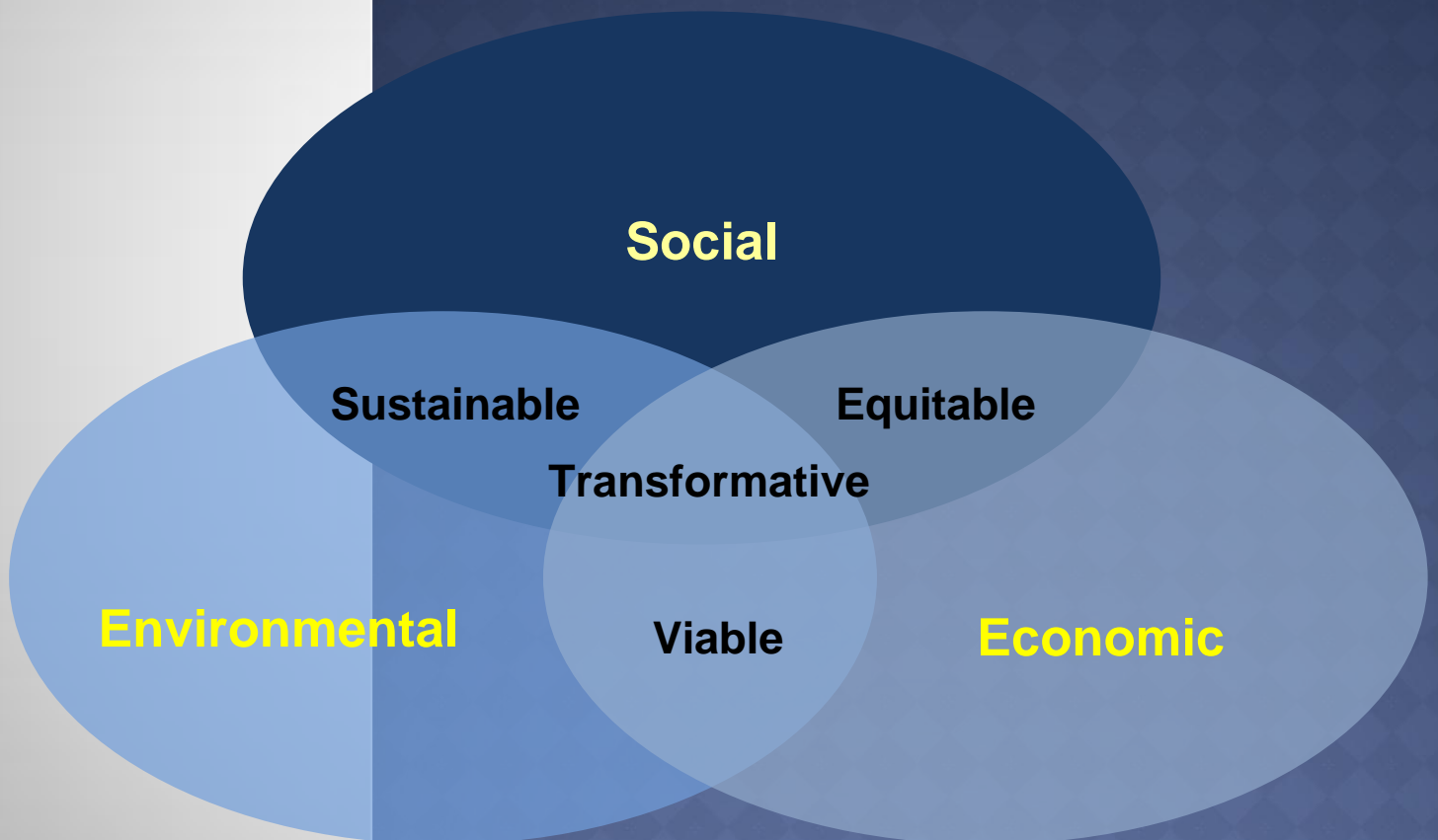


DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

VERSION 2.5



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Development and Social Change

Introduction to the Course



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Introduction to the Course: Development and Social Change

Development and Social Change provides a Biblical rationale for engagement in efforts to address issues such as poverty, injustice and ecological destruction. It also considers the effectiveness of various development theories, initiatives and strategies; and presents a framework for analyzing and appropriately responding to poverty at the community level.

Learning Objectives:

Specific learning outcomes are presented within each of the course units. The overall learning objectives for the course are summarized as follows:

- Explain what is meant by the terms Development and Social Change, what the history of the international humanitarian assistance sector is, and to what degree it has been effective.
- Describe fundamental approaches used to bring about development and social change, and to what extent those approaches have been effective in our own context.
- Recognize various levels of poverty and what factors contribute to it in order to assess and appropriately respond to household poverty within our own context.
- Present an in-depth explanation of the Biblical basis for followers of Jesus to engage in development and social change efforts, an examination of the root cause of the suffering, damage and brokenness we experience in our world, and what God's thoughts, feelings and response are to that.
- Explain to what extent Christianity has been faithful to God's concern for a hurting world throughout various time periods beginning with Jesus' earthly ministry up to our day and age.
- Describe what Jesus meant through his strong emphasis upon the coming of the Kingdom of God, and what it means to be a citizen of and an ambassador for his Kingdom in the world in which we live.
- Explain what is meant by the terms "integral mission" and "community transformation," and what appropriate structures and strategies can be used to carry that out on a local level
- Recognize important elements for successful change efforts, assess to what extent key principles are present or absent within development efforts, identify characteristics that are important for an effective community transformation facilitator, and address some key issues such as avoiding unwise dependency upon external resources and relying more upon local resources.

Required Reading:

All the readings for this course are included in the units. Any additional reading will be handed out during the residency.

Module Units:

Unit 1: An Introduction to Development and Social Change

Unit 2: A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 1 - God's Original Vision and What Went Wrong

Unit 3: A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 2 - God's Perspective on Development and Social Change

Unit 4: Living as Citizens of the Kingdom

Unit 5: How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

Unit 6: Emerging Faithfulness: the global Church's response to human need

Unit 7: Transformation - A Kingdom Agenda for Development and Social Change

Unit 8: Principles of Community Transformation

Unit 9: From Kingdom Theory to Kingdom Practice

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Course Information

Welcome. You are about to embark on what I consider to be a journey to the center of Christianity. By “center” I mean its core, its essence. For me, that is the heart and vision of God for all of creation, for all of time. In effect this course is something of a history lesson...His – story. The story is much older than Christianity. Christianity as we know it is a chapter but a later one. In terms of time sequence, the story within this course begins in Genesis and follows a common theme up until our own history and then past us into the future—into eternity.

You might be thinking, “What does this have to do with the title of the course?” It does not sound like an introduction to a study of Development and Social Change! Oh, but it is very fitting when we consider that development and social change, in the most simplistic of terms, is all about trying to “set things right.” For millions of people around the world, life is not even close to what God has always intended it to be. Jesus said that he came that we might have life to the full. That is not how so many people know and experience it. We think of setting things right when we are disturbed to the point of taking action because things are so terribly wrong, and/or we have glimmers of hopeful possibilities that things could be so much better. Development and social change is all about taking such action. It is a response, a reaction to what we consider unacceptable suffering and damage to humanity and the environment upon which we so desperately depend.

Also, when I speak of the “center” or core of Christianity, I refer to essential purpose. For those of us who follow Jesus, that means “mission.” Why are we here; what are we supposed to be doing? The course opens with a general look at development and social change as a specific social and economic service sector which receives a lot of attention and resources. It ranges in size from small non-governmental organizations located in villages and urban neighborhoods all the way to the global offices and operations of the United Nations. This course can only be regarded as an overview, and in fact, because the subject matter is so vast, it is an overview of a particular slice of what we generally mean by the terms development and social change. That slice will be a primary focus upon the role of Christians within this vast enterprise known as humanitarian aid and assistance. That role, I assert, is central to our purpose as disciples of Jesus. It is at the heart of our mission, not as agencies only, but as churches, small groups and individuals.

The course contents: subjects and topics are as follows:

Unit 1 - An Introduction to Development and Social Change

Course overview

Introduction

Definitions - what is social change and what is development?

Who are the poor and why are they in that condition?

The history of development assistance

Five fundamental approaches to bring about development and social change

Is there any reason for the poor to have hope?

Unit 2 - A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World, Part 1 - God’s original vision and what went wrong

The vision of God

God’s purpose for humanity

Caretakers of creation, shepherds of humanity

The price of mercy - the state of the world as we know it

Unit 3 - A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World, Part 2 - God’s perspective on development and social change

The mission of Jesus

The coming of the Kingdom

What the Bible teaches about God’s heart for the poor and oppressed

What the Bible teaches about God’s heart for the environment and animal life

Unit 4 - Living as Citizens of the Kingdom

Following In the footsteps of Jesus

Living as citizens of the Kingdom

Apprentices of Jesus

A people of paradox – blending truth and love

Ambassadors of the King

Reconcilers and peacemakers

Introduction to the Course: Development and Social Change

Unit 5 – How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

A historical review of our faithfulness to Christ's mandate
The Great Reversal

Unit 6 - Emerging Faithfulness - The Global Church's Response to Human Need

The Church in response to human need
Structures for engaging integral mission
Christians in the caring professions
Christian NGOs
The latent potential of the local Church

Unit 7 - Transformation - A Kingdom Agenda for Development and Social Change

The Isaiah Agenda
A place to begin
An appropriate approach

Unit 8 - Principles of Community Transformation

Understanding community change
Principles of community transformation
Profile of a community transformation facilitator
The dark side of benevolence

Unit 9 - From Kingdom Theory to Kingdom Practice

A better way forward – partners, not patrons
The early Church's practice of giving
Kingdom mathematics
Being intentional about the mission of Jesus
Kingdom seed projects

You will not see much reference made in this course to one particular task of the Church - evangelism. It is mentioned, but it is not studied here. I am making the assumption that most students, if not all who participate in this course will already be knowledgeable about that subject and fully understand that it is an integral part of which we Christians are supposed to be engaged in, although there are diverse opinions as to the best way to go about it.

Please do not misunderstand me, I am not even remotely suggesting there are "two missions" in which the church ought to be involved—one: evangelism; two: social action. I discount that entirely. There is only one mission and it is holistic in its approach to human need. I fully concur with what author Christopher Wright reported in an article within the Sept/Oct 2007 Frontier Missions publication. He was quoting something Jean-Paul Heldt had written:

There is no longer a need to qualify mission as "holistic," nor to distinguish between "mission" and "holistic mission." Mission is, by definition, "holistic," and therefore "holistic mission" is, de facto, mission. Proclamation alone, apart from any social concern, may be perceived as a distortion, a truncated version of the true gospel, a parody and travesty of the good news, lacking relevance for the real problems of people living in the real world. On the other end of the spectrum, exclusive focus on transformation and advocacy may just result in social and humanitarian activism, void of any spiritual dimension. Both approaches are unbiblical; they deny the wholeness of human nature of human beings created in the image of God. Since we are created "whole," and since the Fall affects our total humanity in all its dimensions, then redemption, restoration, and mission can, by definition, only be "holistic."

I am troubled about the emphasis, especially within the past decade, that we Christians need to introduce social activism into our traditional ministry and missions "portfolios" in order to become "more balanced." Rather, I assert that if our core paradigms of mission and ministry do not experience a fundamental shift so as to align with a biblically informed understanding of God's perspective, then any bit of tweaking we do here and there to become "more balanced" will, like the seed falling on shallow ground, eventually dry up and wither away, if not in practice, then most likely in impact. Jesus warned us against trying to put new wine into old wineskins, and that is worth considering in this regard.

Because of my concern, in this course I approach the topic of social change and development with an emphasis upon theology. By doing so, I intend to demonstrate that it is not a new wineskin that is needed after all, but rather it is a returning of mission to the original wineskin where it belongs—the heart and vision of God. My hope is that once you have finished this course of study and reflection that you will better understand God's heart—about what God is passionate; that you will have a broader understanding

Introduction to the Course: Development and Social Change

of humanitarian assistance—the good and not so good; that you will better understand the focus of discipleship—kingdom citizenship; and most of all, that you will see a way forward in which to personally engage God’s great program—the restoration of God’s kingdom on the earth. May you and I both willingly give ourselves over to being a part of the answer to the prayer that Jesus taught us—*“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

Course structure and assignments

This course (module) is comprised of nine units to be completed (normally) within a 16-18 week period. Throughout the course there are questions located within outlined answer boxes titled “Think About It.” Those questions are designed to engage you with the lecture material and the additional readings. They are also linked directly to the learning objectives for each unit and may be used as the basis for formulating the questions on your final exam. The “Think About It” questions are not simple “yes/no” questions. They are reflective in nature, call for original thinking and in some cases you will need to return to text you read in a previous unit in order to review key points. It is our expectation that you reflect upon each of those questions as you proceed through the course. To do so is clearly to your advantage in terms of effective learning, and also in terms of writing quality assignments and preparing for the final exam.

Something different with this course as compared to some others in the MA program is that you will not find the “final assignment” boxes at the end of each unit that professors often include as their assignment requirements. Rather, professors are free to assign questions from the various “Answer Boxes” in each unit that he or she feels will best help students achieve the unit and overall course learning objectives.

Attention please! Any time you insert portions of text from this course manual or from any other source materials into your assignments, you must use quotation marks to distinguish that text and give the source information: title of the source document, name of author and date of publication.

Note on method

It’s important to interact with what you read. One way to do that is to mark a passage or section in a special way, such as underlining, highlighting or using question marks (?) or exclamations marks (!) that help call your attention to that which you want to recall or read again. Please use the margins of workbook pages to make personal observations, raise questions or state issues as you read through the material. You can raise these questions in your internet/email conversations with the professor who teaches the course. You can also use this area to write notes to yourself to help you review for the final exam.

The author



My name is Jim Alexander. I became a follower of Jesus while active in the cultural and political upheaval known as the hippie and anti-war movement in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was a time of breaking free from what we considered meaningless values and destructive tendencies—racism, war, materialism, and religion. Along the way someone challenged me to read about the life and teachings of Jesus. I did, and while doing so I discovered the One who could change both me and the world around me. I memorized the Sermon on the Mount and set out in search of others who had heard, felt, believed and then heeded the call....not to religion, but to the grass-roots movement of Jesus.

That has been and still is my life journey, and what a journey it has been. We Christians are fond of that saying “a straight and narrow path.” Well, my path has been narrow, so narrow in fact that I have fallen off more than once and have the scars and bruises to prove it! But “straight?” No, my path has been anything but straight, at least as viewed from here at ground level.

This will become a very long story unless I fast forward it to the part where it might seem more relevant to my authoring this course. In 1976 I first went to South Asia with an international Christian youth organization. It was a two year internship as part of my undergraduate work in Biblical studies and cross cultural missions. During those two years I was mainly involved in outreach and discipleship in Iran, Pakistan, India and some forays into Afghanistan and Nepal. My wife Linda and I started dating during that time, in Iran, just as the Islamic revolution began there.

After returning to the US to complete my theological studies, Linda and I married and joined friends in Northwest Pakistan to help them set up a Christian relief and development agency in response to the outpouring of millions of Afghan refugees who were fleeing the invasion of their country by the Soviet Union. Within a year, our whole idea of mission was challenged and changed.

Over 25 years and two adult sons later, I now look back with gratitude to God and to others that I have had the opportunity to live and serve in many countries around the world as a practitioner, trainer,

program manager and organization development consultant in the sector known generally as community development. Along the way I completed my graduate studies in the field of international development management.

But it has been in the past ten years or so that my vocation has become increasingly clearer and perhaps more urgent as we watch the growing emphasis on community transformation taking hold in various parts of the global Church and within increasing numbers of mission organizations. It is an emphasis on what is known as “Integral Mission,” being agents of God in pursuing the mission that Jesus launched, one that touches on every aspect of a person’s life—body, soul and spirit, including our interaction with and dependence on the rest of humanity and all of creation. That is what this course is all about.

I regard my association with DAI to be one of those unforeseen blessings. I was not looking for them, and they were not looking for me, but I believe God arranged the meeting, and I have a very high regard for them. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to both teach in and now author a course for the Master of Arts in Organization Leadership program.

Select bibliography:

Because this course covers a broad subject matter, it has been difficult to find a single text which speaks to the key issues and learning points that make up its focus. The option of assigning several different texts was not pursued because of the cost factor involved for students. Therefore, within each individual unit the course itself includes select articles and excerpts from various writings which attempt to address this challenge.

There are many sources cited throughout the course, both published documents and internet based information. Rather than list them all here (they are noted in the text), the select bibliography below represents the primary sources used:

- Arnold, Eberhard (Editor). *The Early Christians in Their Own Words*. Farmington, PA. Plough Publishing House. 1997.
- Bercot, David W. (Editor). *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. Peabody, MA. Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 1998.
- Bercot, David W. *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*. Tyler, TX. Scroll Publishing Company. 2003.
- *Biblical Worldview and Skills for Wholistic Ministry*. Vision Conference Training Workbook. Harvest International and Food for the Hungry, USA, 2004.
- Black, Maggie. *The No-Nonsense Guide to International Development*. Oxford. New Internationalist™ Publications Ltd.. 2002.
- Blomberg, Craig L. *Neither Poverty nor Riches - A biblical theology of possessions*. Downers Grove, Ill. IVP. 1999.
- Boyd, Gregory A. *The Myth of a Christian Nation*. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 2005.
- Camp, Lee C. *Mere Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI. Brazos Press. 2003.
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- Fung, Raymond. *The Isaiah Vision*. Geneva. WCC Publications. 1992.
- Goudzwaard, Bob; Vander Vennen, Mark; Van Heemst, David. *Hope In Troubled Times*. Grand Rapids, MI. 2007.
- Korten, David C. *The Great Turning*. Bloomfield, CT. Kumarian Press. 2006
- Koyama, Kosuke. *No Handle on the Cross*, Great Britain. SCM Press Ltd. 1976.
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- McLaren, Brian D. *The Secret Message of Jesus*. Nashville. W Publishing Group, a Division of Thomas Nelson. 2006.
- McLaren, Brian D. *Everything Must Change*. Nashville. Thomas Nelson. 2007.
- Myers, Bryant. *Walking with the Poor*. New York. World Vision International, published by Orbis Books. 1999.
- Philip, Peter, *Journey with the Poor*. Australia. Collins Dove. 1988.
- Rickett, Daniel. *Building Strategic Relationships: A Practical Guide to Partnering with Non-Western Missions*. USA. Partners International. 2000.
- Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty*. New York, NY. Penguin Press. 2005

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- Sine, Tom (Editor). *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Missions USA. Advanced Research and Communication Center. 1983.
- Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity*. San Francisco. HarperCollins. 1997.
- Trainer, Ted. *Developed to Death - Rethinking Third World Development*. London. Green Print. 1989
- Wallace, Jim. *God's Politics: Why the Right gets it wrong and the Left doesn't get it*. San Francisco. HarperCollins. 2005.
- Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus*. Downers Grove, Ill. IVP. 1999.

In addition to the texts indicated above, several key articles were obtained from the following internet sites:

- Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO). <http://www.aerdo.org>
- Creation Care Magazine. <http://www.creationcare.org/magazine>
- Learning to Give. <http://www.learningtogive.org>
- Sojourners Magazine. <http://www.sojo.net/sojmail>
- The Micah Network. <http://www.micahnetwork.org>

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are taken from the NIV Bible. International Bible Society.

Development and Social Change

Unit 1

An Introduction to Development and Social Change



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Unit 1 - An Introduction to Development and Social Change

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (December 1948)
- 2) “Millennium Man” by Stephanie Nolen from *Saturday's Globe and Mail*
- 3) “Why the Millennium Goals Won't Work” by Bunker Roy, *International Herald Tribune*

Learning Outcomes:

1. Define the terms “development” and “social change;”
2. Explain what is meant by “poverty,” and what factors contribute to it;
3. Describe to what extent international development assistance has proven to be successful;
4. Describe five fundamental approaches to bring about development and social change, give examples of each from your own context of and state how effective each has been.

Introduction

It is always good before one sets out to study a course like this to understand what the name of the course itself means, at least in the mind of the one writing it. And herein lies our first challenge. Just what do the two terms mean—*Development* and *Social Change*?

When I did my graduate work, those terms represented separate courses I was required to take, and so they must not mean the same thing. And true to the educational experience I think most of us have, these many years later I cannot remember the difference, in spite of all the money I paid back then to find out! Even though the distinction has obviously not had much impact upon my life one way or the other, it must have been important to know while doing my studies, and so for those of you taking this course it must be equally important for you to know. Now doesn't that make perfect sense?

Therefore, before we go any further, we need to define the words "Development" and "Social Change."

Definitions – what is social change and what is development?

"Social Change"

There are many different definitions for social change, but let me give you three from a few sources who should know best.

From a renowned university's social sciences department - "Positive social change is a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies and actions to promote the worth, dignity and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures and societies. Positive social change results in the improvement of human and social conditions."

From a person with a PhD - "Social change is a phenomenon that alters the landscape of human existence through the forces that are purposefully designed by a group of people or an individual for the betterment of human kind. Social change can address human needs, resolve problems or bring about a change leading to a departure from the old ways of doing the same thing."

From an Organization Development Consultant - "Social change is when one progressively lives out his or her obligations to society and maintaining enduring human relationships to foster the development of society. It is the opportunity to make a difference with the strength, the compassion and the dedication to building a better world."

Those all seem to be pretty good definitions, but perhaps my favorite definition comes from a not so renowned student who was asked to define the term. The student's definition? "*Social change is the way in which a society changes.*"

As we can see, social change can apply to almost anything that can be considered as: 1) Social, meaning involving more than one human being; and 2) Change, meaning not remaining the same.

For the purpose of this course I think the university student's statement above is quite fitting. Social change by definition does not require the change to be positive (the horrendous violence which took place in Rwanda between Tutsis and Hutus was in fact social change, as was the genocide against Muslims in the former Yugoslavia), but our study and discussion will focus upon very poor and disadvantaged people experiencing positive changes in their lives. The Kingdom of God is all about positive social change.

"Development"

The term "Development" also has a wide variety of meanings attached to it, but let us immediately narrow the large field of definitions down to development which affects humans and their environment in a positive manner (sounds a lot like social change, doesn't it?). "Development" describes a process of change. It is dynamic, not static.

Economists and others divided the world into two parts 50 years ago: "developed countries," and "undeveloped countries." This is a very superficial division. In fact, this language has been changing. One now hears terms such as "under-developed" and "more developed." Among many agencies, especially UN agencies, "least developed" is a popular term.

I would suggest that the shift in language has occurred because development is not a place at which one arrives; it is a continual process of change along a particular continuum. That is why we now hear "less" and "more" as attempts to indicate to what extent development has progressed, rather than suggesting that once someone, or some society is "developed," change no longer takes place. Every society is "developing" in all sorts of different ways, and it is apparent that some are at much higher levels of what is considered desirable development than others. Those same societies also tend to be

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developing even further at much faster rates than those who are less developed; in other words, those who have more also have the means to get more.

The most obvious example of this “have more/get more” principle is the United States. Earth Trends, a group tracking the state of the planet in environmental terms reports the following:

“. . . according to the World Bank, the 2.3 billion residents of low-income countries accounted for less than 3% of public and private consumption in 2004, while the 1 billion residents of high-income countries consumed more than 80% of the global total. . . . In this same year the United States accounted for 4.6% of the world's population and 33% of global consumption. . . .”

(<http://earthtrends.wri.org>. Washington DC: World Resources Institute)

Okay, so far we have defined development as a process of change which affects humans and their environment in a positive manner. We now have to describe what we mean by change which is “positive.” Here lies our second great challenge, because what one person might consider positive change may be different from the view of someone else.

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

- 1) Summarize how you would define “Social Change” and “Development” as it has been experienced in your context.
- 2) What would a “better life” mean to most poor and disadvantaged people in your context? How might they describe that?

Much of the world considers the “better life” to mean achieving higher degrees of material wealth fueled by seemingly limitless economic growth. But if that were so, we would then have to conclude that Jesus was one of the least developed individuals to have ever lived! He said he did not even have a place to lay his head, and when he died, the only thing of perceived value he left behind for people to fight over was a single garment! But most people in the world, including Christians, aren't using Jesus as their example of a “better life.” They might think of Solomon as an example, but not Jesus.

There are millions of people in the world today for whom a better life would simply mean having sufficient food for the year ahead (or for even for next week). Those who refer to themselves as development workers and development organizations are those who consider their purpose is to help those who are poor and disadvantaged to achieve a level of “better life,” which means they have the capacity to at least secure their most basic needs now and into the foreseeable future.

To help us understand development work, perhaps we can be best served by understanding what it is not. Development work is not about giving needy people free stuff. That is called welfare or “relief work” in these times. In Jesus' day it was called alms-giving. If someone does not have enough to eat, you give them some food. If they do not have clothing, you give them some clothes. If they do not have water to drink, you give them a cup of cold water. Relief is all about giving people the things they need to survive.

Some of those who have been involved in development efforts for a long time have traditionally felt uncomfortable with relief work. Some have been outright critical of it. Why? Because they are concerned that relief turns people into beggars and parasites who either begin to like the idea of living off other people's generosity or become so disempowered that they begin to believe there is no use trying to become productive members of society once again.

The slogan of development workers had long been *“If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.”* I think most of us are now a bit embarrassed about the implied simplicity of that motto, but it still communicates an important distinction between relief and development efforts. Relief is a response to an emergency situation or a critical event by which people are made helpless and face extreme suffering or death if their basic needs are not provided. Refugees of natural or man-made disasters fall into this category. A family who depends upon the man to work each day in order to survive falls into this category if that man becomes seriously ill or dies.

Relief is helping those who honestly cannot help themselves (feeding them each day by giving them a fish). Development on the other hand is enabling people to help themselves—those people who long to be productive and self-reliant, if they but had the capacity and resources to do so (teaching them how to fish and thereby to feed themselves).

I feel the debate and contention between the two camps of relief workers on one side and development workers on the other is about as helpful as Baptists and Lutherans slinging Bible verses at each other about the correct mode of baptism. In other words, I think it is useless and even harmful, but most of all - misses the point. The reason I suggest that is because you have to keep people alive long enough so that they can once again help themselves!

Relief and development occur along the same continuum of responding to human need, but it is true that we need to be concerned that progress is being made toward the development side of it.

People Unable to Help Themselves

People Enabled to Help Themselves



Emergency/Critical Relief Assistance

Development Assistance

Relief provides help to those who are in need and who cannot help themselves; development enables people to help themselves and is about bringing an end to poverty. As examples of each, I often think about the Tsunami in South East Asia in December 2004. Relief efforts provided critical help to those who had lost everything—their homes, their material possessions and their livelihoods as a result of the disaster; development efforts provided help to enable the people impacted by the tsunami to rebuild their lives and helped them provide for their own needs once again.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

- 1) Describe an example of “relief” assistance and also “development” assistance occurring in close proximity to each other in your own context.
- 2) Now, explain the relationship between those two forms of assistance and how they might negatively impact each other or positively impact each other.

Who are the very poor and why are they in that condition?

There are degrees of poverty which may be totally inimical to any kind of culture in the ordinary accepted sense. They are essentially different from “poverty” and deserve a separate name. The term that offers itself is “misery.” (Thomas, Harford (Editor), *A Picture of Poverty*, Great Britain. OXFAM. 1979; Page 18.)

As we move on, we need to think about what we mean by “poverty.” Development work is all about bringing an end to poverty, but how do we define that? The United Nations, World Bank and others have tried to come up with a universally acceptable formula for determining to what extent a person is poor. What they have developed is a basic economic level. They say that no one should be earning less than US \$1 a day. That is still very low, but for them, that is the bottom line. The hopelessly poor fall below that line.

There are obvious problems with the previous definition; one problem is that it is a cash based measurement. Many people still live within an agricultural or trade and barter economy in which one may not have much cash at all but be relatively well-off in terms of land and animals. Therefore, the attempt to settle on a universally acceptable definition is itself seen as unacceptable to many.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) now uses what they refer to as indicators of human development. Economic status is certainly one of those indicators, but so are life expectancy and education. That broader definition is generally considered a move in the right direction.

Many organizations refer to what they consider to be a list of “basic needs” to determine who is poor and who is not. Although what is on such lists vary somewhat, most at least include the biological needs of air, water, food, shelter and clothing. The Canadian government puts forward the following as their list of global basic needs:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Clean water and sanitation | 4. Basic education |
| 2. Adequate nutritional food | 5. Family planning |
| 3. Primary health care | 6. Basic housing |

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

Attached as additional reading at the end of this unit is the “1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.” Many human rights advocates around the world use this document as a baseline by which they determine if a particular country is addressing the basic needs of its citizens. In addition to what we see in the Canadian government’s list of basic needs above, what other “basic needs” are mentioned in the document?

One of the better definitions I have concerning on what development assistance should focus was a statement made by the South Commission in 1990:

Development is a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment. It is a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation. It is a movement away from political, economic or social oppression. Through development, political independence acquires its true significance. And it is a process of growth; a movement essentially springing from within the society that is developing. . . . The base for a nation’s development must be its own resources. . . . Development has therefore to be an effort of, by and for the people. True development has to be people-centered. (The Challenge to the South, Report of the South Commission, OUP 1990.)

Efforts at determining universal definitions of poverty have their place, especially for the large international aid and development agencies, but another approach being made by more grass roots groups is an attempt to define poverty within local contexts. This form of “wealth ranking” is perhaps a more practical way of getting beyond the criticisms being placed against such relative and ambiguous definitions as the US \$1 per day baseline. Local people are asked questions such as: “Who do you consider to be the well-off and the poor in your community?” They are asked to describe indicators that are used locally for families that are considered to be very poor. What is it about those families that make them fit that description? (Are they handicapped in some way? Are they landless, etc.?)

In like manner, people are then asked to define what they would consider to be a very well-off household in their context. In between these categories they would also define several other stages along a scale from very poor to very well-off. The exercise concludes by asking them to place each household in their community at one of those points along the continuum. A variation of the exercise is to start off by comparing one household to another. The question is asked “Which of those two households is better off (or worse off) than the other?” People are then asked to explain what the difference is in their minds that led them to decide as they did. By doing this repeatedly, one can come up with local definitions of poverty and wealth and develop an idea of the various levels where other households in the community are between the two.

If economic development is a ladder with higher rungs representing steps up the path to economic well-being, there are roughly one billion people around the world, one sixth of humanity . . . too ill, hungry, or destitute even to get a foot on the first rung of the development ladder. These people are the “poorest of the poor,” or the “extreme poor” of the planet. They all live in developing countries (poverty does exist in rich countries, but it is not extreme poverty). Of course, not all of these one billion people are dying today, but they are all fighting for survival each day. If they are the victims of a serious drought or flood, or an episode of serious illness, or a collapse of the world market price of their cash crop, the result is likely to be extreme suffering and perhaps even death. Cash earnings are pennies a day.

A few rungs up the development ladder is the upper end of the low-income world, where roughly another 1.5 billion people face problems like those of the young women in Bangladesh. These people are “the poor.” They live above mere subsistence. Although daily survival is pretty much assured, they struggle in the cities and countryside to make ends meet. Death is not at their door, but chronic financial hardship and a lack of basic amenities such as safe drinking water and functioning latrines are part of their daily lives. All told, the extreme poor (at around 1 billion) and the poor (another 1.5 billion) make up around 40 percent of humanity.

Another 2.5 billion people, including the Indian IT workers, are up yet another few rungs, in the middle-income world. These are middle-income households, but they would certainly not be recognized as middle class by the standards of rich countries. Their incomes may be a few thousand dollars per year. Most of them live in cities. They are able to secure some comfort in their housing, perhaps even indoor plumbing. They can

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purchase a scooter and someday even an automobile. They have adequate clothing, and their children go to school. Their nutrition is adequate, and some are even falling into the rich-world syndrome of unhealthy fast food.

Still higher up the ladder are the remaining one billion people, roughly a sixth of the world, in the high-income world. These affluent households include the billion or so people in the rich countries, but also the increasing number of affluent people living in middle-income countries—the tens of millions of high-income individuals in such cities as Shanghai, Sao Paolo, or Mexico City. The young professionals of Beijing are among the fortunate one sixth of the world enjoying twenty-first-century affluence. (Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, pages 18-19.)

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

When you consider your own context (using your neighborhood, community or city) think in terms of the four levels of development Sachs introduced above. For each of the levels, list some criteria (indicators) you would use for deciding if a family was at that level.

Level 1. Extremely poor:

Level 2. Poor:

Level 3. Middle income (middle class):

Level 4. High income (affluent):

The following is another attempt to demonstrate the continuum from very poor to well-off. It is based upon Maslow's Hierarchy of human needs but approaches it from both a social and economic development perspective.

Level 1: Survival - The uncertain availability of:

- Food
- Health
- Water
- Shelter
- Clothing
- Physical safety

Level 2: Security - The needs listed under level 1 can be reasonably guaranteed on an ongoing basis through some form of relief assistance, and thus there is some measure of peace of mind. No longer focused primarily upon personal survival, people give increasing attention to elements of communal relationships, beliefs, religion and measures to improve their situation.

Level 3: Independence - The needs listed under level 1 can be reasonably guaranteed on an ongoing basis, not through the relief assistance of others, but by an opportunity to secure some form of personal and communal production or employment.

Level 4: Surplus - A move beyond a concern with only meeting basic needs. Resources, freedom and time become available for:

- Discretionary consumption
- Pursuing personal interests and values
- Increased comfort levels
- Etc.

Level 5: Increasing options - Resources are available for a wide and/or growing choice of:

- Personal occupation
- Discretionary use of time and resources for leisure activities
- Location
- Etc.

Why are some people so very poor?

There are various theories that attempt to answer that question at the macro level. Some reasons given are rather obvious, such as war and natural calamity, but other reasons such as patterns of economic globalization, the economic policies and structures of nation states and multi-national corporations are quite complex and hard for other than economic theorists to understand (assuming those theories make sense at all!). Therefore I will not attempt to interpret the science and art of macro economics in this course. However, from a more philosophical and theological consideration, in units two

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and three I will put forward what I consider to be some fundamental reasons why many people are so very poor.

As I will argue in a later unit, I believe the household and local community context is the level of engagement where most followers of Jesus are called to address issues of human need. But when doing so it is very important to try to understand the reasons why people are struggling and therefore the question remains a very valid one for us. For example, if we think of a health issue like dysentery, to only treat a symptom will appear to help in the short-term, but if the sickness itself is not addressed, matters will only get worse. Bryant Meyers, in his book, *Walking with the Poor*, presents a helpful synopsis of what happens at a household level which results in ongoing poverty. He draws his thoughts primarily from the work of Robert Chambers who is well known within the community development sector.

Using the household as his point of departure, Chambers describes the poor as living in a "cluster of disadvantage." The household is poor, physically weak, isolated, vulnerable, and powerless. Chambers describes these dimensions of poverty as an interactive system that he calls the "poverty trap" (1983, 103-39). Chambers' systems view of poverty has considerable explanatory power and aligns well with experience. (Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, pg. 66)

Meyers lists and describes the five categories as defined by Chambers and then adds a sixth category, spiritual poverty, which he does in the interest of being holistic. The six categories of poverty presented by Meyers are:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Material poverty | 4. Vulnerability |
| 2. Physical weakness | 5. Powerlessness |
| 3. Isolation | 6. Spiritual poverty |

Here is how Bryant Meyers defines each of the six categories:

1. Material poverty: The household has few assets. Its housing and sanitation is inadequate. It has little or no land, livestock or wealth.
2. Physical weakness: The household members are weak. They lack strength because of poor health and inadequate nutrition. Many in the household are women, the very young and the very old.
3. Isolation: The household lacks access to services and information. It is often remote—far from main roads, water lines and even electricity. It lacks access to markets, capital, credit and information.
4. Vulnerability: The household has few buffers against emergencies or disaster. Its members lack choices and options. They cannot save, and they are vulnerable to cultural demands, such as dowry and feast days, that soak up savings.
5. Powerlessness: The household lacks the ability and the knowledge to influence the life around it and the social systems in which it lives.
6. Spiritual poverty: The household suffers from broken and dysfunctional relationships with God, each other, the community and creation. Its members may suffer from spiritual oppression—fear of spirits, demons and ancestors. They may lack hope and be unable to believe that change is possible. They may never have heard the gospel or have only responded to a truncated version of the gospel that lacks transforming power.”¹

In his writings, Chambers observes that poor families generally experience all of the categories concurrently and they are interrelated. I would not challenge him on that point, but I would suggest that often there will be one or more dominant causes that provide “leverage” points for engagement. What I mean by that is that we may not be able to, or even need to address all the causes through outside assistance, for if we help a family overcome a dominant cause of their difficulties they may be able to address the other issues themselves over time. But what are those dominant issues? Chamber’s outline of elements may give us clues to consider before we attempt to solve problems we do not fully understand or to search for answers to the wrong questions.

¹ Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, World Vision International. Published by Orbis Books, New York, 1999. Pgs 66, 67

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

Think of a specific family in your context that you consider to be existing at the level you identified as “extremely poor” in answer box #4. Using the categories presented by Meyers, describe in what way that family is experiencing each of the various elements of chronic poverty.

1. Material poverty
2. Physical weakness
3. Isolation
4. Vulnerability
5. Powerlessness
6. Spiritual poverty

Which of the six elements do you feel that if they could be significantly addressed, the family would be able to rise out of their impoverished condition?

In workshops I often use the above six elements of poverty in an exercise I call “The Web of Chronic Poverty.” I have participants draw a large spider web in the rough shape of a bicycle wheel with six evenly spaced spokes that divide the web into six segments. We give each segment the title of one of Meyer’s six elements of poverty. We draw a big ugly spider named “poverty” in the center of the wheel - it’s hub. We then draw threads around the entire wheel at even proportions from the center to the outside rim (wheels within wheels). Where each thread intersects each segment we write an indicator that explains what a poor family experiences related to that particular segment, such as “material,” or “physical weakness,” etc. By the time we are finished we have a full profile of that family’s condition. I then ask the group the same question as in the above answer box. “Which of the six elements do you feel, if addressed, the family would then be able to rise out of their impoverished condition?” What we discover is that like an insect stuck in a spider’s web, even if it gets one part of its body loose, it is still stuck in the grip of the spider “poverty.” The lesson? It takes an integrated approach to free such people; a single solution response is too simplistic. Jeffrey Sachs expresses that condition in this way:

The greatest tragedy of our time is that one sixth of humanity is not even on the development ladder. A large number of the extreme poor are caught in a poverty trap, unable on their own to escape from extreme material deprivation. They are trapped by disease, physical isolation, climate stress, environmental degradation, and by extreme poverty itself. Even though life-saving solutions exist to increase their chances for survival—whether in the form of new farming techniques, or essential medicines, or bed nets that can limit the transmission of malaria—these families and their governments simply lack the financial means to make these crucial investments. The world’s poor know about the development ladder: they are tantalized by images of affluence from halfway around the world. But they are not able to get a first foothold on the ladder, and so cannot even begin to climb out of poverty. (Sachs, pages 19-20)

The history of development assistance

We know that relief assistance has been going on for a long, long time. It has been happening within families, within communities, within individual societies, nations and empires for many centuries. All the world’s major religions have some form of “almsgiving” expected of their adherents as far as I know.

We know less about development assistance, other than it was assumed local agriculture, manufacturing and public service trades, commerce, government employment, etc. would be the means by which people would help themselves through finding some form of productive employment. But that is quite different than what we now refer to as international development assistance, which has grown to be about a 60,000,000,000 (60 billion) US dollar a year public service industry taking place in virtually every country around the world in some form.

This highly organized, very intentional international effort was born around 1950 AD. On January 20, 1949, the then US President, Harry Truman, announced the launching of a “bold new” development aid program under the auspices of the newly formed United Nations:

“More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and

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stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. . . . The United States is pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. The material resources which we can afford to use for the assistance of other peoples are limited. But our imponderable resources in technical knowledge are constantly growing and are inexhaustible.”

The race to rid the world of poverty had begun and ushered in the era of development assistance as we now know it. The winners of World War II (assuming anyone truly wins a war) entered a period of unprecedented economic growth and accumulation of wealth, especially the United States of America. Western countries were becoming rich very quickly, in fact, rich enough to feel generous toward people in other parts of the world.

The very concept of "development" arose in a specific historical socio-cultural context; it is hard to separate the ideas of development from the source. In the case of the northern-based development programs and organizations, they gained ascendancy following World War II in response to the critical needs of the poorer nations. The contemporary developmental movement is predicated on the western scientific and technological revolution, asserting that the ultimate goal is to increase production and economic growth which will raise the standard of living and provide a better life for as many as possible. Modern medicine, farm equipment, fertilizers, hybrid seeds, irrigation, and so on were seen as the panacea for the "backward" or underdeveloped Third World. With this transfer of technology, the economic gap would be closed. Thus, the model of development underlying the efforts of both secular and Christian groups is basically derived from the secular humanism of the Enlightenment than from Christian thought, as has been documented by Sine (1981:72).

. . . Underlying this approach to development is an assumption that progress is basically materialistic. This assumption is one-dimensional and ignores the whole non-economic side of life, the human and cultural values that in some cases are much more advanced than those in the industrialized north. It also assumes that the capitalist monetary system is the vehicle for progress, and ignores traditional economic systems that have worked for millennia and which might be better than participating in the world monetary system. Furthermore, modernization assumes that what worked in one hemisphere and climate will work universally—such as a capital-intensive agricultural or industrial system. But it ignores the realities of the parts of the world where capital is scarce and where human labor is the main resource. To introduce tractors or mechanized factories in these situations is to create unemployment and contribute to chronic underemployment. The climates and soils are also different, as are the social structures.²

Western nations, especially the USA had become industrially, scientifically and technologically advanced to the point where our generosity so blended with our optimism and pride that we became salvific, meaning we thought we were in a position to save the world from misery. This is very well expressed in Thomas Dichter's book *Despite Good Intentions* where he quotes British novelist and physicist C.P. Snow, who in 1959 wrote:

Life for the overwhelming majority of mankind has always been nasty, brutish and short. It is so in the poor countries still. This disparity between the rich and the poor has been noticed. It has been noticed, most acutely and not unnaturally, by the poor. Just because they have noticed it, it won't last for long. Whatever else in the world we know survives to the year 2000, that won't. Once the trick of getting rich is known, as it now is, the world can't survive half rich and half poor. It's just not on.” (*Despite Good Intentions – Why Development Assistance to the Third World has Failed*, Thomas Dichter, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst and Boston, 2003. Pg. 49)

Well, the last 50 years have proven Mr. Snow's prediction strikingly wrong. The reality is that the poverty gap has widened even further; the rich keep getting richer and the poor keep slipping further into lives of misery.

In 1989, Ted Trainer, then a lecturer at University of South Wales in the UK, published a book titled *Developed to Death*. He mentions that he had researched over 100 books and articles to gain an understanding about what international development efforts had achieved up until that time.

Almost all summary comments stated that at best negligible gains had been made for large numbers of Third World people, or for Third World people in general. All comments reviewed on the post-1980 period estimated that absolute living standards had in general

² Written by Wayne Bragg in *Christian Relief and Development – developing workers for effective ministry*, Edgar J. Elliston, Editor, Word Publishing, Dallas, 1989. Pgs 22,23 (Last printed in 1989 – currently out of print.)

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fallen, and for large numbers had undergone marked falls. No direct attempts to explain that the conventional strategy is producing satisfactory Third World development were encountered. This literature both criticises the practical achievements of the conventional approach, and rejects conventional development theory. . . . To summarise the discussion, there is now a very weighty case against conventional development theory and practice. Few if any explicit defences ever appear in the development literature. It is condemned directly or indirectly by a vast amount of literature and evidence that has accumulated over the last two decades.” (Ted Trainer, *Developed to Death*, page 51-52)

I want to insert here two of the quotes that Trainer uses in his book that typically reflect the conclusions of that large body of sources he had researched.

Development of the type experienced by the majority of Third World countries in the last quarter century has meant, for very large numbers of people, increased impoverishment. This is the conclusion which has emerged from a series of empirical studies of trends in levels of living in the rural areas of Asia. In most of the countries we have studied, the incomes of the very poor have been falling absolutely or the proportion of the rural population living below a designated "poverty line" has been increasing, or both. Similar things almost certainly have been happening elsewhere, in Africa and parts of Latin America, for the mechanisms which generate poverty in Asia are present in greater or lesser degree in much of the rest of the underdeveloped world . . . In almost every case a significant proportion of low-income households experienced an absolute decline in their real income, particularly since the early 1960s. (K. Griffin and A. R. Kahn, "Poverty in the Third World: Ugly facts and fancy models," Chapt. 18 in H. Alavi and T. Shanin, Eds., *Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies*, 1982)

After three decades (of development effort) there is little doubt that inequality of wealth and income, both internationally and domestically has increased and is still increasing. . . . It is undeniable that the poorest, especially in the poorest countries, have suffered an absolute decline in their standard of living. (T. Balough, *Failures in the strategy against poverty*, *World Development*, 1978.)

It may be noted that Trainer's research dates back to the 1980s. Perhaps the situation has greatly improved since that time. In 2002, Maggie Black, one of the most informed writers on social and justice issues in the world today gave a fresh report of the impact of international aid and development. She "sums it up" with these words:

The idea of "development" was invented in the post-Second World War world to describe the process by which "backward" countries would "catch up" with the industrialized world—courtesy of its assistance. Five decades and much sobering experience later, the concept has spawned an industry of thinking and practice and undergone much evolution. However, the numbers of poor people in whose name development is justified are greater than they were when it was invented, and in many cases their poverty stems directly from the havoc it has wreaked on their lives. Under these circumstances, is the concept any longer useful? (Maggie Black, *The No-Nonsense Guide to International Development*, Page 10)

Some people object to such statistics in light of the rapid economic growth we see happening in places like Vietnam, India, China and elsewhere. But one needs to look more closely at who in those nations is actually benefiting from that growth. What percentage of very poor people are in fact experiencing any of it other than having more consumer goods available in their markets to tempt them to spend limited resources that are needed to help meet their basic needs? Two further quotes from Trainer's book speak to that issue:

Many Third World countries that had experienced relatively high rates of economic growth by historical standards in the 1960s began to realize that such growth had brought little in the way of significant benefits to their poor. For those hundreds of millions of people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, levels of living seemed to stagnate and in some countries, even to decline in real terms. Rates of rural and urban unemployment and underemployment were on the rise. The distribution of incomes seemed to become less equitable with each passing year. Many people felt that rapid economic growth had failed to eliminate or even reduce widespread absolute poverty, which remained a fact of economic life in all Third World nations. . . . The magnitude and extent of world poverty has probably worsened over the past two decades. . . . In the period 1960-1982 there has been little improvement in the per capita incomes of the poorest Third World people. (M. P. Todaro, *Economic Development in the Third World*, 1985.)

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Recent studies in a host of countries—including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and parts of India—indicate that the absolute incomes of some groups have declined over the past two decades, often in the face of considerable growth in gross national product and agricultural output. (E. Eckholm, The Dispossessed of the Earth, World-watch Paper 30, June 1979)

The current sources I continue to study reflect that the “economic boom” we see taking place around the world in certain “show-case” developing nations, whose stories are used by the evangelistic hawkers of economic globalization policies, do not tell the whole story. The growth of emerging international financial giants such as India is not finding its way into the “pockets full of holes” that typify millions of poor citizens. Let me refer to a very current issue occurring in India as reported by P. Sainath - renowned journalist writing for *The Hindu*, one of India’s leading newspapers.

Close to 150,000 Indian farmers committed suicide in nine years from 1997 to 2005, official data show. While farm suicides have occurred in many States, nearly two thirds of these deaths are concentrated in five States where just a third of the country's population lives. Which means that farmers' suicides occurred in those (mainly cash crop) regions with appalling intensity. . . . The number of Indians committing suicide each year rose from around 96,000 in 1997 to roughly 1.14 lakh (114,000) in 2005. In the same period, the number of farmers taking their own lives each year shot up dramatically. From under 14,000 in 1997 to over 17,000 in 2005. While the rise in farm suicides has been on for over a decade, there have been sharp spurts in some years. For instance, 2004 saw well over 18,200 farm suicides across India. (14 Nov 2007, reported by P. Sainath. <http://www.indiatogether.org/2007/nov/psa-mids1.htm>)

That is very sad news indeed, you might be thinking, but what does it have to do with Indian economics? Well, the answer comes when the reasons for this sharp climb in suicides are investigated. P. Sainath continues by quoting a leading researcher following these phenomena—Prof. K Nagaraj of the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS):

“From the mid-90s onwards,” points out Professor Nagaraj, “prices and farm incomes crashed. As costs rose—even as bank credit dried up—so did indebtedness. Even as subsidies for corporate farmers in the West rose, we cut our few, very minimal life supports and subsidies to our own farmers. The collapse of investment in agriculture also meant it was and is most difficult to get out of this trap.”

Leading cause of suicide among poor rural farmers in India? Rising debt. And why are they so indebted? In part because governments of countries like the USA are providing large incentives and subsidies to their own farmers that enable them to market their grains and produce to India at a price that competes with India’s own poor rural farmers! And a “spin-off” result of this? There is then a growing reluctance within India’s own financial institutions to invest in rural farming. And therefore, the cost of supplies and loans which are essential to surviving in the rural agricultural sector escalate in price beyond the capacity of those families to cope with it. Many farmers apparently feel it is better to take their own life than to watch their family face a future without hope.

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

- 1) Based on the research and perceptions I have reported, with what thoughts are you left regarding to what extent international development assistance has generally been successful?
- 2) And more specifically, what would you consider the impact of development assistance has been in your own context?

Since US President Truman’s speech in 1949 which, in effect, launched the history of international aid and development, there have been periodic grand statements and commitments made to continue the struggle against poverty and other forms of human suffering (or perhaps used to remind world leaders of previous commitments that had not materialized). Some examples:

- In 1960, the United Nations proclaimed the Development Decade with the objective of having the underdeveloped countries reach economic takeoff within ten years.
- In 1972, Stockholm, Sweden hosted the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which was attended by 113 delegates and two heads of state (Olaf Palme of

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Sweden and Indira Gandhi of India). This conference raised awareness of an issue hitherto little talked about, the global environment, and called for action to address growing concerns.

- In April 1973, the UN held an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly which focused specifically and exclusively on development and cooperation problems and on the urgency of instituting a new international economic order. Their Declaration: “The establishment of a new international economic order [shall] make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future generations.”
- In 1992, in Brazil, leaders of 105 nations gathered to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development. It was in effect the 20th anniversary of the first summit on the environment which had been held in Stockholm. The Brazil conference is known as the Earth Summit. The result was the Rio Declaration which was a call to halt and reverse the growing serious effects of environmental devastation, in particular, global warming.
- In March 1995, at the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, governments reached a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. The Social Summit was the largest gathering ever of world leaders at that time. It pledged to make the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration overriding objectives of development.

The most recent international declaration of this nature is the United Nations Millennium Declaration and was signed by all 191 United Nations member states in September 2000. The focus of the declaration is upon eight global goals these nations have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are as follows:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
 - Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than one U.S. dollar a day.
 - Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
 - Increase the amount of food for those who suffer from hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
 - Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.
 - Increased enrollment must be accompanied by efforts to ensure that all children remain in school and receive a high-quality education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
 - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4. Reduce child mortality.
 - Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5. Improve maternal health.
 - Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
 - Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
 - Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
 - Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources.
 - Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
 - Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.
 - Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—nationally and internationally.
 - Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.
 - Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States.
 - Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term.
 - In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth.
 - In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

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- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies—especially information and communications technologies.

I don't think anyone would suggest these are not wonderful goals. In fact, most major government and non-government agencies working in development around the world have taken these eight goals as their agenda, including some high profile Christian agencies. Jeffery Sachs, a well-known economist and professor, had a major role to play in developing the Millennium Goals, which he argues are certainly within the reach of the governments of the world if they would simply make it a priority. He writes:

The very hardest part of economic development is getting the first foothold on the ladder. Households and countries at the very bottom of the world's income distribution, in extreme poverty, tend to be stuck. Countries already on the ladder of development, such as Bangladesh and India, are generally making progress, even if it is uneven and sometimes painfully slow. Our generation's challenge is to help the poorest of the poor to escape the misery of extreme poverty so that they may begin their own ascent up the ladder of economic development. The end of poverty, in this sense, is not only the end of extreme suffering but also the beginning of economic progress and of the hope and security that accompany economic development.

When I speak of the "end of poverty," therefore, I will be speaking of two closely related objectives. The first is to end the plight of one sixth of humanity that lives in extreme poverty and struggles daily for survival. Everybody on Earth can and should enjoy basic standards of nutrition, health, water and sanitation, shelter, and other minimum needs for survival, well-being, and participation in society. The second is to ensure that all of the world's poor, including those in moderate poverty, have a chance to climb the ladder of development. As a global society, we should ensure that the international rules of the game in economic management do not advertently or inadvertently set snares along the lower rungs of the ladder in the form of inadequate development assistance, protectionist trade barriers, destabilizing global financial practices, poorly designed rules for intellectual property, and the like, that prevent the low-income world from climbing up the rungs of development.

The end of extreme poverty is at hand—within our generation— but only if we grasp the historic opportunity in front of us. There already exists a bold set of commitments that is halfway to that target: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the eight goals that all 191 UN member states unanimously agreed to in 2002 by signing the United Nations Millennium Declaration. These goals are important targets for cutting poverty in half by the year 2015, compared with a baseline of 1990. They are bold but achievable, even if dozens of countries are not yet on track to achieve them. They represent a crucial mid-station on the path to ending extreme poverty by the year 2025. And the rich countries have repeatedly promised to help the poor countries to achieve them through increased development assistance and improved global rules of the game. (Sachs, pages 24-25)

However, this new rally cry is not without its critics, especially those who work at grass roots development, not for the poor but with and among the poor. Bunker Roy, founder of the Barefoot College and chairman of the Global Rain Water Harvesting Collective is one such critic. Turn to the Additional Reading section at the end of this unit and read the article about Jeffrey Sachs titled "The Millennium Man." Also read "Why the Millennium Goals Won't Work," written by Bunker Roy.

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

Imagine you were a panel member judging a debate in which Mr. Sachs and Mr. Roy present their sides of the Millennium Goals story. You now are called upon to voice your opinion as to who wins the debate. Who would you choose and for what reasons?

Putting all debates aside, how are the world's governments doing at achieving the eight millennium goals? Is this initiative truly going to end up different from all the other grand statements, which according to sources already cited have pretty much been a total failure, or in the words spoken by Nelson Mandela in 2001: "*Will the legacy of our generation be more than a series of broken promises?*" Let us look at the 2005 report on the progress made as regards the Millennium Goals:

| Global and Regional Progress in Achieving Selected MDG Targets by 2015 | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Region | Halving Poverty | Halving Hunger | Primary Education for All | Reduce Child Mortality by Two Thirds | Halve Share Without Access to Safe Drinking Water | Halve Share Without Access to Sanitation |
| Arab States | achieved | reversal | on track | lagging | n. a. | n. a. |
| Central/Eastern Europe and CIS | reversal | n. a. | achieved | lagging | achieved | n. a. |
| East Asia/Pacific | achieved | on track | achieved | lagging | lagging | lagging |
| Latin America/Caribbean | lagging | on track | achieved | on track | on track | lagging |
| South Asia | on track | lagging | lagging | lagging | on track | lagging |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | reversal | reversal | lagging | lagging | lagging | reversal |
| WORLD | on track | lagging | lagging | lagging | on track | lagging |

Source: UNDP

It is good to see that some of the targets have already been achieved. But as you study the above table, you might identify areas of deep concern in regards to our progress. Personally, I am concerned by the fact that so much of the world is lagging on several of the goals, and in the actual reversal of progress in some areas!

According to the World Bank, less than one-fifth of all countries are currently on target to reduce child and maternal mortality and provide access to water and sanitation, while even fewer are on course to contain HIV, malaria and other major diseases slated for reduction under the Millennium Development Goals.

While some countries and regions have made significant gains in poverty reduction and the world as a whole is generally believed to be on track for meeting the Millennium Goal targets set for poverty reduction and clean drinking water, the situation is less hopeful for the other goals and targets, including those on hunger, primary education, child mortality and access to sanitation.

The World Health Organization estimates that to sustain a public health system, a minimum of \$30-40 per person is necessary, but in the world's poorest countries, where GDP per capita is typically in the low hundreds, even this rather modest level of spending will be impossible without outside investment. In 2003, donor countries gave \$68 billion in official development assistance, or just 0.25 percent of their gross national incomes, far short of the 0.7 percent of national income goal that was initially adopted at the 1970 U.N. General Assembly and broadly reaffirmed in 2002 at major international conferences. Only five countries have met the 0.7 percent target so far: Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.³

Five fundamental approaches to bring about development and social change

I consider there to be five fundamental approaches used around the world to bring about development and social change:

1. Macro Economic Development
2. National Infrastructure and Human Resource Development
3. Political Development (reformation/replacement of power structures)
4. Rehabilitation and Subsidized Services
5. Sustainable Community Development

Macro Economic Development is an approach which usually takes place at a national or regional level through organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, or through bi-lateral agreements made between governments. Economic development is considered to be a sustainable increase in living standards so that a society is able to provide for all its other social needs, such as better education, health, as well as environmental protection. There are numerous strategies for economic development at a national level. Infusions and loans of cash capital for growing manufacturing, trade and other types of business ventures are very common, as are investments in harvesting natural resources. The buying of technology from and joint-venture operations with multi-national corporations is a well-known strategy. The privatization of inefficient government industrial ventures is common. A rapidly growing strategy which is adopted by the private sector by and large is what is known as labor

³ <http://www.worldwatch.org/features/vsow/2005/09/07/>
Development and Social Change, Version 2.5

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outsourcing, where companies in the West will have people in other parts of the world (where labor is cheaper) manufacture goods and provide services which are then returned to western countries and sold.

Currently there is a heated debate going on around the world about what is referred to as “globalization.” The International Monetary Fund, which is very pro-globalization, defines globalization as “the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services, free international capital flows, and more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology”. Meanwhile, the not-so-pro International Forum on Globalization defines it as “*the present worldwide drive toward a globalized economic system dominated by supranational corporate trade and banking institutions that are not accountable to democratic processes or national governments.*”

David Korten, a name long associated with economic development around the world, has emerged as one of the world’s leading critics of the “false god” of economic globalization. In the mid-1990s he wrote a book titled *When Corporations Rule the World* that has provided much energy and statistical leverage to opponents of globalization. In his most recent book *The Great Turning*, Korten continues his analysis:

I had realized even in the early 1980s that critiques of conventional growth-driven development models of the previous decade had influenced the rhetoric of development, but not the practice. Practitioners almost inevitably fell back on the frame of a discredited theory because they had no other theory to guide them.

In its simplest terms, the theory underlying corporate-led economic globalization posits that human progress is best advanced by deregulating markets and eliminating economic borders to let unrestrained market forces determine economic priorities, allocate resources, and drive economic growth. It sounds like decentralization, but the reality is quite different. A market without rules and borders increases the freedom of the biggest and most economically powerful players to become even bigger and more powerful at the expense of the freedom and right to self-determination of people and communities. Corporations and financial markets make the decisions and reap the profits. Communities are left to deal with mounting human and environmental costs.

These costs have awakened millions of people to the reality that the earth of a community depends in substantial measure on its ability to set its own economic priorities and control its own economic resources. Strong communities and material sufficiency are the true foundation of economic prosperity and security and an essential source of meaning. Street protests are one response to this awakening. Calls for reform of corporate legal structures are another. Less visible, but even more important, is a spreading commitment to rebuild local economies and communities from the bottom up. (David Korten, *The Great Turning*, page 13)

Although globalization is not a development assistance strategy *per se*, it is supported by much of the macro economic development sector and heatedly opposed by those who work at more grass-roots levels and assert that it destroys many local economies and livelihoods.

The major assumptions behind macro economic development are that the accumulation of material goods is an indication of healthy development; that economic development at a national level will in fact “trickle down” to meaningful economic benefit at the household level.

The major dilemmas are that consumerism (the purchase of material goods) often takes place at the expense of other social concerns such as health, education, family stability, etc. The closing of state-owned industries causes extensive employment loss, which is in fact not regained in the private sector, especially for the elderly and physically impaired. But above all, the rich seem to get richer and the poor only get poorer.

Think About It

Answer Box # 8

- 1) Give an example of how the Macro Economic Development approach is being used in your own context.
- 2) How would you generally assess the effectiveness of this approach in your context?

National Infrastructure and Human Resource Development is a macro level approach similar to what we have looked at under economic development. International large scale grants or loans are provided for the purpose of building national health systems, communication, transport, higher education,

subsidized housing, etc. Sending people overseas for university education is a common strategy that is used. Importing sophisticated technology is another.

The major assumptions behind this approach is that national infrastructure will in fact support economic development and that the benefit will be accessed by all, including the poorest people.

The major dilemmas are that efforts are often beyond the national capacity to financially sustain and technically maintain the new infrastructure; powerful elites are often in control of the process and corruption is very common.

Think About It

Answer Box # 9

- 1) Give an example of how the National Infrastructure and Human Resource development approach is being used in your own context.
- 2) How would you generally assess the effectiveness of this approach in your context?

Political Development is an approach which seeks to either reform current power structures and the people managing them, or see that they are replaced by others—peacefully or otherwise. Good governance is necessary for good development to occur. This is as true at the local level as it is at the national level. Corruption, favoritism and greed are major constraints to development efforts. Common activities in this approach are the promotion of western democracy, forced regime change, development of legal systems, election monitoring and so on.

The major assumptions behind this approach are that powerful people actually have the best interests of their people at heart and truly want to change, or that in replacing them, better people will take over who will not follow the same path and example of the former tyrants; also, that western-style democracy works equally well outside of western cultural settings and value parameters.

The major dilemmas are that such powers are usually very well entrenched and show little sincere desire to change. Using force to bring about political change often causes a chain reaction of retribution and revenge, as well as encouraging others to use similar tactics to assert themselves in the future. The old saying holds true that power corrupts, and like the dog that once tastes fresh blood, no chicken is safe from that point on. Another dilemma is that western-style democracy is not as attractive to others as the West assumes it will and should be.

Think About It

Answer Box # 10

- 1) Give an example of how the Political Development approach is being used in your own context.
- 2) How would you generally assess the effectiveness of this approach in your context?

The **Rehabilitation and Subsidized Services** approach can be considered very close to relief activity. Rehabilitation helps a person or group of people to regain the position they had before some crises struck them. For example, many thousands of people in Northeast Pakistan who suffered through a disastrous earthquake in 2005 were still living in tents over a year later. Their homes were destroyed, water systems wiped out, animals killed and fields left in ruins. Stabilizing their situation in terms of basic survival needs was the immediate response to their situation, but helping them rebuild homes, roads, clinics, shops, etc is what we call rehabilitation. It is the attempt to get them back to the point they were at before the earthquake struck.

Subsidized service is often the next step taken after rehabilitation of basic infrastructure is completed or well underway. The local economy may still not be strong enough to support children going to school, paying medical fees, buying seed and fertilizer, paying rent of shop and small scale manufacturing space, etc. as it had in the past. And therefore, while the economy rebuilds, partial payment is provided by external donors, often according to a sliding scale based upon people's ability to pay.

The major assumption behind this approach is that people are not able to provide for themselves, but given temporary assistance, they will be able to and want to do so in the future.

The major dilemmas the approach presents are that it tends to create unhealthy dependency and does not address the underlying root causes of poverty.

Think About It

Answer Box # 11

- 1) Give an example of how the Rehabilitation and Subsidized Services approach is being used in your own context.
- 2) How would you generally assess the effectiveness of this approach in your context?

Sustainable Community Development is the approach by which a group of interdependent people identify, mobilize and supplement their already existing capacities and resources to achieve or acquire something of common value and the means to maintain that benefit into the future. It is development carried out by local people, not for them. This kind of development effort is very process-oriented and deals extensively with values, motivations and the ways in which people interact. It tends not to be technology oriented, or at least not beyond the level of local capacity to understand and maintain it. Although it obviously involves material resources, it is biased toward maximizing what can be secured or generated locally.

The process starts with assisting people to visualize a state of being which they value. It then leads them in identifying the means by which they can achieve their aspirations and deal with the challenges they face in doing so. It generates action plans for cooperative change and includes periodic exercises for reflecting upon and learning from experience in order to modify the current process and inform future change efforts.

Of course, community development is a somewhat relative concept. First of all, what do we mean by “community?” Internet chat sites are called “virtual communities.” The United Nations is at times referred to as representing the “global community.” When we use the term we are referring to a group of people who live in a small enough geographic area so as to relate to one another on a very regular basis and who depend upon one another in very obvious and tangible ways.

Sustainable community development, by and large, is focused at ensuring that at least people’s basic needs being met.

The major assumptions behind this approach are that community groups have the interest, commitment, and capacity to help themselves; and that the best way to aid the poor is to empower them directly rather than wait for benefit to trickle down from national and regional macro development efforts.

The major dilemmas are that local people often find the needed resources and influence to change are difficult to obtain and control; the process of moving from feeling dependent and disempowered to becoming self-reliant takes time and patience.

Think About It

Answer Box # 12

- 1) Give an example of how the Sustainable Community Development approach is being used in your own context.
- 2) How would you generally assess the effectiveness of this approach in your context?

Some might consider **Advocacy** to also be a fundamental approach to development and social change. Advocacy is activity focused upon putting pressure on governments, and at times large corporations to change, establish or follow through on policies which are favorable to people in need. The well known singer Bono of the rock band U2 is a very visible example of this. Because of his fame, he is able to gain access to rich and powerful people around the world and press them to respond to human need. He is also able to influence and rally many people who consider themselves fans to also engage in advocacy and activism. However, I do not include it in my list because its focus is to provoke people to act, but in itself it is not an implementation approach.

Some might question why the **Human Rights** approach is also not on my list. I view most human rights activism similar to advocacy. It is an effort to expose, educate, embarrass, litigate, etc. political entities to follow universal standards established by the United Nations. In most cases it is pressing

governments to follow through on what they already agreed to do when they signed the UN Declaration of Human Rights (attached as additional reading). Therefore, I include human rights activism under the political development approach. I personally favor the indicators listed in that declaration to what the UNDP has limited itself to in their definition of human development because the Human Rights document speaks to multiple issues of justice, well-being and dignity, about which I think God is very concerned.

Is there any reason for the poor to have hope?

I don't know how you are feeling at this point, but if I were you and did not know about all the information and reflection that the rest of this course includes, I would be feeling quite sad, if not downright depressed! Is there any reason for the poor to have any hope for their future? I believe there are such reasons, but please read these words carefully—we must not underestimate the factors and powers that are keeping very poor people in the miserable condition they find themselves. If poverty were easily overcome with some sort of “quick fix” solution, spiritual or otherwise, then people around the world would not remain so poor as they are, now would they? It is not as if no one has been trying to help them! But we dare not raise the hopes of suffering people yet again by making the same kind of grand statements, thin promises and hollow assumptions that we have been studying in this unit.

One of most recent books I have been reading on this subject, and one of the most critical analyses of the failures of the development sector I have come across in awhile, was written by a team of Christian professionals—one a professor of economics and social philosophy, another a social worker-writer and another a professor of political science. The title of their book offers us the paradox we need to move forward—*Hope in Troubled Times*. They paint a not-too-positive picture of past and present attempts at initiating and sustaining significant development and social change. And yet, those authors chose a title that emphasizes *Hope*.

In the face of seemingly autonomous forces, or powers of domination, we can feel helpless and our hope can easily disappear. Where then is hope to be found today?

In our view, hope does not lie in overthrowing technology, the economy, science, the market, the state, or even the corporation as such. The real enemy has deeper roots. The enemy's deepest power, as we try to demonstrate, lies in the stubbornness of the human heart. It is a power vested in people like us, people who are tempted again and again to elevate human-made powers or institutions, enthroning them as forces of liberation and deliverance, and thereby paving the way for their gradual development into tyrannical idols. Campaigns that seek to eradicate the structures of society therefore almost always miss the mark. They can even pull people into the very force field they wish to oppose. The enthusiasm of a new revolution easily disappears in a new iconoclasm. Full-scale, radical revolution often amounts to a prostration before perpetual violence, an idol even more tyrannical and merciless than the forces of progress.

Some in our society have lost all hope. Deathly afraid of possible escalations of violence or falling back into poverty, or feeling helpless in relation to the ongoing ruin of the environment, they have become pessimists or fatalists. Such calamities may indeed come, but they will strike only if we continue to sustain the forces threatening to make them realities.

When tyrannical powers, with their absolute claims and powerful temptations, come into focus, our courage may sink down to our toes. But let us remember the lesson of the stone. Centuries ago a young, unarmed shepherd boy named David found a way to conquer a seemingly unbeatable giant, Goliath, by accurately throwing a small stone. Like Goliath, today's awful powers and belief systems also have points of vulnerability. Let us never underestimate what ordinary people can do today when confronting oppressive powers, as David did against the vicious warrior Goliath. But that means we must first discern the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the giants taunting us before we sling the suitable stone. And let us always be mindful that, to some extent, the real enemy resides within ourselves: within our own thoughts, hearts, imaginations, and lifestyles.

Times that deserve the label “a world possessed” are not times without hope. Helplessness, expertise, and mass revolution threaten to extinguish hope. But genuine hope is deeper than these threats. It flares up just when the night is at its darkest. (Goudzwaard, Vander Vennen, Van Heemst, *Hope in Troubled Times*, page 30)

I think the optimistic “Millennium Man” Jeffrey Sachs would agree with them. Another way of putting it would be to use a familiar saying – it is better to light a candle than to continue shouting against the darkness.

Unit 1 – An Introduction to Development and Social Change

There is one more approach that I do not include in this unit, but it seems the best way to describe what this course is about. It is called **Transformational Development**. Of the five approaches outlined above, I feel it is most aligned with Sustainable Community Development, but it does not exclude involvement in the others. I believe it offers perhaps the greatest hope for bringing about significant and lasting change for those individuals and families that more often than not, are left with pockets still empty once the development and aid industry has long come and gone. We will look in depth at what this approach involves as we progress through the course. For now, let me give you World Vision's definition of what it means:

Transformational Development is a process through which children, families and communities move toward fullness of life with dignity, justice, peace and hope. The scope of Transformational Development includes social, spiritual, economic, political and environmental aspects of life at the local, national, regional and global levels. The Transformational Development process recognizes that God is already involved among the poor and non-poor. Human transformation is a continuous process of profound and holistic change brought about by the work of God. Hence, the process and the impact of Transformational Development must be consistent with the principles and values of the Kingdom of God.

Readings

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law, Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations, Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin,

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property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence. (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country. (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Millennium Man

Stephanie Nolen, From *Saturday's Globe and Mail*

Sauri, Kenya — Jeffrey Sachs is standing in the thick red dirt of a field in Kenya, surrounded by gleaming waist-high cassava plants, and one begins to picture him in a white lab coat.

Imagine him lifting a narrow test tube to the light, squinting one blue eye while he swirls the contents: Sprinkle in a fistful of fertilizer, stuff in the gossamer panels of a mosquito net. Scrape in a plate of beans, some plastic tarp, a pill or two, some gaunt and weary Kenyan grannies. Add water. Shake briskly.

End poverty.

The village of Sauri, not far from the shores of Lake Victoria, is the famed U.S. economist's test tube, the pilot site for an audacious experiment in poverty alleviation he plans to roll out all over Africa. It is Sauri that, a year and a half after the experiment began, is showing the results Prof. Sachs says vindicate his claims: Malaria is down by half, school performance has shot up, harvests have tripled. "Things are very different for us now," Edwina Odit, a hunched and weathered 58-year-old farmer, said with simple understatement.

The conventional wisdom on aid these days is that it doesn't work. Only trade and economic growth will lift people out of poverty. It's the "rising tide" theory, that the prosperity born of globalization will come. Although Prof. Sachs is a fan of the free market, he argues — everywhere he can, including in his bestseller *The End of Poverty*, reissued in paperback last week and this week edged out by Adam Hochschild's anti-slavery chronicle, *Bury The Chains*, for the annual Lionel Gelber Book Award — that market remedies don't apply for the 1.6 billion poorest people in the world, including most of sub-Saharan Africa.

Caught in a trap of depleting their limited resources just to subsist, he says, they are in no place to benefit from trade, and in fact get steadily poorer. Not only do they have no boat to catch the tide, they are stranded hundreds of kilometres inland, in dusty, arid villages. And so, he says, they need good old-fashioned aid to get them "on to the first rung of the ladder."

But they don't need multimillion-dollar World Bank megaprojects. Rather, the tab in Sauri clocks in at about \$100 (U.S.) a head — enough money for better seeds, some fertilizer, a bed net to fend off malarial mosquitoes, a share in a protected water source, a school lunch for the kids, a solar lantern. Just that, more or less, is enough to stop people from deforesting or exhausting their soil, to give them a food surplus and some crops to grow for cash, better health and the energy to stay awake at school. Not a handout, Prof. Sachs says, but an investment — in simple, proven technologies, to increase productivity and access to markets. His ideas are a return to what is viewed as the failed idea of, well, giving poor people things.

If he were anybody else, his plan wouldn't be getting any attention at all. Over the past 25 years, Jeffrey Sachs has done the near-impossible, injecting the world of economics with a quality that verges on glamour. He is the jet-set, go-to economist, with the ear of governments and powerful people, squashing

inflation here and yanking a creaking communist economy into the market era there. Tickets to his lectures are scalped on eBay.

There is certainly nothing glamorous about his appearance. He's short and slight, with a big head and puff hair, appalling fashion sense and an astonishingly loud voice that twangs with a middle-American accent. But he is a veteran at radically reshaping countries and economies. In 1985, as a tenured professor at Harvard University at the unprecedented age of 28, he was listening in on a seminar about the 25,000-per-cent inflation that then plagued Bolivia. Then he stood up and said to the visiting Bolivian economists, in effect, "I can fix that."

Skeptical, but in no position to turn down help, the Bolivian government let him at it — and, to hear Prof. Sachs tell the story, in remarkably short order, he had done a couple of fancy manoeuvres with the foreign-exchange reserves and had the country stabilized.

Before long, he was working his magic on Ecuador and Brazil — and then the leaders of the Solidarity movement in Poland came calling. For them, Prof. Sachs developed a strategy that came to be called (though never by him) "shock therapy." He was the first person to posit how a centrally planned economy could be merged with a free market, a strategy that boiled down to "quickly." He prescribed the immediate removal of all price controls and subsidies, and the opening of the borders to free trade. Within months, the store shelves were full, the zloty had stabilized and small businesses proliferated, giving Poland the fastest-growing economy in Eastern Europe.

Soon, Prof. Sachs was advising every place from Mongolia to Estonia, most of it with remarkable success — until he went to Russia. Again, he prescribed shock therapy, and then-president Boris Yeltsin embraced the idea, but things didn't go as planned: The ruble collapsed, and the oligarchs, as they would come to be known, looted state-owned enterprise. Prof. Sachs puts the blame for the failure on the fact that most of the reformers were removed from their posts early on, and the international community failed to finance the transition. Regardless, his reputation took a hit.

As his activity in Europe wound down, he developed a new awareness of the problems plaguing the least-developed countries, particularly in Africa, where 10 million people a year die from easily prevented or treated conditions such as malnutrition or malaria, whose underlying cause is extreme poverty (usually defined as living on less than \$1 a day).

The United Nations General Assembly had adopted a list of targets, the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015. But it was clear by 2002 that many of the poorest countries, particularly in Africa, were not on track to meet the targets and, in many cases, were headed in the other direction.

That year, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Prof. Sachs, then the director of a big-budget Columbia University think-tank called the Earth Institute, as his special adviser on the Millennium Goals, charged with drawing up a blueprint, complete with price tags, to meet them.

He delivered his plan in January, 2005. But he added a twist: He wanted to demonstrate, in his test-tube villages, that it could be done.

They started in Sauri because it had so many of the typical characteristics of extreme poverty. Two-thirds of its people were living on less than \$1 a day, a quarter of them with HIV-AIDS, almost half infected with malaria parasites and half the children victims of chronic poor nutrition. In addition, the community had some history of working with international organizations, which Prof. Sachs believed would remove several steps of groundwork. In August, 2004, they met with the villagers, whom Prof. Sachs said were wildly enthusiastic. They also got a warm nod from the government of Kenya, which promised to support the project's infrastructure needs, with paved roads and an extended electrical grid. Medical advisers began testing everyone for malaria. The soil experts started analyzing samples.

Six months after Sauri, they went to Koraro in the desolate Ethiopian highlands. And now, the Millennium Villages Project is six months into setting up in Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda. Each village is located in a distinct environmental zone. Some have farmers, some nomadic herders; some are chronically short of water, some in an equatorial flog. Each poses particular problems in terms of disease, agriculture and infrastructure. These factors of geography help explain why so much of Africa remains terribly poor: Having endemic malaria all year long and being 15,000 kilometres from a railway line are huge issues, not just a local quirk.

Work has also begun on expanding the Sauri interventions to 10 surrounding villages, and in Malawi the plan has been rolled out to 13 villages around the original one. The goal is to cover 560,000 people by the end of this year. "We're running because we think every country needs this push. And we're running because we're trying an interesting thought experiment — treating the Millennium Development Goals as real and not just a nice thing," Prof. Sachs said during a recent visit to Kenya. "I'm kind of desperately rushing, hurrying everyone to the point of distraction, because I'm watching the clock — because every year lost is 10 million deaths. I can't believe we live in a world like that. I can't understand why it's not the biggest damn cause on the planet."

There is an undeniable proselytizer's edge to his words: He has come, at 51, to his purpose. In a long career of dramatic global action, he is now engaged in what he has decided is the most important thing being done by anyone, anywhere.

His work in Latin America and Eastern Europe gave him ideas — that simple instruments can be used to effect great change. For example, debt cancellation is not only morally right, but also the only economically sensible course for a country such as Kenya, he said. The country cannot hope to pay back the massive debts that cripple its economy, incurred by previous, unelected regimes. And the key to development is not just to grow more food or improve public health, but also to do all these things together, all at once. Shock altruism, if you will.

Jeffrey Sachs likes to tell the story of the questions he asked during the "eye-opening" first meeting he held with the villagers in Sauri and some of the "big brains" from his Earth Institute in 2004.

"How many know what a bed net is?" he asked. All hands up.

"How many use one?" No hands.

"Why not?" Sir, we can't afford them, one woman said.

"Would you use one if you had one?" Every hand.

He came to realize that Sauri's impoverishment had happened in living memory. Older people remembered when the harvests were bigger, when there was a clinic, when they could afford to buy fertilizer. He was also struck by "the degree of engagement of the community in their problems, their readiness to chip in, their energy." By the end of that first visit, the people of Sauri had organized themselves into committees — one for electricity, one for clean water, one on AIDS, one on agriculture. Soon, everyone in Sauri had a bed net. A core group of farmers (mostly women) was given some seeds and fertilizer and taught the latest techniques in how to use them. They also were shown how to rotate their maize crop with fallow crops to put nitrogen back in the soil.

Which brings us back to Prof. Sachs in his metaphorical lab coat in the cassava field. A few weeks ago, he made one of his regular returns to Kenya to check on its progress. He arrived with many of his hired experts, and, rather more incongruously, a large group of ruddy-faced American millionaires. "I didn't anticipate two years ago that we'd be going this way," he said. Originally, he envisioned the Villages Project operating with money from donors that were rich nations, not rich people, but only Japan was willing to chip in. Frustrated, he confided in a wealthy Columbia trustee who suggested that he pilot his ideas in a village, and offered to foot the bill. Soon, more donors came forward; they can sponsor a village of 5,000 people for \$300,000.

On this trip, Prof. Sachs was accompanied by New Jersey leveraged-buyout king Ray Chambers, with whom he co-founded Millennium Promise (a charity to finance the villages), and a cotillion of other would-be donors. With them were specialists in malaria, soil and livestock. Also on the trip were Prof. Sachs's wife, Sonia, a pediatrician he has put in charge of the villages' health programming, and his daughter, Hannah, 10, a sharp-eyed observer. When one of the intrigued millionaires asked if she had been to Africa before, Hannah patiently explained that she has been to Kenya so many times that she has lost count, and more than 60 other countries in her short life. And no, she didn't have a favourite, though she didn't like China much, because they wanted her to eat turtle.

They started off in Nairobi, where Prof. Sachs met ambassadors, the representatives of key donor agencies and then the Kenyan cabinet. A short flight west brought them to Sauri, where they commandeered two dozen trucks to tote the entourage. One day in Sauri is much like the next, so this sudden white influx brought most of the village out of their fields to watch.

"I would like Prof. Sachs to look at the faces of Sauri people. They are shining because they are not hungry any more," Monicah Oketch, an imposing woman who is the chair of the local council, boomed in Kiswahili. Mama Monicah, as Prof. Sachs calls her, knows how to work an audience. She seized on this opportunity, determined not to let these rich white people go anywhere until they had heard what she needs. Sauri is grateful to have surplus grain, she said, but has no safe place to store it. Villagers need help to build one. They need a decent road too. "We have already been taught how to farm and we're going to do it all the days. But now we are looking forward to having milk [from dairy cattle] in the community. And we want to have electricity here in Sauri, so we can see the faces of you, our friends, on TV!" At the end of her tirade, she folded a laughing Prof. Sachs, who is about half her size, into a vast embrace. "Be ready," she quipped. "I always like short people like you!"

It was clear from their faces that many of the rich folks found the new, transformed Sauri still fairly horrifying. But just as Monicah Oketch described it, Sauri had a lot to show — a pile of surplus grain, a shiny new clinic, a little building optimistically labelled "computer room" (though the computer has yet to come, and the clinic is the only building in the village with electricity, from a small solar-panel system).

People in Sauri are quick to talk about how much has changed. Edwina Odit, for example, declares herself very happy. "We got food and planted fallow, which we have never done before. And we were given ground nuts and soy beans [to plant], although these were destroyed by drought. It is a big difference compared to past years."

Ms. Odit had grown 10 bags of maize, compared to three the year before. She gave one bag to the school, where it will be used to make the school lunches for her six orphaned grandchildren. "The project gave us fertilizer, and that was the biggest factor in the high yield," she said. "Plus, we used to plant just anyhow. After the project came, they taught us how to use ropes in spacing, and when we did this, the result was more harvest." It was the first instruction in farming technique she had ever had.

"When I was very young, I saw one big harvest or another, but since I was married, I have not seen a harvest like this. . . . I longed to buy fertilizer, but had no means."

Because she now sleeps under a bed net with her grandchildren, no one has had malaria in a year — a miracle in itself. There have been no costly trips to the regional hospital, no one rendered unable to help with the chores. When someone does fall ill with a minor ailment, they go for free treatment at the little local clinic, built with the assistance of the Millennium Project and staffed by health workers it has trained and paid. Three of Ms. Odit's grandchildren are in school. But three others have finished the six years of primary education that are free in Kenya, and sit at home all day because she cannot afford to have them continue. Her big goal for the five years of the Millennium Project is to grow cash crops to raise the money to send them all to secondary school. "Then they could help me in the future, and help themselves."

But not all is as described in the Millennium Project's glossy brochures. Not everyone in Sauri had such a bumper harvest. Millicent Omondi, for example, was hit by parasitic weeds, harvested nothing and has no idea how she will feed her family this year. Prof. Sachs's staff likes to talk about how the primary school has jumped in the district-wide rankings to 7 out of 354 from 198, based on province-wide exams that all children write, because providing kids with a nutritious lunch, often the only meal they get all day, allows them to concentrate and guarantees better attendance. In fact, the lunches began before Prof. Sachs arrived on the scene, under the auspices of a determined headmistress. Still, the jump in rankings supports his thesis that school feeding is cheap and has a huge impact.

And while he has experts on each of the village's visible problems — the soil guys, the water guys, the livestock guys — there is a certain absence of discussion about some of the core issues that underlie the situation here. For example, there is no question that the imbalance of power between the genders is a key factor in keeping women trapped in poverty: They are infected with HIV by their husbands, whom they cannot persuade to use condoms; inherited, at their husbands' deaths, by brothers or cousins, along with all the other household goods; the source of most of the labour but prevented by custom from owning property (and thus from using it as collateral); dying in huge numbers in childbirth because they cannot afford to go to the hospital.

Prof. Sachs has not involved big brains in gender in his project. There is constant talk of fallow crops, but no conversation, on this trip, about how to address the systemic oppression of women. Co-ordinator Patrick Mutuo suggests that, if the women have better harvests and earn more money, they will have greater autonomy.

Still, life in Sauri is far better than it was in 2004. Even so, the Sachs formula runs completely counter to most of the ideas that now dominate international development. Many even see it as heretical, coming from a man who has championed the free market. In particular, the idea of buying so much stuff goes against the grain. It is derided by all those who say that 50 years of aid to Africa has been squandered by dictators, bloated bureaucracies and corrupt leaders, leaving the continent worse off than ever.

That kind of talk enrages Prof. Sachs. "The whole development discussion has become unhinged from ground realities. There is endless discussion about process and corruption and governance, as if these are realities of life in Africa — and it's all deflected attention away from things like growing food, and drinking water," he said. He sees condescension at the root of the argument that all aid is futile. "It starts from the fundamental idea that the problem in Africa is that people just don't take care of themselves or their money, and if we could just give them courses in decency. . . ." "The problem here," he adds with a sigh, "is extreme poverty and biophysical conditions — soil depletion, malarial endemicity. It's not about people's decency or not. That's the case for aid."

His argument has found some support from British Prime Minister Tony Blair and other European leaders, who have proposed a hike in aid to Africa. Britain and France have committed to increasing their aid spending to 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product. However, the biggest donors, the United States and Japan, flatly reject the idea. Washington, in particular, continues to harp on about corruption and waste — the issues that so gall Prof. Sachs. Canada also refuses to commit to the 0.7 target, and it increasingly emphasizes "program support" — giving a government an annual cheque, in essence, to bolster its budget. Kenyans are the ones best able to determine their needs, the thinking goes. The mantra in development is that this will help governments develop a greater capacity to govern.

Prof. Sachs considers this cockamamie thinking too. "Capacity for what? Deliver what? Train people with no supplies? Capacity has to be in the context of a real project." Otherwise, he said, aid will be wasted. "The original good idea is to move beyond individual donors funding individual projects thought up in northern capitals. But to hand over a cheque and say, 'We trust you to make good use of it.' There's not a government in the world, not yours and not mine, that I would trust with that. That's not how good deals are made.

"We need larger aid flows, but with strict accountability. A cheque to the bottom line of the budget is inherently untrackable." He said aid must go for "direct deliverables," subject to straightforward monitoring: So many thousand dollars to purchase so many bed nets, resulting in so many fewer cases of malaria, for example — rather than an overall grant to a ministry of health for an anti-malaria campaign.

The accounting on the Sachs End Poverty Plan breaks down like this: It's going to take about \$100 per person per year. Prof. Sachs said local governments, and in a few cases the people involved, can afford to contribute about \$45. Donor countries already give about \$10. That leaves \$45 more per person. Add that all up, and it's \$150-billion of additional development assistance every year. Not that much, really, Prof. Sachs argued. It's far more than the governments of poor countries themselves could ever afford but, as he likes to point out, rather less than the \$900-billion world military budget or the \$30-trillion combined economy of developed nations.

"When you're below subsistence, you can't save for the future. You have to use all your income to stay alive. So what happens? They mine the environment, take the nutrients out of the soil, cut down the trees, exhaust the fisheries — what looks like a constant level of poverty is in fact losing ground. "But if you're above survival level, anywhere in the world, then you can save. You can do microfinance. Instead of using your whole farm for maize, you can do dairy or beekeeping. You go from being subsistence farmers to an agricultural community with a mix of income-generating activities. You're on the first rung of the ladder. You start to get a surplus to save." When Prof. Sachs says it, loudly and at top speed, it all sounds irrefutably logical. He said the criticism he hears most often is that the program lacks community participation (another mantra these days in the development world). The plan is being imposed by outsiders, and therefore doomed to fail from a fatal lack of "buy-in." He dismissed this charge as nonsensical. "Yes, we can bring fertilizer, but 1,000 farmers have to be weeding and distributing it."

Yet James Shikwati, an economist who heads the Inter-Regional Economic Network in Nairobi, is not impressed: If you turn up in front of a whole lot of people plagued by malaria and offer bed nets, he said, of course they will want bed nets. That does not mean they share your whole future vision.

And the program does raise long-term questions: What happens in five years? Is that enough time to make enough change, solid enough that the kind of sideswiping events that lurk in a place such as Sauri can't undermine it?

What happens, for example, when Edwina Odit's granddaughters start secondary school, but then have sex with an older village man to get money to pay for textbooks and end up with HIV? What happens when Ms. Odit needs surgery, can't afford it, dies, and there is no one left to use the new fertilizer and the farming techniques and grow more food? What will carry them through a season — or more — when the rains fail? Or when locusts come? Or when they grow ground nuts, but every other village does too, and the price collapses?

And on a larger scale, there is the bottom-line question: Where will the money come from? Angered by the millionaires' tours of model villages, Prof. Shikwati said Prof. Sachs is "turning Africans, and particularly these people in Sauri, into wild animals to be looked at. They lose human dignity. . . . [The way] you get out of poverty is not supposed to be an undignified strategy." But Prof. Sachs said the real onus is on donor countries. He heaps scorn on Canada, for the failure to meet 0.7, and on the Group of Eight industrial countries in general, which he said outright lie about their commitments to ending poverty, making huge pledges at summits and refusing to pony up any of the money. Rather than Prof. Sachs's rhetoric about the moral imperative to end poverty, Prof. Shikwati would rather talk business. "My counterapproach is, find the people who say [that] if they come to Africa, they will make profits. They will solve Africa's problems."

But Prof. Sachs said that argument lacks context: Profit-oriented investment is irrelevant in Sauri until the playing field is far more level. And with the same brazen confidence that has carried him through 20 years of telling people what to do, he is sure his plan will work. "There's something real and achievable that's very magical," he confided over a bowl of dry corn flakes the day he left Kenya. "We're dealing with people of great dignity and great talent and great energy. They just happen to be poor, but they're not without talent and energy — they're just without means. "There's no such thing as a culture that doesn't care about their children and want them to be healthy. The idea that somehow the poor have themselves to blame and there's nothing we can do. . . . We got on the wrong track actually, and we never understood that there were things we could do with a little confidence in each other."

Stephanie Nolen is The *Globe and Mail's* correspondent in Africa. Article is from the Globe Website and is copyrighted <http://web.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060311.wxnen0311/BNStory/Front/home>

Why the Millennium Goals Won't Work

By Bunker Roy

International Herald Tribune

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2005

TILONIA, India In 1978, when Robert McNamara, then president of the World Bank, and McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation, spend a night at the Barefoot College here in Tilonia, McNamara asked a man whose family lived on much less than a dollar a day what he looked forward to in life. He smiled and said very quietly, "Two square meals a day."

Unit 1 – An Introduction to Development and Social Change

I remember the stunned silence even today and think back to that meeting when I read the United Nations' report on its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2005. For all the high-powered officials who put it together and for all the 25 UN agencies and international donor groups it depends on, it reflects a naïve and gullible attitude about poverty. The virtual reality in which its authors live, full of action plans, road maps and fact sheets, is frightening. They should listen to someone who has lived and worked for the last 34 years with the rural poor: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MDG No. 1) does not need indicators and databases. Only intellectual activists who have no idea how to reach the very poor need that.

So long as governments in the South are powerless to break the hold of corrupt private contractors and larcenous village-level politicians, the poor will never be free from want or free from fear, whatever the UN report envisions. The possible solution? Get every government in the South to work toward a Right to Information Act like India's. Ensure transparency and accountability, with rural communities putting pressure on government from below to disclose how money has been spent. Ask Transparency International. They will help.

If we want to achieve universal primary education (MDG No. 2), Unesco's approach has not worked. With 60 percent of the poorest rural children not going to school in the morning because they have to help with domestic chores, far from a solution, the development report offers only a demonstration of an inability to think out of the box. But there's a common-sense people's solution - have school at night. Few government teachers sleep in the villages. So train literate but unemployed rural youth as part-time "barefoot" teachers by the thousands, all over the world, to run the night schools. Are the development report's authors aware that the tremendous work that community-based groups are doing in primary education is not reflected in the official statistics either of Unesco or of governments? This is because their work is still not valued or recognized and never will be, because they are a threat to village officials who represent government and who do not believe in changing the status quo.

There are many innovative ways of empowering women (MDG No. 3) used by community-based groups the world over. In my experience, to the disbelief of urban paper-qualified experts, semiliterate rural women have become solar and water engineers and have begun repairing hand pumps, building rainwater tanks in schools, solar-electrifying villages and feeding data into computers without any technical help from outside.

Speaking of rainwater, it falls on the roofs of schools everywhere. It should be collected, by the billions of gallons, for drinking and flushing toilets. Expensive centralized technology solutions with hand pumps or piping systems must be phased out. This simple solution to meet a basic minimum need will advance not only MDG No. 7, which specifically calls for greater access to safe drinking water, but almost every other MDG as well, either directly or indirectly.

We do not need the World Health Organization in the villages: It's so simple and inexpensive to upgrade the skills of traditional midwives, improve their confidence and build on their knowledge. Where these small community-managed steps have been taken to involve the traditional medicinal systems, child mortality has fallen sharply, maternal health has improved and waterborne diseases have been tackled more effectively (MDG Nos. 4 through 6).

If the primary focus is really ending poverty, the partnerships we need to strengthen are of a sort other than trade (MDG No. 8): partnerships between poor communities so that they learn from one another and share traditional, practical knowledge and skills. Importing expensive, unworkable ideas, equipment and consultants from the North simply destroys the capacity of communities to help themselves. Any goal that is driven from the top by international donors and governments not accountable to the communities and without financial transparency is doomed to fail. That model encourages colossal falsification of figures, the excessive hiring of private consultants and contractors, conflicts of interest and a massive patronage system.

When poor communities think at the human level, all their goals are interconnected. But under the present top-down model, with the absence of a global grass-roots movement with the communities as equal partners, the goals have been broken up compartmentally into project mode, to suit donors and governments. That's the ultimate recipe for disaster, and that's why the MDGs will be achieved only on paper.

(Bunker Roy is the founder of the Barefoot College and chairman of the Global Rain Water Harvesting Collective.
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/13/opinion/edbunker.php>)

Development and Social Change

Unit 2

A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World – Part 1

God's original vision and what went wrong



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 2 - A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 1

God’s original vision and what went wrong

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Additional Readings:

“Creation, Care and Evangelical Relief and Development” by Calvin B. DeWitt

Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe God’s original and enduring vision for our world and the role given to us by God within it;
2. Describe how evil entered the world, what its consequence has been, how God has responded to it.

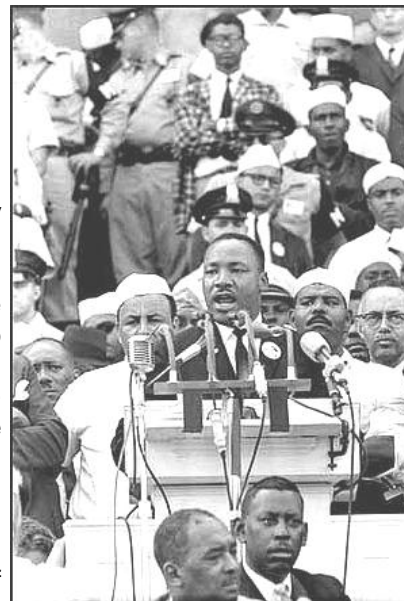
Introduction

The vision of God

The date was August 28, 1963. More than a quarter of a million people had gathered in the heart of Washington, D.C., the capitol of one of the world's then two superpowers. It was the largest social protest that nation had ever experienced. People from many different parts of America, from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds were there. National leaders, community leaders, doctors, lawyers, bus drivers, students, household servants had all come together for that moment in history.

The preacher from Alabama approached the podium. It had been a long road to this day. A journey which started when he spoke out in defense of a black woman named Rosa Parks who on a day in 1955 refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man who demanded it from her. It had been a long road for those he led, many of whom, at his side, had faced the beatings and imprisonment, threats, bitter words of hate, bombings and burning. It had been a long road and he knew there were many bridges yet to cross before the black citizens of America would be considered and treated equal to white citizens.

He stood there for a moment just looking. Spread out before him was a multitude of people. They grew quiet, and he spoke. He spoke not with bitterness but with anguish of soul. He spoke not with fear but with inner strength tempered by accustomed threat and repercussion. He spoke not out of despair but of hope mingled with the experience of painstaking progress. And as he concluded, Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke words which will forever be regarded as some of the most powerful and liberating words to have been given voice in the history of humankind.



. . . And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and 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 injustice, 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 will one day 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* today! I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a *dream* today! I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning: *My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and 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! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!!*"

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

Re-read Dr. King's speech, and as you do so, try to visualize the setting, the masses of people tuning their ears to each word as he spoke them. Then pause. What are the emotions and thoughts you feel stirred inside you by those words, the emotions you would have shared with the listeners if you had been there with them, if you also had journeyed on that long road to that day? Write them down below.

About 25 years ago that speech came to mind as I was preparing a devotional reflection for a meeting of senior development program leaders. I was struck by the power of it and the thought came to me, what if God were to give such a speech. What if God were to start with "I have a dream . . ." What would God go on to say? With that thought I went to the scriptures to see if I could find out. These many years later I still have not heard God's entire speech, I am sure, but I think I have heard much of it. God, too, has a dream.

Obviously, the word "dream" is not being used here as what occurs when we are sleeping at night. Rather, it happens while we are wide awake, pondering the future. What would the future look like if we could have our greatest hopes realized? A better word perhaps would be "vision." Vision means "to see." When we think of it in terms of an individual's life or the shared life of a group of people, it is a description of what we hope to see in the future. It is a picture in our minds and perhaps words on paper, but it comes from the aspirations and longings of our hearts. But vision must be linked to purpose and intent if it is to have any transforming value and impact. In my years of work as an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) organization development consultant/trainer, I have seen a good number of vision, mission and other types of statements. Usually much time and care have gone into developing and writing them. My question though, even if at the time I do not give voice to it, is: "So what difference is this statement actually making in your lives and the lives of those among whom you serve?" Vision without committed intention is powerless. Martin Luther King, Jr. had more than a vision, as forceful as it was. With much intent he was laboring to see the longings which had been planted in his heart bear fruit in lives around him. On the evening of April 3, 1968, King said these words:

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight, that we as a people will get to the Promised Land. And I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

Vision demands personal risk if it is to be more than words. The very next day, on April 4, 1968, newspapers around the world ran headlines similar to this:

The American black civil rights leader, Dr Martin Luther King, has been assassinated. Dr King was shot dead in the southern US city of Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a march of sanitation workers protesting against low wages and poor working conditions. He was shot in the neck as he stood on a hotel balcony and died in hospital soon afterwards. (The BBC)

Dr. King was willing to pay a great price in the service of his vision. Not many other Nobel Peace Prize winners have been assassinated while pursuing their dreams.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

What is God's vision? If in the beginning of time God were to have stood up before all the angels and began to speak "I have a dream . . .," what do you think God would have said?

I don't believe God ever delivered an "I have a dream" speech, at least not in the way we are accustomed to experiencing speeches. Rather than becoming words on paper or a voice through a microphone, God's dream was expressed in physical form and substance. As I think of it I have a picture in my mind of all the angels watching in anticipation as if in some great cosmic art gallery or theater on opening night. God, the original artist and playwright, begins to reveal God's dream, vision and dramatic story of the future:

On the first day God created the heavens and He created the earth, which was without form and covered with darkness. And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters. God said *"Let there be light"* and there was light. God saw that the light was good. He called the light "day." God separated the light from the darkness and called the darkness "night." Evening came and then morning. That was the first day.

On the second day God said *"Let the waters separate into two parts, waters upon the earth and waters above the earth"* and between them he created a large space which he called 'sky'. Evening came and then morning. That was the second day.

On the third day God said *"Let all the waters be gathered together into one place and let dry ground appear."* The dry ground he called "land" and the water he called "seas." God saw that it was good. Then God said *"Let the land produce vegetation - plants that produce seed, and trees that produce fruit."* God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning. That was the third day.

On the fourth day God said *"Let there be made two great lights to mark the seasons, days and years."* The greater light (the sun) would govern the day and the lesser light (the moon) would govern the night. God also made stars and set them in the sky. God saw it was good. Evening came and morning. That was the fourth day.

On the fifth day God said *"Let the water fill with living creatures, and the sky with birds."* So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing within the water, and every winged bird. God saw that it was good and he blessed them. Evening came and morning. That was the fifth day.

On the sixth day God said *"Let the land produce animals, wild animals, livestock, and creatures that move upon the ground."* And God saw that it was good. Then God said *"Let us make man in our image."* And so God created him - the male from the earth and the female from the body of the male. God blessed them.

God looked upon all that he had created, and it was very good. Evening came and morning. That was the sixth day.
(*emphasis and underlining mine*)

What a week that must have been! Each day, the divine artist-creator brought forth new and unimaginable delights. And at the end of a day of loving labor the text tells us "And God saw that it was good." Perfection was completely satisfied. God's dream was coming true, and when the masterpiece was completed, God said "it is very good" and rested. Now, we can be sure that when God says something is very good, it is V...E...R...Y Good! Even God could not improve upon what had been created, not then and not in the future. The angels must have been breathless and full of awe at the beauty of it all.

We are so accustomed to stars, sky, flowers, trees and birds that most of us have lost the sense of wonder. I think many of us rarely notice the created world around us except with quick glances. Few of us were ever trained to ponder and perceive creation, to see the hand of the artist, to observe the great drama of life all around us. By and large Christianity as we know it is human-centric. By that I mean that we see ourselves as the center of all God's attention. We look into the mirror of cosmic design, and we focus upon ourselves without seeing that we are in context, that we were one image in the spectrum of God's thoughts and intent during those six days of Genesis. It reminds me of the world maps with which I grew up in school – all the ones I remember had the United States right in the center of them.

But the creation story demonstrates that in God's mind there is much good apart from you and I. Not all God's thoughts are focused solely upon us, for as Jesus taught, not a single sparrow falling to the ground escapes the notice of the Father of creation. We came into the picture in the final act, late on the sixth day. Already God had called everything good. The text tells us that at the end of the fifth day God had already given the first blessing upon the creatures that had been made before us. Neither was humanity the first to be encouraged to multiply and fill the earth. That blessing as well was given to animals before Adam was formed from the same earthly matter that God had used to create them. I have pondered numerous times that God could have stopped at lunch time on the sixth day, and all would have been good – not complete, but still good. Later in scripture we find indications that God also has at times wondered if perhaps stopping after lunch would have been a better idea.

God's purpose for humanity

I fly on airplanes a lot. Sometimes when we approach an airport I have time to look down and see human life happening much like watching small ants scurrying around their small nests. More than once I

have had a sense of futility as I gaze out my window. What is our significance? Why did God create human beings? What role were we meant to play in God's great story? Of course that has been a central question passed down through history, hasn't it? Why are we here? Philosophers have pondered that question and attempted answers. Architects of religious systems have done the same. I think most of us have asked ourselves that question at least once in our lives—"Why am I here?" What is my place in the world around me? What purpose do I have? What purpose do any of us have?

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

Explain what you have been taught are the reasons that God created humanity.

From what I had been taught most of my Christian life, if you would have asked me that question not so many years ago, I would have answered without hesitation, "for fellowship!" God wanted a family, sons and daughters. God was a loving parent who had no one to love, so we were created. As far as I was concerned, that was the only reason—case closed.

I still believe God created us out of a longing to give and receive love, but a few years back the "case" was re-opened for me as I studied more closely the text in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. This is what I observed:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, **in the image of God he created him; male and female** he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; **fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.**" Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – every-thing that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food." And it was so. (Gen. 1:26-30)

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens - and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and **there was no man to work the ground**, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground - the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Gen. 2:4-7)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." The LORD God said, "**It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.**"

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. **He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.** (Gen. 2:15-19)

In bold text above I have highlighted what I consider to be the key concepts presented in Genesis 1 and 2 that help us to understand the teaching presented here as to why God created humanity. First of all, I think it is noteworthy to point out what the text does not say. It does not say that God was lonely and childless and therefore created human beings for fellowship and family life. Again, I am not suggesting that may not have been implicit in God's mind, but the text does not state that is the case. The text does tell us the following:

The role given to Adam

God apparently came to a place in the creation process where further progress was conditional upon an action God had yet to take. Chapter 2 verse 5 tells us that no shrub or plant had appeared because God had not sent rain and there was no man to work the ground. In the very next verse the text

goes on to say God then formed the man out of dust, breathed life into him, and man became a living soul. Here the text seems to imply that Adam was created to work the ground. What does that mean? Well, we do know that this is before the curse that led to toilsome labor and therefore it must have been joyful and fruitful activity. Some commentators use the word “husbandry” to describe Adam’s responsibility. It is a nurturing term that we use in an agricultural sense today as well - animal husbandry.

Chapter 2 verse 15 tells us that God then placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to work and take care of it. Here again we see the role for Adam as a husbandman within the garden of Eden. But now we have another term introduced besides “work.” It is the word “care.” To me this speaks of the quality or attitude Adam was to apply to his work. God was not just looking for a laborer or a property manager, but rather a “caretaker.” A caretaker does not represent a detached administrative function concerned only with efficiency and productivity, but represents personal nurturing, fostering and providing nourishment. In fact, the first task given to Adam in this role of “caretaker” was one that conveys relationship. We are told that all the animals were brought to Adam and he personally gave names to each one of them.

I recall as a young man when my father began to name his animals on our small farm. His view of them changed. They were no longer just meat with legs. In fact, it was his first step down the path which led him to no longer slaughtering livestock. I guess it is harder to kill something to which you have given a name. We see that in regards to many forms of violence, especially war. As long as the victim or enemy remains nameless to us, we can objectify our actions. In US military terms, innocent lives lost as a result of actions by American soldiers are often referred to as “collateral damage” or “civilian casualties.” In other words, they are people without names. I’m not sure what kind of relationship Adam had with, let’s say the rhinoceros, but by naming it as distinct from all the other animals, it was no longer anonymous to him.

Another biblical term we could use here that is related to both agricultural husbandry and to being a caretaker would be “shepherd.” The Bible uses that term in the specific sense of shepherds tending sheep as David did, for example. But the word is also used in a broader sense. God and Jesus are referred to as Shepherds numerous times. The leaders of God’s people are also referred to as shepherds. In fact, the word “pastor” originated as referring to a shepherd who cared for actual sheep. As with the word caretaker, we also find in the use of this term, not only a management or stewardship function, but one which has a qualitative, caring aspect. This is very clearly demonstrated in Ezekiel 34:7-12:

Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep.

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

Now explain what you have been taught is the reason that God created Eve.

The role given to Eve

Why did God create Eve? There is a joke that goes like this: “*When God finished the creation of Adam, He stepped back, scratched his head and said – ‘I can do better than that’ he then proceeded to create a woman.*” Some similar humor suggests that the creation of Eve is proof that God believes in evolution - the process by which all life forms move to a higher level of existence over time. The suggestion is that Adam was made from dirt (low form) but Eve was made from Adam (higher form). Maybe, but the Genesis text actually reads as follows:

The Lord God said, “**It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.**” So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. **But for Adam no suitable helper was found.** So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. **Then the LORD God made a woman** from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (Gen. 2:18-22)

We can't be sure from the first two chapters of Genesis that God was lonely, but a case can certainly be made that Adam was! What does God do immediately upon making that observation? Well, what we go on to read could be considered a somewhat humorous story. God brought all the animals and paraded them in front of Adam to name them, yes, but why do you think it then reads, "But for Adam no suitable helper was found"? I might be wrong, but the text seems to suggest the possibility that Adam was looking among all those animals for a compatible companion. I can only imagine (or perhaps would not want to) what you and I might look like if he had settled on, let's say, a hippopotamus. Or what if he had taken a liking to a giraffe or a frog? Well, thankfully he did not! In spite of all the wonderfully diverse and interesting creatures God had made, Adam remained alone until God got very creative once more.

If we look more closely, we see that it was not just the fact that Adam was "alone." Perhaps the meaning here had nothing to do with an experience of feeling lonely as we think of a person who is relationally by themselves. The text qualifies the use of that term when it states that Adam had no suitable helper. I cannot substantiate this, for scripture does not say much more about the predicament in which Adam found himself, but I think we can at least contemplate the possibility that the job given to Adam was more than he could handle on his own. He needed a partner, someone who would work alongside him. For such a big responsibility, two caretakers are better than only one. What does the text mean when it refers to a "suitable" helper? In the King James Version of the Bible, the term used is "help meet," about which Holman's Bible Dictionary states the following:

Modern translations supply various equivalents: a helper suitable for him (NAS, NIV); a helper as his partner (NRSV); a suitable companion for him (TEV). The noun translated helper or partner does not suggest subordination. Elsewhere the term is used of God as Helper (1 Chronicles 12:18; Psalm 30:10; Psalm 54:4; Psalm 121:1) or of military allies (Jeremiah 47:4; Nahum 3:9). The adjective "meet" (translated suitable, comparable, or corresponding) stresses that woman, unlike the animals (Genesis 2:20), can be truly one with man (Genesis 2:24), that is, enjoy full fellowship and partnership in humanity's God-given task (Genesis 1:27-28).

I suggest that many Christian men throughout history have gotten this all wrong. They read the text as meaning that God made Eve in order to help Adam in whatever way Adam thought he needed to be helped. This has led to many instances of men practicing inequality with regard to women, but even beyond inequality, it has also led to instances of injustice and abuse. Eve was not created to be a servant to Adam. I believe the text suggests that women were created to join men in the role of being caretakers of paradise. Eve was created fit for that role. How many leaders would like that option when looking for a person to hire or recruit for a specific job - to ask God to go ahead and create just the right person for the position, tailor made!

Now it is true that when sin entered the picture, the relationship of mutuality and partnership was affected, as was all that God had purposed for creation and called "good." However, we need to be reminded of God's original intentions as they relate to why we are here, male and female.

Caretakers of creation, shepherds of humanity

So far in this reflection we have been looking at the text in chapter two of Genesis. Let us now turn to chapter one. Starting with verse 27 we read: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." We have already noted that humanity was created with a particular role in mind, a job to do. We were delegated the day-to-day responsibility of being caretakers of God's vision. In effect, God was saying, "Behold what a wonderful thing I have done. All that was in my mind and all that was the longing of my heart I have brought to pass. It is very good. Now, I pass to you the job of taking care of it on my behalf."

We have seen that the woman was created fit for her purpose, tailor made to fulfill her role in the world God had made. She was the perfect partner for Adam, created from his own substance. Not quite a clone, thank goodness, but rather she was like him in so many ways which made them compatible and yet distinct and complementary in equally wonderful ways. Doesn't that make perfect sense? In fact, it makes so much sense that God used the same logic for creating them both. God made humanity fully fit for our role. Being created in God's image we were given minds that could think and imagine, emotions with which to feel deeply and passionately as God does, and we were given hearts that could cause us to cherish and commit to attitudes and behaviors that would reflect God's own heart of love and nurture. In other words, we were made in such a way that we have the capacity to be the kind of caretakers that God is.

In the early stories, the point was that the Creator loved the world he had made, and wanted to look after it in the best possible way. To that end, he placed within his world a looking-after creature, a creature who would demonstrate to the creation who he, the Creator, really was, and who would set to work developing the creation and making it flourish and fulfill its purpose. This looking-after creature (or rather, this family

of creatures: the human race) would model and embody that interrelatedness, that mutual and fruitful knowing, trusting and loving, which was the Creator's intention. (N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian - Why Christianity Makes Sense*, 2006, Harper-Collins, New York, Page 37)

“Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (Genesis 1:26). “. . . fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Genesis 1:28) I have underlined the specific tasks which God gave to the man and woman. They were to “rule over” the creatures; they were to “subdue” the earth. Other translations use the term “have dominion over.”

We're certainly seeing different language in Genesis chapter one from what we have looked at in chapter two. The language in chapter one sounds more like ownership, power, control and domination rather than caretaking and nurturing. I think that the language in chapter two qualifies how those terms “rule and subdue” will look like if they are done in the image of God. God is supreme ruler, King of kings and Lord of lords. However, scripture also says that God is love. God rules in a loving manner because God fully loves what God rules. Not a creature created, not a plant or tree, not the water, seas or land had any reason to fear they would be abused or misused by God's hand. Holman's Bible Dictionary puts it this way:

When God created humans, He made them to have “dominion” over all of the earth (Genesis 1:26). Dominion was not intended to be domination or exploitation. Dominion was God's call for human beings to be good and gracious managers of God's creation. Unfortunately, the sin of humanity interrupted God's plans for His world. Humankind became selfish, seeing the world as a means to its own self-centered ends. The things of the world were now seen as possessions with humans as owners, not as God's stewards. God's intention for His world did not change. He still desired that people see God as the Lord of everything and themselves as the managers of God's creation.

I believe the role of caretakers was not limited to caring for nature and the animal species. God had told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. That would mean the garden would soon fill up with people! There would be need for leadership, governance and pastoral responsibilities regarding human society. Humanity itself would need caretakers, shepherds. What kind of shepherds? God promised: “I will give you shepherds after my own heart.” (Jeremiah 3:15)

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.” (John 21:15-17)

Caretakers of creation, shepherds of humanity. Later in Genesis we see one of Adam's sons dispute and reject that responsibility when he replied to God: “Am I my brother's keeper?” Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will see God”. Yes, by all means, we are not only our brother's keeper, but we are the keepers of all those created in God's own image.

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

- 1) In your own words, summarize the stated reason from the scriptures that God created humanity and compare that with what you wrote in Answer Box 3 regarding what you were taught. Why do you feel it is important that we understand this correctly?
- 2) In like manner, summarize what we have just considered regarding the implications of Genesis two's reason for God's creation of Eve. How does this reason compare with what you wrote in Answer Box 4? Why do you feel it is important that we understand this correctly?

So, God had a dream, a vision. Rather than presenting it in a speech, God gave it shape and form. “The heavens declare the glory of God!” the Psalmist tells us. It only takes a look upward on a clear dark night, away from all earthly illumination, to agree with awe and wonder. A single flower, when newly blooming radiates color, texture, form and fragrance that delight the senses. The thunderous sound of ocean waves breaking upon the shore, the pull of the current upon our legs as we wade through that water remind us that we do not control the forces of nature. The sight of waterfalls and clear pools set

along the paths of mountain streams invigorates us with freshness. When we do take the time, creation around us can have a significant restorative impact upon our souls.

The Psalmist also tells us that you and I are fearfully and wonderfully made. There is a beauty to human beings which, although now marred through the consequence of sin, still commands great admiration. Think of the diversity! No two human beings are alike. This is not limited to physical features alone but includes our various personalities, individual gifts, abilities and capacities. All of these speak of a great complexity and richness that point to the vastness of God in whose image we are created. Oh, what a marvelous thing God created in that single week of divine and loving creative genius! But like a cosmic dark cloud, a great sadness was soon to descend upon all that goodness.

A great and long tragedy

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

Among all the various cultures I have encountered, I can't think of one exception to the fact that parents who are farmers or perhaps small business owners have great hope one day passing their property and/or enterprise on to another family member, often the eldest son. Why is that?

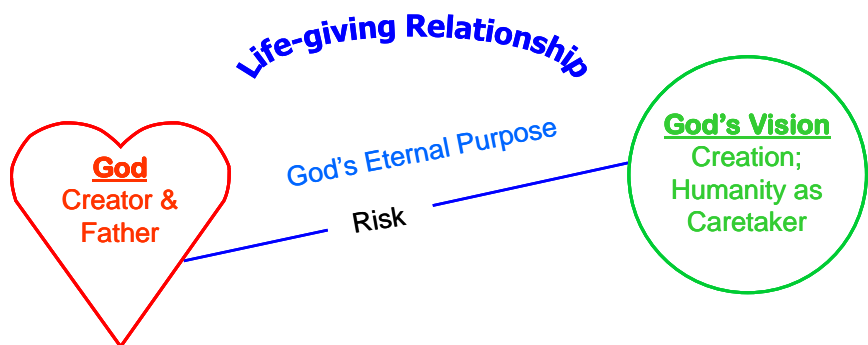
I ask this question each time I present this material. A typical answer I receive is that the parents have a desire to keep the assets in the family. Another is the desire to pass on a means of livelihood to later generations. Another is the hope that in their old age they will be cared for by providing their children a means of doing so. These are all good answers. But I can also think of one more—trust.

You see, it is possible to meet all the above concerns by hiring a professional manager from outside the family to operate the farm or business on their behalf, but there would remain a deeper concern about trust. If an outsider is brought in, will that person care for and protect the farm or business in the same manner as the parents had? And if not, what will become of all their hard work? What will become of the land, the animals, the employees? Jesus illustrated this issue of trust in John 10:12. "The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep." There is an element of risk when we place something we greatly value into the care of someone else. The risk is assumed to be less when it is placed in the hands of family members, but as demonstrated in the story of the Prodigal Son, there are no guarantees.

In the creation story we encounter God's vision. God brought forth creation and established a life-giving, life-sustaining relationship with it. God then delegated the role of day-to-day caretaking to humanity who had been created in God's own image, created with the capacity to govern as God would govern, to nurture and protect as God would nurture and protect.

It is my firm belief that

God had no other purpose and no other plan in mind. When God looked ahead into eternity, I believe God's intention was that what had been made and established in Genesis one and two would continue like that forever. Creatures and human beings would multiply within a context of sufficiency, security, nurture and interdependence. There would be no violence, killing, suffering or tears. Everything was very good. However, God took a great risk, just as the farmer or business owner takes a risk when turning his life's work over into the hands of others. "Can I trust you to care as I have cared?"



Think About It

Answer Box # 7

- 1) What have you been taught or have concluded is the original sin recorded in scripture, and who committed it?
- 2) Turn to Genesis 3:4-5, and study it carefully. With what did the serpent tempt Eve? What did she desire to obtain? Was it only to taste a nice piece of fruit?
- 3) What is the significance of the name of the tree from which they ate? What was the significance of eating that particular fruit, beyond the obvious fact that God had forbidden it? What was the consequence of their action?

I was taught that the original sin was Adam and Eve eating a piece of fruit they were told not to eat. I expect that the majority of Christians around the world are also taught this. It was an act of disobedience, and I was taught that disobedience is the root of all sin, plain and simple. God has given us clear laws/rules, and our job is to keep them. When we don't, that is called sin. Much of Christian teaching is based on this straight forward, seemingly obvious definition. Yet, when I look more closely at Genesis 3:4-5, I conclude that there was more to the "original sin" than a single act of disobedience.

To better understand what happened that day in paradise, we can look at Isaiah 14:12-14. The subject of this passage is most likely the ruler of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who in that time of history was probably the most powerful person on earth (although since the third century some theologians believe that the text actually refers to Satan and a description of the fall of Lucifer). Regardless, the sin described here was that this person said in his heart, "I will raise my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will make myself like the most high." Now, returning to Genesis, what was the temptation which prompted Eve to disobey? Why did she eat the fruit? What motivated her? We read from Genesis 3:5, "For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." That and the statement made in Isaiah 14 are basically identical.

"You will be like God." I believe it is here that we discover original sin and we do so by noting the original temptation which Eve yielded to in her mind and determined in her heart before her hand ever touched that piece of fruit. Nebuchadnezzar helps us to understand this further when he says that he would raise his throne above the stars of God. A king's throne represents his power, authority and control. While seated there, a king can determine what he wills in regard to whatever and whomever is subject to him. Only God is fully self-determinate, meaning God answers to no one else. God lives life on God's own terms and follows no laws or rules beyond God's own wishes and desires. At its core, sin is essentially this: human beings, created by God for God's purposes, say to God consciously or unconsciously, "Not thy will be done, but mine." When we sin, we are in effect declaring the right to have sovereign rule over our thoughts, feelings, actions and whatever we can get our hands on to bring into our own personal kingdoms. Sin is self-centeredness, self-indulgence, self-determination and the desire to have dominion over what God has created, all for our own selfish reasons.

I think I will ask God a question after we meet face to face, if it still seems relevant at the time. "Why did you draw attention to that particular tree by putting it right in the middle of the garden?" You see, I believe there is grave significance in the name of that tree - the knowledge of good and evil. If the whole drama were only a test of obedience, why not use a banana tree or a mango tree? They are safe fruit, but the knowledge of good and evil was not safe, and we have the rest of history as proof. Up until the moment when Eve moved that fruit toward her lips, opened her mouth and took that single bite, all that God had dreamt about and brought to pass in that week of unbelievable artistry and loving workmanship had only known good—up until that single moment. A simple act of disobedience? Oh, no, a great tragedy that unleashed not only the knowledge of evil, but also its dire consequences.

I feel that within the global Church there is not a clear understanding of the nature of sin. We hear preaching and teaching on the subject of the sin nature, but what about the nature of sin itself? I have described in the paragraphs above what I believe is the primal motivation for sinning, but when the scripture speaks of "sin entering in," it gives the impression of it being more than that. I think the clearest teaching on the nature of sin is found in the letter of Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Think About It

Answer Box # 8

Read Romans 6:11-18, 7:8-11, 14-17 and list the various terms Paul uses to describe sin—what it is like and what it can do.

Paul teaches us that sin can reign in our life. It can be our master, and we can be its slaves. Sin can seize an opportunity it sees in our life. Sin springs to life. When I read those passages, I come away with the picture of sin as some sort of life form with the power to do and control things. It certainly seems that it is not limited to some list of specific moral actions, such as telling a lie or stealing something, or all the other activities we Christians consider when we hear the word “sin.” Paul describes the essence, the origin of sin as being a living force, an entity in its own right. Original sin was more than a wrongful actions that took place on that day in the Garden of Eden; it was a horrendous event. Evil itself sat down on the throne of the human heart as humanity’s new master.

Think About It -

Answer Box # 9

- 1) There were two trees in the middle of the garden; what was the second one? (Gen. 2:8,9)
- 2) Why was humankind driven out of the garden? (Gen. 3:21-24) What was God’s concern? Was it that single act of disobedience or was it something of far graver consequence?

Paul gives us an image of sin as a master, but he uses other words that bring another image to my mind. When I consider the nature of sin, I think of the HIV/AIDS virus. The virus enters the human body and begins to take control. It invades good cells which help the body fight off diseases and then uses those same cells to produce more of the HIV virus, destroying their capacity to protect the body from diseases in the process. There is still no cure for this virus. It only dies when its host dies. It is a living evil, a relentless master. Adam and Eve were not told to leave the garden as punishment for sin. God sent them away so that they would not eat the fruit of eternal life and live forever. The eternal life-giving bond with God was broken. Now they would die so that the virus inside of them would also die. What God had intended to remain “very good” for all eternity had been invaded by evil. God made a decision right then that evil may rule for a time, but not for eternity.

Why did God put that tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden and thereby draw attention to it? In my mind, an obvious reason would be that because God knew its awful significance, God wanted to make sure it was left alone. So, God told Adam and Eve under no uncertain terms—do not eat of that one tree, right there! This still does not explain why God created that tree in the first place. I don’t know why God did that, and I don’t know anyone who does. Theologians through the ages have focused on this story as a test of obedience. I think that it was a test of trust. I believe God wanted to see if those to whom God handed over the task of being caretakers of creation could be trusted. You see, caretaking is all about caring, not for oneself, but for that which has been put under our care. It is other-centered, not self-centered. It is providing for the needs of others, not self-indulgence. It is pursuing what God determines should take place in and through our lives, not following a path of self-determination.

Sowing and reaping

There is a moral law written into the universe which tells us that we will reap what we sow. Our actions have consequences. We all know this on a personal as well as a societal level. As Mother Teresa sowed love and care, she received love and care in return. However, her harvest was larger than that because from what she sowed, many others also reaped great benefit. In 1995, the American terrorist Timothy McVeigh detonated the explosives which took the lives of 167 men, women and children in Oklahoma, USA. He set himself on the path which ultimately ended with his execution in 2001. As with Mother Teresa, the harvest from his actions was much greater than just how it affected his personal life.

However, the law of sowing and reaping goes beyond how we humans affect each other’s lives. Having lived and served in a number of rural societies, I am impressed by the relationship I have observed between farmers and their land and animals. Watching a farmer bend down, pick up a handful of soil and work it in his fingers, I am convinced there is a relationship there, which I imagine as being quite different than for the agricultural extension officer who tours around with test tubes taking soil samples for examination in some university’s laboratory.

I always feel a bit uncomfortable as I watch a farmer in a pool of water bathing a water buffalo. There is a certain tenderness in that act. I could imagine using a fire hose perhaps, but circular motions on the animal’s body with my bare hands? Not likely. Even as I write this, I can hear the tender sounds of an old woman clucking for her hens to come for food and shelter because daylight is drawing to a close. They are more to her than egg factories!

What is the nature of this relationship between humans and creation? Yes, the farmer, the land and animals are knit together in a pragmatic livelihood sense. If the old woman treats the hen well, feeds and protects her, she gets eggs in return—sowing and reaping. If the hen cooperates, it avoids the curry

pot! Again, sowing and reaping. But what is at work when I call for my cat to come sit in my lap? I don't anticipate getting any milk and surely would be alarmed to find her laying eggs around the house. I enjoy her warmth, I enjoy stroking her fur and I draw comfort from something that goes beyond physical touch; there is companionship. Of course here the law of sowing and reaping is also active. I can have sharp claws, or I can have soothing purrs depending upon how I act in the relationship.

Adam was not created out of thin air or out of the pure thought of God. The infinite soul of Adam was breathed into him by the Spirit of God, that is true, but the finite humanity of Adam was made from the soil, the same soil God had used to create the animals. In Genesis we hear God declare, "Let the land produce animals," and soon after we watch God "form man from the dust of the ground." Speaking of all living creatures, including humans, the Psalmist writes: "These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust." (Psalm 104:27-29). We came from dust, and we will return to dust. You and I, and all other created life forms, share that same heritage and destiny. We are linked to each other by substance, interdependence and affinity.

Think About It Read Genesis 3:17-24.

Answer Box # 10

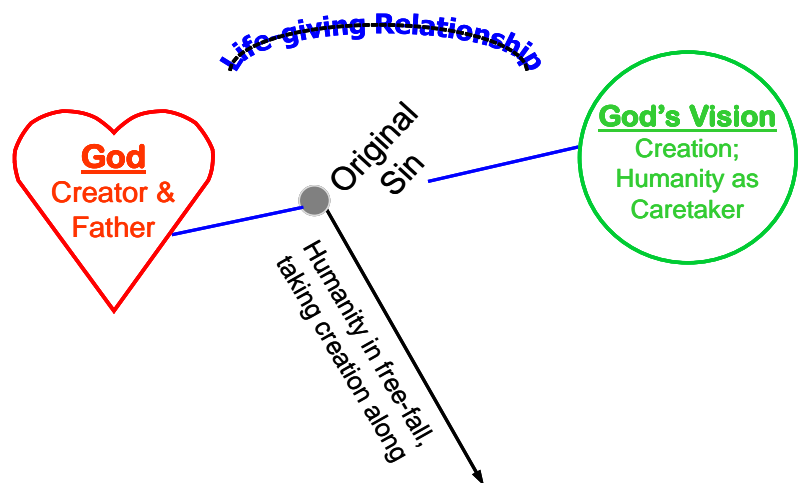
- 1) From Genesis 3:14, we know that the first curse after the fall of humanity was upon the serpent. What was the second curse?
- 2) God had said to Adam and Eve that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would surely die. However, they didn't actually die until many years later. Who was the first to die as a result of their action?
- 3) In what way does the principle of sowing and reaping apply to these two texts?

The second curse after the fall of humanity, recorded in Genesis 3:17, was upon the ground. Remember from the account of creation, how God had spoken to the earth that it should bring forth vegetation and animals, all of which were good in God's eyes? The earth had been blessed and had been a blessing, an instrument in God's hands for acts of beauty and life. Had the earth sinned and was, therefore, deserving of a curse?

What was the first death recorded in scripture? Most people would say Abel, but he was not the first to die. His was the second death recorded in scripture. The first was an innocent animal. Genesis 3:20 tells us that because of the shame they experienced through realizing their nakedness, God clothed Adam and Eve with garments of skin. Had the animal sinned and was, therefore deserving of death? Humanity has reaped and is reaping what we have sown, but creation around us has also reaped the consequences of our actions.

Eve sinned, then Adam sinned, and each one of us have followed their example. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," Paul writes in his letter to the Romans. And what is that "glory?" I agree that an aspect of it is the righteousness of God, but I also believe it was that state of being and the promising potential which humanity had enjoyed up until sin became our master and evil became a part of our experience.

The event of original sin is known as "*The Fall*" of humanity. I think that is a very suitable term, but from what have we fallen? We have fallen from God's original purpose and specific intention for us. Like people jumping out of an airplane with no parachute, humanity has gone into free fall, and we are not alone in our fall. Because of our identification with and responsibility over creation, like a society who suffers from the sins of its rulers, we have brought creation down with us. God took a risk. The question needed to be answered—could God trust us?



We all know the answer to that question. But as we saw earlier, God acted immediately when we failed the test. God contained the evil, put a limit on it. It would not rule forever. God did not give up on the dream, the vision of goodness. The Bible is the story of God not giving up. It is a history lesson on a grand scale. It is **His-story**.

Think About It

Answer Box # 11

- 1) Read Isaiah 65:2 and Isaiah 29:13. Throughout history, what has been the greatest challenge God has faced in God's attempt to contain evil from causing even further damage?
- 2) Read Genesis 6:5-8. The text begins by telling us how severe the sinfulness of humanity had become. What was God's immediate emotional response to it? What would your response have been?
- 3) What could God have done to bring an end to the evil which ruled in humanity's heart? Why didn't God do it? (II Peter 3:9)

I do not believe that Satan has been the greatest challenge God has faced in constraining evil. I believe it is the human heart. Just consider the situation God was facing in the days of Noah: "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." (Genesis 6:5) Creation had become completely corrupted and defiled through rampant selfishness and violence, and that behavior sprang forth from hearts which were evil.

And yet, how did God react? Not as I would have. I would have had an anger that burned with fury. But what was God's response? God grieved with a heart filled with pain. Oh, how little we understand this God of ours! What strangers we are to God's heart. God could have put an end to the madness in an instant. If you kill the host, you kill the virus. But that did not happen. Why? Because there was found one single light in the darkness, a glimmer of hope, and God's heart reached for it. "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." God is a God of mercy, stubborn in love, hopeful in trusting. God did not give up.

The price of mercy - the state of the world as we know it

The law of sowing and reaping is still intact. God's mercy toward humanity's sowing of evil deeds throughout the ages has come at a high price. There has been a harvest of sorrow and suffering. And who has paid the high price of this mercy? Well certainly God himself has paid it. The grief and pain of heart he experienced soon after he created human beings has continued all through our history. Christ's appointment with suffering and death is a large part of the price that God has paid, but it was not the end of it. It is true that one day all tears will be wiped dry, including God's own, but that day is not yet. God could have stopped us, destroying the sin virus by destroying its host, but God didn't. And the consequence of that mercy? Just take a look at history's headlines.

News Flash #1 Friday, 2 October 1998

"Humans have destroyed more than 30% of the natural world since 1970," WWF has announced.

A stark new report, the Living Planet Index, analyses the deterioration of the world's forest, freshwater and marine ecosystems between 1970 and 1995, and it reveals that global consumption pressure has doubled in a generation. "The results are chilling" said Jorgen Randers, deputy director general of WWF International, at a press conference in London.

The Living Planet Index reveals that since 1970, wood and water consumption has almost doubled; carbon dioxide emissions have increased two and a half times; freshwater systems have declined by 50%; and the world's forest cover has decreased by 13%.

"This has been the most destructive period in the history of the natural world since the extinction of the dinosaurs 60 million years ago" declared Jorgen Randers. "If we continue without change, the economic, social and environmental costs will be catastrophic."

(http://www.wwf.org.uk/news/n_0000000307.asp)

The destruction of the environment - a consequence of God's mercy

- 50% the world's major rivers are seriously polluted or depleted. (1)
- During the 1990s, the amount of the Earth's forest cover destroyed every minute was equal to the size of 37 football pitches (approx. 50 hectares or 125 acres). (1)

Unit 2 – A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 1

- Global water consumption increased by 600% between 1900 and 1995—more than double the rate of population growth—and continues to grow as farming, industry and domestic demand all increase. 1/3 of the world's population lives in water-stressed countries now. By 2025, this is expected to increase to 2/3. (1)
- The world will need almost 60% more energy in 2030 than it did in 2002, but oil experts estimate that current reserves will only last for about 40 years. (1)
- Around the planet, 26 billion tons of topsoil are being eroded each year from the world's farmland—3 million tons each hour. (2)
- Over 200 million tons of waste are added to the atmosphere each year. (2)
- There are over 31,000 hazardous waste sites in the US. There are over 130,000 tons of known nuclear waste in the world, some of which will remain poisonous to the planet for another 100,000 years. (2)
- A 2000 World Bank study projected that on average 1.8 million people would die prematurely each year between 2001 and 2020 because of air pollution. (3)
- The U.N. Environment Programme projects 50 million environmental refugees worldwide by 2010. (3)
- Over one billion people still lack access to safe water, and nearly two billion people lack safe sanitation. More than three million people still die every year from avoidable water-related disease. (4)
- Coral reefs harbor more than 25% of all known marine fish, as well as a total species diversity containing more phyla than rainforests. Current estimates are that 10% of all coral reefs are degraded beyond recovery. Thirty percent are in critical condition and may die within 10 to 20 years. If current pressures continue unabated, 60% of the world's coral reefs may die completely by 2050. (4)
- Worldwide, about 700 million persons are directly dependent upon fisheries for food. Nearly one third of the world's fisheries has collapsed or is near collapse because of over-fishing. Nearly half of the world's fisheries are being fished at their maximum level. (4)
- Sewage is the largest source of contamination by volume of God's oceans. Worldwide, approximately 250 million people become sick each year after eating contaminated fish or bathing or swimming in contaminated coastal waters. Even in coastal waters deemed swimmable, 5% of adults worldwide will become sick after a single swim. (4)
- A study published in the January 04 issue of *Nature* indicated that 15-37% of known land-based species could become "committed to extinction" by 2050 due to global warming. Humans have been the main cause of extinction and continue to be the principle threat to species at risk of extinction. (4)

News Flash #2

Thursday, 26 May 2005

"The impact on people of the two-year conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur has been described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis by the United Nations. Some two million people are estimated to now live in camps, having fled their homes and at least 180,000 are thought to have died during the crisis. Sudan's government and the pro-government Arab militias are accused of war crimes against the region's black African population, although the UN has stopped short of terming it a genocide.

Refugees from Darfur say that following air raids by government aircraft, the Janjaweed ride into villages on horses and camels, slaughtering men, raping women and stealing whatever they can find. Many women report being abducted by the Janjaweed and held as sex slaves for more than a week before being released."

(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3496731.stm>)

Human violence and oppression - a consequence of God's mercy

- Every hour, the world spends more than \$100 million on soldiers, weapons and ammunition. (3)
- During the 1990s, a total of 53 major armed conflicts resulted in 3.9 million deaths (nearly 90% of them were civilians). In 2002, there were approximately 22 million international refugees in the world and another 20 million to 25 million internally displaced people. (5)
- Low income, developing countries accounted for just over a third of all armed conflicts in 1946-89. In 1990-2003, they accounted for more than half. In 2002, these countries spent on average 3.7% of GDP on their militaries but only 2.4% on health. (5)
- Worldwide, 639 million small arms weapons kill 500,000 people a year—one a minute. The United States, Russia and China dominate their production. (5)
- Half of all women in Sierra Leone reportedly faced sexual violence during the civil war. (5)
- There are estimated to be 250,000 child soldiers worldwide. (5)

Unit 2 – A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 1

- In the past decade alone, an estimated 2 million children have been killed in armed conflict. Three times as many have been seriously injured or permanently disabled. (6)
- More than 60 million women are “missing” from the world today as a result of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide, according to an estimate by Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate. (7)
- Every two and a half minutes, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted. One in six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. In 2003-2004, there were an average annual 204,370 victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault. About 44% of rape victims are under age 18. The United States Justice Department has estimated that one of every six victims is under age 12. Studies suggest that only 25% of sexual assaults are ever reported to the police. (8)
- The ILO reports that because the use of children as prostitutes is often hidden, there are no reliable figures about how many of them are exploited around the world. But it is thought to be up to two million a year. (6)
- In some studies, between one-quarter and one-half of children report severe and frequent physical abuse, including being beaten, kicked or tied up by parents. Available data also suggests that about 20% of women and 5-10% of men suffered sexual abuse as children. (9)
- In a survey in the United States 36% of nursing home staff reported having witnessed at least one incident of physical abuse of an elderly patient in the previous year. (9)
- Studies from a range of countries show that 40-70% of female murder victims were killed by their husband or boyfriend, often during an ongoing abusive relationship. (9)
- Around the world an estimated 815,000 people committed suicide in 2000—roughly one every 40 seconds. (9)
- In 2000, an estimated 199,000 youth were murdered around the world. That is an average of 565 children and young people dying each day as a result of interpersonal violence. For every young person killed by violence, an estimated 20-40 receive injuries that require hospital treatment. (9)
- The 20th century was one of the most violent periods in human history. An estimated 191 million people lost their lives directly or indirectly as a result of conflict, and well over half of them were civilians. In 2000, over 300,000 people died as a direct result of violent conflicts. Rates varied from less than 1 per 100,000 population in high-income countries to 6.2 per 100,000 in low and middle income countries. Worldwide, the highest rates of conflict-related deaths are found in Africa (32.0 per 100,000). (9)

News Flash #3 September 2005

“In its 2005 Human Development Report, the UNDP states that one in five people in the world (more than 1 billion) survives on less than 1 US\$ each day—a level of poverty which they consider so extreme that it threatens human survival. An additional 1.5 billion people live on the equivalent of between \$1 and \$2 each day. In their language this means that over 40% of the world’s population is, in effect, a ‘global underclass.’

UNDP also reports that every two minutes four people die from malaria; of these, three are children. An additional 2-3 million children die from measles, diphtheria and tetanus each year. They assert that most of these deaths could be prevented by simple, low-cost interventions such as vaccines and mosquito nets which cost less than what millions of people around the world spend each day for a meal at McDonalds.

The report goes on to say that more than 98% of children who die each year live in poor countries. The UNDP provides this point to readers for their consideration: “They die because of where they are born.” (Reflections upon the UNDP 2005 report.)

Poverty, disease and human suffering - a consequence of God’s mercy

- Even though in the 1990s global poverty fell by 20%, the number of hungry people rose by 18 million. In 2003, 842 million people did not have enough to eat, 1/3 of them in sub-Saharan Africa. The FAO estimates hunger and malnutrition kill 10 million people a year—25,000 a day—one life extinguished every five seconds. (1)
- 1 in 6 people in the world do not have access to clean, safe drinking water (1.1 billion). An estimated 2.6 billion worldwide lack access to improved sanitation. An estimated seven million people die a year from waterborne diseases—10 times the number killed in wars around the globe. That number includes 2.2 million children under five. That means one of those children dies every 14 seconds. (2)

Unit 2 – A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 1

- Of the 1.9 billion children from the developing world, 640 million (1 in 3) are without adequate shelter; 400 million (1 in 5) have no access to safe water; 270 million (1 in 7) have no access to health services. (10)
- Since the epidemic began, 25 million people have died from AIDS, which has caused more than 15 million children to lose at least one parent. (11)
- Approximately 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the world. Of this figure, 60% live in Sub-Saharan Africa. (11)
- Each year, another 5 million people are infected with HIV and more than 3 million die of AIDS. (11)
- In 2003, 12 million children were newly orphaned in southern Africa; it is expected to be 18 million in 2010. (11)
- 40–50 million children are growing up in poverty in even the world's richest countries. Two of them—Mexico and the USA—have child poverty rates of more than 20%. (5)
- An estimated 530,000 women die each year in pregnancy or childbirth, but these deaths are the tip of an iceberg—at least 8 million women a year suffer severe complications in pregnancy or childbirth, with grave risks to their health. (5)
- At the end of 2003, there were an estimated 143 million orphans under the age of 18 living in 93 developing countries. The exact number of street children is impossible to count, but estimates are that tens of millions exist across the world. (6)
- The ILO estimates that 246 million children between 5 and 17 are engaged in child labour. Of these, nearly 70% are working in hazardous conditions—in mines, with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or with dangerous machinery. Some 73 million of them are less than 10 years old. (3)
- Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names. (3)
- Around the world, more than 121 million children of primary school age are not in school. Nearly 54% of them are girls. (6)

News Flash #4 **Sunday, 3 July 2005**

In his address to Johannesburg's Live 8 concert, former South African President Nelson Mandela urged world leaders to fight poverty to prevent a "genocide of humanity".

"As you know, I recently formally announced my retirement from public life and should really not be here. However, as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest. Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times—times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation—that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.

But in this new century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved, and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is manmade and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.

Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom. Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity, against which I ask all humanity now to rise up."

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4232603.stm)

Grave inequality and injustice – a consequence of God's mercy

- The 20% of the world's population living in developed nations consume 86% of the world's goods. (3)
- Developing countries now spend \$13 on debt repayment for every \$1 they receive in grants. (3)
- The richest 50 million people in Europe and North America have the same income as the world's 2.7 billion poorest people. That means the richest 1% have the same as the poorest 57%. (3)
- 12% of the world's population (all living in developed countries) uses 85% of the world's water. (3)
- 16% percent of the world's people (all living in developed countries), account for \$662 billion (75%) of annual global military expenditures. The military budgets of these high-income countries are roughly 10 times larger than their combined development assistance budgets. (3)
- On average, a child born in Mozambique today can anticipate four years of formal education. One born in France will receive 15 years at vastly higher levels of provision. (5)
- A child born in Burkina Faso can expect to live 35 fewer years than a child born in Japan; a child born in India can expect to live 14 fewer years than a child born in the USA. (5)

Unit 2 – A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World - Part 1

- Life expectancy gaps are among the most fundamental of all inequalities. Based on current indicators, a child born in Zambia today has less chance of surviving past age 30 than a child born in 1840 in England. (5)
- Almost all child deaths occur in developing countries, while most of the money used globally to prevent child deaths is spent in the wealthiest ones. (5)
- In 1980, child death rates in Sub-Saharan Africa were 13 times higher than in rich countries. They are now 29 times higher. (5)
- The risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes in Nigeria is 1 in 18. In Canada it is 1 in 8,700. (5)
- The richest 20% of the world's population hold 75% of its income, the poorest 20% hold just 1.5%. (5)

Unless otherwise noted, the preceding statistics are based on information available from the following sources:

- (1) BBC documentary "Planet under Pressure" - http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/sci_tech/2004/planet/default.stm
- (2) The World Game Institute – http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/theme_a/mod02/www.worldgame.org/wwwproject/
- (3) World Watch Institute - <http://www.worldwatch.org>
- (4) Evangelical Environmental Network - <http://www.creationcare.org>
- (5) UNDP 2005 Human Development Report - <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005>
- (6) UNICEF - <http://www.un.org/rights>; http://www.unicef.org/media/media_fastfacts.html
- (7) Amnesty International - <http://www.amnesty.org>
- (8) The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) - www.rainn.org
- (9) World Health Organization (WHO) – http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets
- (10) Global Issues That Affect Everyone - www.globalissues.org
- (11) Bread for the World - <http://www.bread.org>

Think About It

Answer Box # 12

- 1) As you read through those news flashes and the statistics listed, which single fact under each of the four categories is the most surprising to you and why?
- 2) Which three statistics do you consider to be especially relevant to your context and that you feel deserve an urgent response from the Christian community? What kind of response is already being made or that you think might be possible?

If the entire world were a village of only 100 people, there would be

60 Asians
14 Africans
12 Europeans
8 people from Central and South America, Mexico, the Caribbean
5 from the USA and Canada
1 person from Australia or New Zealand.

33 Christians
22 Moslems
15 Hindus
14 Nonreligious, Agnostics, or Atheists
6 Buddhists
10 all other religions.

14 who speak Mandarin
8 who speak Hindi/Urdu
8 English speakers
7 Spanish speakers
4 Russian speakers
4 who speak Arabic
This list accounts for less than half the villagers. The others speak (in descending order of frequency) Bengali, Portuguese, Indonesian, Japanese, German, French and 200 other languages.

80 would live in substandard housing.
67 adults live in the village, and half of them would be illiterate.
50 would suffer from malnutrition.
33 would not have access to clean, safe drinking water.
24 people would not have any electricity.
Of the 76 that do have electricity, most would use it only for light at night.
In the village would be 42 radios, 24 televisions, 14 telephones and 7 computers (some villagers own more than one of each).
7 people would own an automobile (some of them more than one).
5 people would possess 32% of the entire village's wealth, and these would all be from the USA.
The poorest one-third of the people would receive only 3% of the income of the village.

The following is also something to ponder...

- If you woke up this morning healthy, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.
- If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the fear and loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pain of starvation, you are better off than 500 million people in the world.
- If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep, you are more comfortable than 75% of the people in this world.
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.
- If you can read this, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

(This 2005 edition of A Village of 100 People is copyright-free. You may reproduce it. Original version by Donella H. Meadows. More info at www.odt.org/pop.htm)

Among many people in the world—among many Christians in the world, there is an assumption being made that there simply are not enough resources in the world to address the kind of poverty, suffering and destruction that these statistics tell. But is that assumption a true one? In fact, **in the world today, we have the means for addressing much of the inequality and injustice that is occurring.** The problem is not that there are insufficient resources, but that those resources are not being made available to address such issues.

| What the opportunity is | Where the resources are |
|--|--|
| US \$6 billion additional funds each year to provide universal basic education | \$2 billion military spending <u>daily</u> in developed countries. In early 2007, the US was spending over \$10 billion each month in Iraq |
| US \$9 billion additional funds each year to provide universal water and sanitation | \$262 billion in assets of the world's 10 wealthiest people |
| US \$12 billion additional funds each year to provide universal reproductive health care | \$33 billion spent annually in the world on cosmetics and perfume |
| US \$13 billion additional funds each year to ensure basic health and nutrition | \$17 billion spent annually on pet foods in the USA and Europe |
| US \$4 billion to reduce neonatal mortality rates in 75 countries by 59%, saving 2.3 million lives | \$35 billion spent annually on business entertainment in Japan |
| US \$3 billion to provide global immunization | \$11 billion spent annually on ice cream in Europe |
| US \$5 billion to eradicate global illiteracy | \$155 billion spent annually on cigarettes and alcohol in Europe |
| US \$300 billion to lift all people above the \$1 a day global poverty line | \$400 billion spent each year in the world on narcotics |

(The chart's statistics come from Global Watch, World Watch Institute, Bread for the World, and the UNDP 2005 Human Development Report)

God's mercy has come at a great price. As we have seen from these statistics, the entirety of creation has reaped grave consequences and paid a high price for God's mercy toward humanity. In Romans 8, Paul writes, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." We who were created to be the caretakers of our environment have been its destroyers instead.

Humanity itself has certainly paid a price. Violence and oppression, poverty and disease, grave inequality and injustice. A serious charge is often made by people who refute the belief that there is a loving God. They ask that if God were so loving, why do the innocent people suffer at the hands of those with evil intentions? The problem with that line of questioning is that there is no one who has not committed a wrongful action themselves at some point in their lives, and therefore to call on God to destroy all evildoers, is in a sense, a form of passive suicide! If God were to destroy all evil, who would be left standing? "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." The blood of the innocent is not on the hands of God, but on the hands of humanity.

I remember hearing about an old comic strip. . . . Two guys are talking to each other, and one of them says he has a question for God. He wants to ask why God allows all of this poverty and war and suffering to exist in the world. And his friend says, "Well, why don't you ask?" The fellow shakes his head and says he is scared. When his friend asks why,

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he mutters, "I'm scared God will ask me the same question." Over and over, when I ask God why all of these injustices are allowed to exist in the world, I can feel the Spirit whisper to me, "You tell me why we allow this to happen. You are my body, my hands, my feet." (Shane Claiborne, "The Irresistible Revolution." ©The Simple Way, 2006. Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids.)

If sometimes our poor people have had to die of starvation, it is not because God didn't care for them, but because you and I didn't give, were not instruments of love in the hands of God, to give them that bread, to give them that clothing. (Mother Teresa)

There is no such thing as free mercy and cheap grace. Just because we cannot earn it does not mean that no price is being paid for it. There is the law of reaping and sowing. When wrong occurs, there is a consequence. A price is always paid, often by humanity itself, often by the rest of creation, but in every case, God also pays the price. God is not blind to the acts of evil. God's ears are not deaf to the cries of the oppressed. It is a divine heart of mercy that compels God from destroying the evil virus within the human heart by destroying us, its host. Just as in the days of Noah, God latches on to a glimmer of hope when one is found.

I believe the efforts which have come to be known as "relief, development and social change" are a response to the consequence of evil and selfishness that continues to reign in the hearts of people. It could be argued that a portion of the extensive harm that has been done was committed in ignorance. I can accept that of those who acted from a caretaker's heart committed to the good of all God created, but I wonder to how many throughout history that innocence would apply?

We know beyond any doubt that the vision God had in the beginning has been marred; the beautiful world God created in those six days is no longer "very good." And God finds this unacceptable. Yes, God rested on the seventh day, but on the eighth and every day thereafter God has been very busy.

God's love for the world

Turn to the Additional Readings at the end of this unit and read "Creation, Care and Evangelical Relief and Development" by Calvin B DeWitt and then answer the questions in the next box.

Think About It

Answer Box # 13

- 1) In the reading, DeWitt uses the Greek terms *oikos* and *oikonomia*. What does he mean by those terms, and how might they apply to what we have looked at in this unit of the course?
- 2) DeWitt gives attention to the work of "Development." How does he define it, and what does he suggest should be its goal?
- 3) DeWitt also refers to "Relief." How does he define relief and its relationship to development work?
- 4) DeWitt concludes his article speaking about "Evangelical Relief and Development." What point do you feel he is trying to make by using that terminology, and does it contrast in any way with how that terminology is generally understood in your context?

Reading

Creation, Care and Evangelical Relief and Development

by Calvin B. DeWitt, Professor of Environmental Studies, Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

(Permission for use has been requested from: Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO), http://www.aerdo.org/resources/occasional_papers/occasion_4.html)

"The heavens declare the glory of God! The firmament displays his handiwork!"

We were convicted of this truth as we stood together that evening on the mountain top, singing. It was late, it was dark, and it was drizzly. We had come to this peak by a narrow mountain road, our bouncing vans' headlight beams disclosing flickering rocks and trees. Out of our vehicles now, we had worked our way with flashlights along a narrow path lined with young Douglas Firs. We came to the top and, huddling, all 35 of us sang to the Lord. With the singing of that marvelous line, "The clouds be rolled back as a scroll," the light and shape of the moon broke through the opening clouds, wonderfully, high above us. As we sang the next two lines a meteorite brightly streamed across clear sky, downward, toward the horizon. It was well, it was well with our souls!

We had begun our field trip that evening in fog and drizzle. We concluded under a cold clear sky lighted by a silvery moon occasionally visible through the high canopy of an old growth forest. We moved in moonlit darkness, wondering, feeling our way over the feet of giants. At dawn the next day, back at camp, evangelical relief and development workers from around the world reflected on Creation's testimony to God the night before—on Psalm 19:1 and Romans 1:20, praising God from whom these blessings flow. We, as many before us, had been left without excuse in knowing God's divinity and everlasting power by the things God has made. And we told each other so.

Our field trip, and our reflection upon it, reminded me of the psalm we sang in my youth, "And through all Creation, His wonderful temple, all things He has fashioned His glory declare" (Psalm 29). We, on Earth, reside on the footstool of the Creator—a footstool upholstered with the living fabric of the biosphere—amidst His creatures great and small. Standing in awe and wonder, giving attention to our Creator's sustaining care, we hear our God speak through scripture of His splendor and our place in it: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." And God asks those called to build His Kingdom, "Where is the house (Gr. oikos) you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?"¹ We are humbled!

God's Oikos and God's Oikonomia

Our Creator—the Most High Creator of the universe—"does not live in houses made by human hands."² God's house is His whole Creation. It is in this house—God's oikos—that we also live, as God's creatures, God's stewards. Thus the houses we build for ourselves and our fellow creatures are necessarily built within the Lord's greater house. Our oikos is built within God's oikos. And whatever we do within our human economy, necessarily is done within the economy of God's household—within God's oikonomia. We know, therefore, at a very basic level that our economy—our oikonomia—must respect and fit into God's oikonomia. We also come to understand the profundity of the scriptural teaching, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it," and, "except the Lord keep (Heb. shamar) the city, the watchman (Heb. shamar) waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1 KJV). If our oikos and oikonomia are to work at all, they must work within the Lord's oikos and the Lord's oikonomia!

Creation's Proclamation of God's Economy

And God's economy is not only knowable, it is proclaimed throughout Creation. Creation pours forth its speech and displays knowledge. Even before the time of Socrates some philosophers became so convicted by the things they experienced in Creation that they called Creation's order and harmony oikonomia. Moreover, since it testified to a divine economist, they called it the divine oikonomia. In the book of Ephesians, this word again surfaces in the phrase, the "oikonomia of the fullness of times"—God's bringing together "all things (ta panta) in Christ..." (Ephesians 1:10). "All things," means absolutely everything, "whether things on earth or things in heaven," and it is in Christ, who, "...by making peace through his blood" reconciles all things (ta panta) unto Himself (Colossians 1:20a).

Our experience on the mountain top that evening was not unique in its proclamation. People have seen clearly God's everlasting power and God's divinity from the very beginning. Clearly comprehensible from the fabric and workmanship of the things God has made, God's enduring power, wonderful might and divinity are wonderfully proclaimed. It leaves everyone without excuse. Not only we on that mountaintop but people everywhere become convicted of God's eternal power and divinity through its proclamation by God's cosmos. We are left standing in awe and wonder, inexcusable in the proclamation

by Creation's grandeur—the grandeur of God's oikos—leading those who remember their Creator to sing out, "it is well with our souls!"

God's Love and Care for Creation

Creation in awesome testimony does proclaim its Creator, reflecting back to God, and to us who watch, what God bestows in love and grace. The Creator of all things, wrapped in grandeur and magnificence, clothed in raiment of light, abundantly provides for all creatures here below. Interactions among photosynthesis, respiration, and global circulations enable reciprocal exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide within Earth's atmosphere—ventilating the Earth, enabling the breath of life. Energy from the sun's thermonuclear fusion brightly shines—energizing green plants, empowering circuits of air and water, delivering reflectively the gentle light of the moon. Water, the universal solvent, is cleansed of particulates and solutes by distillation and filtration in the hydrologic cycle. Renewed time and again, it returns with refreshment to Earth—by dew, torrential downpours, flowing springs, and drizzly rain. For all this love and grace we sing to our Creator,

Thy bounteous care, what tongue can recite?

It breathes in the air, it shines in the light!

It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain.

It sweetly distills in the dew and the rain!

The earth is satisfied—satisfied with the blessed fruit of God's works. God loves the world. God so loves the world!

It is God's love—God's wide-embracing love—that we image as we live and work in God's oikos. Imaging God, we reflect God's love for Creation—animate and inanimate, human and non-human—in all we do. Knowing God's intended destruction of those who destroy the earth (ge) (Revelation 11:18), and sharing the anger of the psalmist who prays, "May sinners vanish from the earth," we work to serve ('abad) God's Garden and keep (shamar) it (Genesis 2:15). Imaging God's love for the world (cosmos), we seek to reconcile all things (ta panta) to God, as Christ does (Colossians 1:15-20).

That night on the mountain God's glory was displayed. God's provisions for Creation proclaim God's care. We are imagers of this glory and love! Reflecting this, we also keep, care for, and love the world as God does!

Building Our Houses Inside God's House

And so it is that we find ourselves in God's house—in God's oikonomia. Our work, reflecting God's care, is what relief and development—and our entire lives—are all about. Our work—our psalm of life—must be in harmony with God's. Our economy must be in accord with God's economy. Our little oikos must be in harmony with God's great oikos. We must not be divided against it. Jesus tells us, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house (oikos) divided against a house (oikos) falleth" (Luke 11:17, KJV). Thus, when we keep God's oikonomia in mind, we seek the kingdom of God in our own oikonomia. It is our highest priority. Having the mind of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) Who made, holds together, and reconciles all things (Colossians 1:15-20), we pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth..." (Matthew 6:10). Putting the mind of Christ Jesus in control, we become obedient servants (cf. Philippians 2:5-8)—stewards of God's oikos. We so behave on earth that heaven will not be a shock to us!

For all who work in God's kingdom this has deep meaning! We seek first God's Kingdom, within the economy of God. In doing so, we necessarily must come to know how God's world works and what is right in the eye of God. Otherwise we will not know how to act within God's economy. In building the foundation of our knowledge, we need to understand the structure of God's creation, including the ways and means by which God bestows love upon the world. In order to practice, we need to know and respect God's oikonomia; we need to hear and respect God's words to us. We must build upon the foundation God already has put into place.

Jesus tells us, "I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and placed its footings on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was founded upon rock" (Luke 6:47-48). However, Christ tells us, "...the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without footing. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete" (Luke 6:49).

Three Questions

Building an oikos—engaging in development at any scale—must therefore have good footings and must be conducted in harmony with God's oikonomia. Helpful in achieving this are three questions that turn out to have great significance in development work. And since these questions come from my own life, the best way to identify them and their significance is from my experience in the place where my

family has set its roots. This place and home—this oikos—is the Town of Dunn, just south of the capitol city of Wisconsin.

Back in 1973, the 4000 citizens of our town knew we had stewardship responsibility for our land, but knew next to nothing about the ground beneath our feet, the town boundaries, or what kinds of ecosystems comprise the living fabric of its 34.5 square miles. So we did an inventory of everything within our boundaries, of frogs and fishes, archeological sites and burial grounds, prairies and pastures, historical buildings and fire districts, soils and springs—everything we could set our eye on or discover. In doing this we sought to understand what it was that was entrusted to our care, and how it all was put together. Our inventory informed and reminded us of who we were and what we had to take care of. And, it helped us discover three very basic questions that must be asked for engagement in responsible land stewardship. These questions are: (1) How does the world work? (2) What ought to be? and (3) Then what must we do?

The first question points to the fact that we had to know how our part of Creation was held together and how it functioned (science). The second points to the need to discuss and discover what ought to be in our town (ethics). And the third points to our having to put our understanding of science and ethics into practice with integrity (praxis). Science, ethics, praxis—all together. Answering only one of these questions was not enough. Learning and knowing how the world works could get us into big trouble, if not informed by what ought to be. Knowing what ought to be would also lead to embarrassment if not grounded in sufficient knowledge of the land and its life. And answering the third without the first and second—just doing something—spelled disaster. And many signs of disaster were springing up around us—mainly in the form of helter-skelter subdividing of land for house-building.

And so we had discussions for a year and more—including weekly town meetings among them—to find out what we had, who we were, what values we had and what we should do. To provide time for this, we stopped what we and nearly everyone else calls development for two years. This moratorium gave us the opportunity to think things through, and to ask those three very basic questions. We made a number of major discoveries, one of which was discovery of our ignorance. Not only did we lack sufficient knowledge of our town and our values, but we did not even understand the meaning of development. When we finally did, we wrote our inventory in maps to be hung and studied in the town hall and in a book to be read. Next we wrote a stewardship plan based upon that inventory. Then we codified this plan into law. Finally we cultivated and cultured ourselves to meet the ongoing difficult challenges that did and would confront us when we put this plan into practice.

Discovering the Meaning of Development

Development, we discovered, was getting the right things in the right amounts in the right places at the right times with the right relationships. This, of course, is the meaning of "development" in developmental biology. In human development there is no advantage for the brain to grow out of proportion with the kidney, even though the brain could in some sense be considered more important than the kidneys. But because organs reciprocally serve each other, they are scaled over the course of bodily development to match each other. Proportioned growth and balance is the rule. Moreover, components are placed in proper proximity to allow relationships to form that help sustain integrity and do so with efficiency. And, things are properly related to each other in time so that development will not be frustrated or prevented from achieving maturity.

In human development, organs are increased or decreased in size so that one does not overwhelm the other. Growth—positive and negative—is controlled on behalf of the organism. In our skeletal system, for example, bone is added by osteoblasts and removed by osteoclasts—specialized cells that redistribute structural strength in response to changing stresses and needs. Development involves simultaneous building up and breaking down—positive growth and negative growth, up-building and down-sizing. Sometimes it involves no growth in size whatsoever, but only in quality, as for fruit fly embryos who in their early stages engage in cell division without increasing their mass. Overarching all of this is the basic observation that can be made for all successful organisms: growth always serves development. If it does not, some part may take over the rest and bring down the whole organism. Such disproportionate growth usually is degrading and destroying. This kind of growth is called cancer.

Yet, as we discussed all these things at town meetings, the larger society around us frequently was told, and accepted the idea, that growth is the same thing as development. The consequences of this idea were visible all around us. Sub-dividing land into building lots for houses often was done with total disregard for farms and farming and at their expense. It was clearly evident in many examples in our region where the oikos of the whole town or village was sacrificed, foolishly and ignorantly, to the oikos of its subdivisions. Important as houses are for development, they often were the only thing in focus even when it could be clearly seen that they could not be the whole picture of what development was about. It was as though the importance of the eye in the human body blinded people to the importance of the rest, reminding us of the scriptures, "For the body is not one member, but many..." "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:14, 21).

We learned to know that development in our little town—as for anywhere else—must concern the whole body, not just one part. Development is much more than subdividing land and building houses. Growth, then—whether of housing or stomachs—is not something unto itself; it always has a larger context, and must be seen in that context. In some contexts growth of some part may be absolutely vital, in other contexts the growth of that very same part might be lethal. Similarly, down-sizing may be vital or lethal, depending upon the larger context. And so, when we remark to someone whom we have not seen for a year, "My how you have grown!" it makes a great difference whether that person is aged 4 or 40! Growth and development are different things. In our town, we discovered that development meant achieving a kind of balance in which things are rightly proportioned and interconnected physically, mentally, and socially. But this discovery was insignificant compared with a greater discovery.

Development Always has a Goal

Our work in our home—our Town of Dunn—led us to discover that development always has a goal—it has a purpose. And recognizing this makes all the difference. In organisms, for example, it makes a great deal of difference whether your goal is to be able to swim, rather than to fly—for it may mean the difference between becoming a fish or a bird! For a town, as for a fish or bird, robin or ostrich, it is important to ask, "What is its goal? What does it seek to be?" In pursuing an answer to this question for our town, we soon discovered that "growth" is never a goal in itself, it is only one means for achieving a goal. And this, of course, makes us put forth the question for any system, "What is the goal of its development?"

One way to explore what the goal might have been for some endeavor is to look at how it turned out. Thus, we can surmise from observing the development of a child that the goal of human physical development is the achievement of adulthood—and this with qualities of ability, strength, and agility. But this approach often is not very helpful because the end results are nothing that could have been intended. Cities, for example, may have as end results increased crime, higher prices, higher taxes, greater congestion and increased air pollution. These achievements of urban development very likely are not its goals.

What then is the goal of urban development? Often, the goal is stated as being "growth." At least in some cities "growth" is upheld as something toward which we should aspire. Accompanying this goal is the often unstated assumption that this will bring good along with it. But growth is a means for achieving development rather than being an end in itself. Similarly, development, much like growth, also is a means. "Growth" or "development" are not goals at all because they have no end in view. Neither is "growth" or "development" that, whatever its stated or unstated goal. It destroys the larger oikos—the larger ecosystem (oikosystem)—in the building of its own smaller oikos. Taken in biblical and theological perspective, the goal of "development" must be consistent with becoming an oikos within the larger oikos—within the divine oikonomia. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

What is the Goal of Development?

All of this leads us to ask, what should our goal for development be? Essayist Wendell Berry helps us find the answer through a question he posed to agroecologist Wes Jackson. Upon his asking Wes what kind of economy would be comprehensive enough to prevent the ruination of farmland, Wes replied, "The Kingdom of God." A very penetrating answer this is! "Seek first yourself and the Kingdom shall be added unto you," is the frequent and persistent message of the world! In my lectures I cite this prevalent teaching by chapter and verse as 33:6 *TTAM*. Inevitably, someone in the audience will ask, "Don't you have that backwards?" And of course I do. The teaching of Jesus is from MATT 6:33, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." One of these teachings is a backwards teaching! Which is which depends upon what authority one takes most seriously.

One person who took Christ's authority as ruling on this matter was no less a figure than Mahatma Gandhi. When giving an invited talk to the Economic Society at Allahabad University, India in 1916 he told his audience he had read the most basic book on economics. Identifying this book as the New Testament, Gandhi paraphrased Jesus from Matthew 6:33, "Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added to us." And then he concluded, "These are real economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our daily lives."³ Many Christians take this teaching seriously, as Gandhi did. For such persons, seeking the Kingdom of God is the goal of development, no matter what kind or where in the world.

The goal of development, in the Christian view, is to seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. The consequences of such seeking is the gaining of everything else that is good. The byproducts of such development are not violence and destruction, but peace and restoration. Seeking the Kingdom of God is what Christian development is all about!

Development as Stewardship

Thus far I have used the word stewardship only in reference to the Town of Dunn. Stewardship, of course means something like "looking after something in behalf of its owner." Of course, in the biblical view the owner is God, whose love for the world we should mirror with our own love. And, in the popular view the owner can be viewed as the many generations of human beings and other creatures that are yet to follow. But stewardship in the biblical view is even more profound than these meanings would suggest, because—and here comes a remarkable connection with God's economy and ours, as we already have considered them—because the biblical word for stewardship is the word, *oikonomia*!

At this point it is very fruitful to go back and substitute the word stewardship for the word *oikonomia* in what you have read up to this point. Doing so, we come to the conclusion that what we have been describing as development, in the rich and full sense of this term, necessarily is stewardship! Whatever we do within our human economy, we necessarily do within the economy of God's household—within God's *oikonomia*. And so we know at a very basic level that our stewardship must respect and fit into God's care for us and all Creation. We are stewards under God and thus work within the framework of God's love and provision for the cosmos.

Thus, what we call development goes well beyond the definitions often applied in society! Development is stewardship! It is our *oikonomia* informed by and subservient to God's *oikonomia*. But what does stewardship mean, in real terms? How do we answer the question, "Then what must we do?" Clearly, we have to deal with this question in the context of the other two questions we identified previously. But how? While our stewardship needs to be matched to particular situations and thus takes different forms in different places and at different times, we have some very significant principles provided us by the scriptures. Included among these are the principles of earthkeeping, fruitfulness, and sabbath. These three principles together give us more than enough to get whatever we do into line with God's economy as we seek His Kingdom and righteousness.

Biblical Principles for Stewardship⁴

1. *Earthkeeping Principle: As the Lord keeps and sustains us, so must we keep and sustain our Lord's creation*

Genesis 2:15 expects human people and their descendants to serve and keep the garden. The word translated keep is the Hebrew word *shamar*. And *shamar* means a loving, caring, sustaining keeping. This word also is used in the Aaronic blessing, from Numbers 6:24, "The Lord bless you and keep you." When we invoke God's blessing to keep us, it is not merely that God would keep us in a kind of preserved, inactive, uninteresting state. Instead, it is that God would keep us in all of our vitality, with all our energy and beauty. The keeping we expect of God when we invoke the Aaronic blessing is one that nurtures all of our life-sustaining and life-fulfilling relationships—with our family, spouse, and children, with our neighbors and our friends, with the land that sustains us, with the air and water, and with our God.

And so, too, with our keeping of the Garden—in our keeping of God's Creation. When Adam, Eve, and we, keep the Creation, we make sure that the creatures under our care and keeping are maintained with all their proper connections—connections with members of the same species, with the many other species with which they interact, with the soil, air, and water upon which they depend. The rich and full keeping that we invoke with the Aaronic blessing is the kind of rich and full keeping that we should bring to the garden of God—to God's creatures and to all of Creation. As God keeps believing people, so should God's people keep Creation.

2. *Sabbath Principle: We must provide for creation's sabbath rests*

Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 require that one day in seven be set aside as a day of rest for people and for animals. As human beings and animals are to be given their times of sabbath rest, so also is the land. Exodus 23 commands, "For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild beasts may eat." You may ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?" God's answer in Leviticus 25 and 26 is: "I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years," so do not worry, but practice this law so that your land will be fruitful. "If you follow My decrees and are careful to obey My commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit."

Christ in the New Testament clearly teaches that the Sabbath is made for the ones served by it—not the other way around. Thus, the sabbath year is given to protect the land from relentless exploitation, to help the land rejuvenate, to help it get things together again; it is a time of rest and restoration. This sabbath is not merely a legalistic requirement; rather, it is a profound principle. Thus in some Christian farming communities, the sabbath principle is practiced by letting the land rest every second year, "because that is what the land needs." And of course, it is not therefore restricted to agriculture but applies to all Creation. The Bible warns in Leviticus 26, "...if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, ...Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins...Then the land will

enjoy its sabbath years all the time it lies desolate... then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it."

3. *Fruitfulness Principle: We should enjoy, but must not destroy, creation's fruitfulness*

The fish of the sea and the birds of the air, as well as people, are given God's blessing of fruitfulness. In Genesis 1:20 and 22 God declares, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." And then God blesses these creatures with fruitfulness: "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." God's Creation reflects God's fruitful work—God's fruitful work of giving to land and life what satisfies. As it is written in Psalm 104, "He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among its branches. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work." And Psalm 23 describes how our providing God "... makes me lie down in green pastures...leads me beside quiet waters...restores my soul."

As God's fruitful work brings fruit to Creation, so too should ours. As God provides for the creatures, so should we people who were created to reflect God, whose image we bear. Imaging God, we too should provide for the creatures. And, as Noah spared no time, expense, or reputation when God's creatures were threatened with extinction, neither should we. Deluges—in Noah's time of water, and in our time of floods of people—sprawl over the land, displacing God's creatures, limiting their potential to obey God's command, "be fruitful and increase in number." To those who would allow a human flood across the land at the expense of all other creatures, the prophet Isaiah warns: "Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field until no space is left and you live alone in the land" (Isaiah 5:8).

Thus, while expected to enjoy Creation, while expected to partake of Creation's fruit, we may not destroy the fruitfulness upon which Creation's fullness depends. We must, with Noah, save the species whose interactions with each other, and with land and water, form the fabric of the biosphere. We should let the profound admonition of Ezekiel 34:18 reverberate and echo in our minds:

Is it not enough for you to feed on the green pastures?

Must you also trample them with your feet?

Is it not enough for you to drink the pure water?

Must you also muddy it with your feet?

Relief, for Development

But people often are prevented from being stewards of land and life. Development just might be out of the question when people's very survival is at stake or when they are so preoccupied with the present they have no time to envision the future. They may be so pressed for food or housing that immediate needs may overwhelm the larger goal. Or they may be so wrapped up in busy-ness that there simply is no time to think about who they are and what they and their world should become. Or they may suffer from lack of knowledge and ability to know. People in all of these cases are in need of relief—relief from the pressures and restrictions they face so that they can envision the future—can envision the Kingdom of God with all the integrity and righteousness that this means.

In my Town of Dunn, we needed relief of the second kind. We were well-fed and had our immediate needs satisfied. But the pressures of day-to-day requests for land divisions, exceptions, and permits consumed every moment available for decision-making. And so, we declared a moratorium on "business-as-usual" for two years. It gave us the time to do the inventory, write the stewardship plan, codify it into law, and develop the means for administering the plan with justice to ourselves, the people of Dunn. Relief, we found, was not only necessary for the starving and dispossessed, it also was needed for people so filled and possessed that we had no time to think through who we were, what our land was like, what we had under our care, and how we should guide our land and life into the future. Obtaining relief from these oppressive pressures was not an easy task, but it was done, and we discovered who we and our land were, and decided to point our town in the direction of achieving integrity of the land and its creatures, great and small, human and non-human.

Relief means providing whatever is needed for making it possible for people to keep the earth, to steward the land and its life. Relief means providing the opportunity and the means for people to connect with their land and its degradations, the life of the town and its long-range future. For us in the Town of Dunn, this meant stepping off the tread-mill of day-to-day decisions long enough to see where we were heading. Discovering that we were moving swiftly toward an unknown destination—going know-where fast—we slowed down enough to look at various "roadmaps" and decided where we would point ourselves. The goal we set was the goal of environmental and community integrity—our formulation of the biblical admonition to seek first the Kingdom of God.

In the village of Karambari, consisting of 1000 families, relief of the third kind was needed.⁵ These people needed the means for visualizing their God-given stewardship of the land and its life. In providing this, their pastor, Rev. Isaac Muringih, used examples the people could remember, drawing on actual observations and on memorable Bible stories. In doing this, he provided the opportunity for people who cannot read and write to be stewards of Creation. Bringing them to the place where once there was a

spring, now with its source cut off through human abuse, he helped them remember the fresh water that once flowed there and medicinal trees that once lived around it. Using this to illustrate how God created the world with provisions, he had them describe the corresponding degradations.⁶ And following his telling of the Bible story of the fat and lean cows in Pharaoh's dream, they worked to restore degraded provisions to their earlier condition. Combining this with learning how their inherited land from forefathers is not something they own but must respect and care for, he taught them how development must protect the community of life and how everybody can get involved in deciding the goal and course of development. To engage in development, people often need relief. But there is more.

Freedom, for Stewardship

Relief is very much related to freedom. Sometimes relief simply cannot be given to the degree necessary for authentic development. People simply may be deprived of the opportunity to be stewards of land and life. Relief from hunger, from busy-ness, while necessary, may not be enough. People must have the freedom to be stewards of land and life, if they are to bring their oikos and oikonomia in accord with God's. The prophet Isaiah points us rightly when he asks,

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?
(Isaiah 58:6 NIV)

Freedom from stewardship is not what such freedom is about. It is not exploitation of workers, ritualistic fasting, or moaning about one's sins. Freedom for stewardship is what such freedom is about. Freedom to be stewards requires doing away with the yoke of oppression and satisfying the needs of the oppressed. Provision of such freedom leads to authentic development: shining of light in the darkness, never-failing springs of water, well-watered gardens, rebuilding foundations, and restorers of streets with dwellings (cf. Isaiah 58 NIV). Freedom for stewardship is freedom to seek the Kingdom of God as the first priority, it is freedom to lay aside the seeking of "other things," it is freedom that leads to authentic development.

In seeking the freedom for stewardship, we must keep watch closely or we run the risk of becoming advocates for those who seek freedom from stewardship. I have read a piece by a corporate executive, for example, who wrote that the book of Proverbs tell us that people without a vision will perish, and then uses this to argue that if his workers are not strong and competitive, they are not "winners." Using Proverbs as his launching pad he told them that getting bigger will give them the muscle that will beat their competition and the ability to set the rules for the game. After reading his claim that he believed, as Darwin did, in the survival of the fittest, I picked up my Bible and read the same passage, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law" (Proverbs 29:18, NIV). From the Living Bible paraphrase I read, "Where there is ignorance of God, the people run wild; but what a wonderful thing is it for a nation to know and keep his laws!" We must keep our oikonomia within God's oikonomia and must preserve our and others' freedom for responsible stewardship.

Addressing the Human Predicament

Finally, an often-overlooked matter that must be addressed in development is "the human predicament." The apostle Paul states it this way, "The good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." In pursuing the Kingdom, we must recognize that it is not enough to believe. If our belief is not put into practice, it does no earthly good. It does no heavenly good either. We need to recognize our shortcomings and failings now and in the coming months and years, and make provisions for addressing them. During our moments of peace, we need to make sure we establish procedures and means to make sure that we continue to pursue the Kingdom of God, despite distractions and tendencies to go our own way. In short, we must face the reality of "the human predicament" by whatever means are available to us and are consistent with God's will. Laws and rules need to be enacted to protect us from our own deficiencies, and means must be implemented to assure that these laws and rules will be enforced—within our families, communities, agencies, and governments. The freedom for being stewards of the Kingdom is assured by laws and rules that protect and assure the stewardship mission we have under God in the seeking of God's Kingdom. The freedom to engage in Kingdom work—to be stewards of everything God has put in our trust—must be preserved.

"Evangelical," "Relief," and "Development"

The title of this piece is "Creation Care and Evangelical Relief and Development," and we come now to the point where we can examine why. The word, evangelical in the Greek New Testament is eu anghellion—the true message, the good news, the good news of the Kingdom of God. It is for this Kingdom we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done. On earth..." We not only pray this prayer in word, but also in deed. Indeed, we seek first the Kingdom in our lives and work on earth, doing so in ways that are in accord with the way things are done in heaven—so behaving on earth

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that heaven will not be a shock to us. Thus, what we do is evangelical. We have a message that must not be selfishly kept. The message of the wholeness and integrity of the Kingdom of God, and its seeking as our very first priority must be proclaimed by what we say. More importantly the Kingdom of God must be proclaimed as our very first priority by what we do. The Amish poem entitled, "I'd Rather See A Sermon," tells us something about how we should preach the Kingdom!

But preaching the Kingdom does little good, if there is no relief. Relief must be achieved among the impoverished and among the wealthy—in fact among all of us—so that it becomes possible to work out in our own lives, land, and communities how we can seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and translate this seeking into practice that respects, restores, and rejoices in the integrity of God's Creation and his coming Kingdom, for whose coming we strive.

And finally, preaching the Kingdom in deed, relieved from diversionary pressures, we engage in true development—real stewardship—that is measured not by worldly standards, but by the degree to which integrity of Creation and the attainment of God's Kingdom is achieved. People are administrators of God's oikonomia on earth. Our success is measured by the degree to which the whole Creation, waiting in eager expectation on tippy toes, with neck outstretched—looking for our arrival—can say with honesty and joy, "Here they come! The children of God!"

The heavens and the whole Creation declare the glory of God! That was our conviction as we stood together that evening on the mountain top, singing. Today, as then, it seems late, dark, and drizzly. But while singing praises to the Lord and reflecting God's love for the world with our own, the light can again break through the darkness. Creation can embrace our coming, and we can sing, "It is well, it is well with my soul!"

Endnotes

1. Isaiah 66:1-2 NIV (this Hebrew verse is quoted in Greek in Acts 7:49-50). Also, we read from Hebrews 3:4, "For every house (oikos) is built by some man; but He that built all things (panta) is God."
2. Acts 7:49 NIV.
3. Mahatma Gandhi, 1916. In the inaugural speech of H. E. Sri Krishna Kant, "Caste, Community, Conversion," at the conference on "Main Streaming the Church for Nation Building," National Council of Churches of India, Hyderabad on 6.7.91. Copy from Job Ebenezer, Director, Environmental Stewardship Office, ELCA, 8765 Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631, USA.
4. These principles are excerpted from: DeWitt, C. B. 1994. Christian Environmental Stewardship: Preparing the Way for Action. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 46(2)(June): 80-89.
5. For other examples of "missionary earthkeeping" see DeWitt, C. B. and Ghilleen T. Prance, eds. 1992. *Missionary Earthkeeping*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press. ISBN 0-86554-390-9 (hard); ISBN 0-86554-404-2 (pbk).
6. For descriptions of "seven provisions" and "seven degradations" upon which Rev. Muringih based his approach, see DeWitt, C. B., ed. 1991. *The Environment and the Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 156 pp. ISBN 0-8010-3006-4, also available in French as *L'Environnement et le Chrétien: Pistes de réflexion tirées des Écritures*. Québec: La Clairière, 150 pp. ISBN 2-921840-02-2, 1995.

Development and Social Change

Unit 3

A Theology for Engaging
A Hurting World, Part 2

God's perspective on development and social change



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 3 - A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World, Part 2

God’s perspective upon development and social change

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Additional Readings:

1. “A Different Kind of Kingdom” by David W. Bercot
2. “On Earth as in Heaven” excerpt from a May 2007 sermon by Bishop N.T. Wright
3. “Is God really on the side of the poor?” by Ron Sider, an article from *Sojourners Magazine*
4. “Creation Care and the Mission of God” by Howard A. Snyder

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain the full mission of Jesus;
2. Explain what Jesus meant when he referred to the kingdom of God and what that means for us;
3. Explain the Biblical basis of God’s concern for the poor and oppressed, his concern for the entire creation, and what God expects of us in that regard.

Introduction

In Unit Two we considered God’s vision for the world that was brought to reality during the six days of creation, the role initially assigned to Adam and Eve and the purpose for humanity as a whole. We also considered the impact of the fall on the environment and on the lives of men, women and children. God’s mercy on humanity, that fact that we have not been destroyed has had a great price.

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

What relevance do you feel our discussion in Unit 2 has upon our chief concern in this course – issues related to development and social change?

Throughout history we read in the scriptures that at different times God considered putting an end to the evil that had been let loose upon creation—the evil that is resident in the hearts of human beings. We were created to be caretakers, but the virus of selfishness that invaded the human race led to us becoming its destroyers and hard taskmasters instead. God could kill the virus, but God must then also kill the host. God’s loving heart and commitment to the original vision for all creation has prevented God from doing that. But where does that leave us in the story of all things? Are we forever in this chapter of wrong seeming to have the upper hand over all that is right? Ahh, but all is not lost - **His-story** continues.

The mission of Jesus

From the moment Eve, and then Adam, demonstrated to God that humanity could not be trusted, God determined to find a way to undo what sin had accomplished in them and continues to accomplish in and through every generation since that time. Adam and Eve were forced to leave the garden lest they live for eternity with self-determination and self-centeredness controlling their lives and hearts. In succeeding generations, humanity’s selfishness continued to demonstrate itself. God was tempted to destroy everything but did not because of one man, Noah, whose life gave God hope. God decided to start over with this man and his descendents. However, God’s optimism did not last long, as the very next generation violated God’s trust yet again. So, God chose another man who had promise, Abraham, to father a nation which would be a light to the world, attracting people to leave their wickedness and confusion and turn to the God and Father of all creation. However, that did not work out either, and so, through Moses, detailed instructions were given to guide Israel in living a life acceptable to God. But, again they rebelled and went their own way.

Later we find God calling out, “O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved.” (Jeremiah 4:14). God’s call was not answered, and God was left with the very disappointing reality that humanity would not freely choose to live life as God designed it to be lived and experienced, good and full. To contain the wickedness and its effects, God resorted to using law and punishment, control and fear as the means to govern human behavior. However, God knew that was not a long-term solution either. It appeared the evil virus would live on until the last of us would die, finally and eternally.

Oh, how far humanity had fallen and would continue to fall! Still, God did not give up. God put into motion a plan which only God could have conceived and implemented. The covenant God had made with Noah’s descendants and the living creatures that survived the great flood dictated that God would never resort to such measures again as an attempt to start over. However, a fresh start was exactly what God needed to do. How would God do it? The same way God attempted to do so through Israel, but this time with one critical difference.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

- 1) Read John 3:16-18. Why was Jesus born, and what did he come to accomplish during his life on earth?
- 2) Now read John 8:36; Romans 6:6; and II Corinthians 5:21. What additional information do those passages provide regarding the previous question?

Most Christians would give an answer to that first question very quickly—Jesus came to save us. He died for our sins so that we might be forgiven and gain entrance to heaven when we die. There are

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many variations of this response which could be presented. We may use different words, theological terms/concepts and scripture verses, but by and large they will all point to that same basic answer. I think the Bible passage most often used in this regard would be John 3:16-17—“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

To have our sins forgiven and the account of them wiped clean from the memory of God is awesome. Jesus accomplished that for us, but he came to do more than that; he came to set us free. Free from what? Free from that virus to which we have referred to as original sin, the “I” virus of self-determination that invaded the human heart, and to use Paul’s words from Romans – then became the “master” of the human race.

The term “redeem” means to purchase back something that had been ours, but at some point was given over to another owner. In Romans 7:14, Paul writes, “. . . I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.” Who sold us? God? No, we sold ourselves. In choosing to be “like God,” we thought we would become the masters of our own lives, but that was not the case; sin became our master instead. Therefore, Jesus came to redeem us, not only to secure forgiveness for our sins, but also to return the ownership of our lives back to the God who created us in love. His death destroyed the power sin had over us. According to I Corinthians 5:21, Jesus accomplished this by taking the sin virus into himself. He became the host on our behalf, and then he reaped what we sowed; he got what we deserved. He suffered; he died, so that we might be set free. Free to do what? Free to continue that life of self-centeredness that has caused grief and pain to the heart of God all through history? In response to that question, in Romans 6:1, Paul shouts, “By no means!”

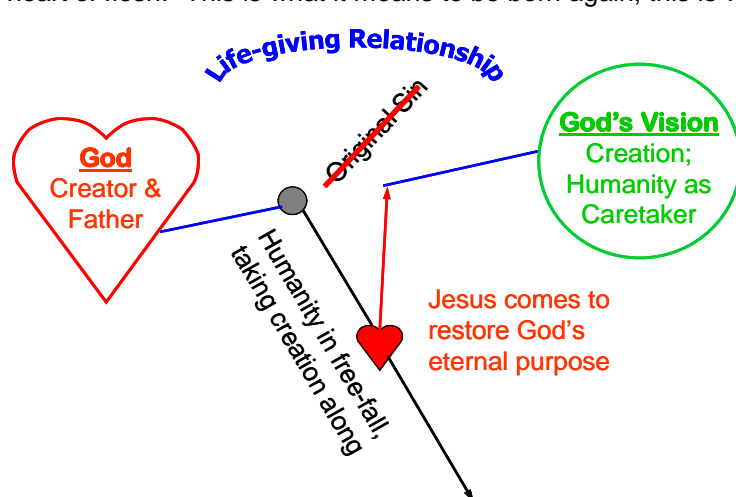
Jesus has set us free to get back on the path from which we had fallen, the vision and purpose God originally had in mind for us. Like the bus lying on its side whose driver had carelessly run it off the road and down the hill does not reflect the intent of the bus owner, so the world, in its fallen state, due to the willful wrongdoing of humanity does not reflect God’s intent either. Jesus restores us to a place where we are set free to begin fulfilling God’s original and eternal purpose for us.

The whole purpose of the Christian life is the recovery of the original image of God.
(Ranald Macaulay and Jerram Barrs)

The Christian life . . . is a recovery of what was lost at the fall. (Eugene Peterson)

The supreme work of Christ in redemption is not to save us from hell, but to restore us to God-likeness again. (AW Tozer)

Paul explains in Romans 6, that it is not enough to simply “believe” that Jesus died for us; we must actually join him in death before we can be raised with him in life. Jesus said that we need to be born again, but for that to happen, we first need to die. How does a doctor or nurse determine if a patient is alive or not? They search for a pulse. The pulse is the echo of the heart. If there is no pulse, the heart is dead. How did the soldier standing below the cross determine if Jesus was truly dead? He punctured his side. Out came both water and blood. The blood had separated into plasma and clear fluid. The heart had stopped pumping. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again,” he meant that through faith our old heart controlled by sin must stop beating, just as his did while on the cross. Then this wonderful provision of God that was promised through the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah can take place. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” This is what it means to be born again; this is what Jesus accomplished for us.



The old covenant was a covenant of law. It operated by means of control via threat of punishment. It could instruct in what is right, it could punish for what is wrong, but it could not go to the root of the problem and give us new hearts free from the tyranny of evil unleashed in the world in that fateful moment in the Garden of Eden. In Matthew 7:17-18, Jesus said, “Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.” The gospel, the new covenant is not about trying to make bad trees produce good fruit; we should not even expect that. The gospel is about

turning bad trees into good trees; the good fruit will come naturally as a result. The bad tree must die so that the good tree might spring to life.

We must stop and consider this critical truth. The world is in the mess it is because people live from old hearts, hearts held captive by selfishness. I do not mean that people are being punished, suffering at the hands of an angry God. God does not hate us, although we deserve that, but rather God grieves with a heart filled with pain. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son . . .” God is not punishing us; we are reaping what we have sown. God is not doing it to us; we have brought it upon ourselves, and as caretakers gone completely wrong, we have brought it upon creation around us as well. We humans can’t fix it! We Christians can’t fix it! We should not even be surprised by all the evil around us; distressed, yes, but not surprised. Bad trees produce bad fruit! Let us quit complaining about all the bad fruit; let us quit using moral judgment and Christian code, lobbying for governmental and ecclesiastical control. The bad trees need to become good trees, and then good fruit will come because God’s Spirit will give birth to it and bring it to maturity. After all, we are talking about the fruit of the Spirit. Only Jesus can fix what has gone wrong; only he can provide the remedy, and he has. He offers to men, women and children new hearts, through faith, by grace. He also offers us hope—hope that the original vision and purpose of God may not be lost after all. We fell, but God caught us and set us right again.

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

- 1) Read Isaiah 11:6-9, Revelation 21:1-5 and Revelation 22:1-5 and then write a short summary in your own words of how you would describe to someone this hope that the Creator God offers us through Christ.
- 2) What elements do the above passages have in common with what we studied in Genesis chapters one and two as being God’s original vision?

I find it fascinating and comforting that the end of God’s story looks a lot like its beginning. God’s vision has not changed from Genesis chapter one through to Revelation chapter twenty-two. Jesus said he is the Alpha and the Omega, didn’t he? What he started, he will also finish.

It is the sustained affirmation of the Bible that the creator of heaven and earth is at work to mend and redeem and repair and rehabilitate the world so that it may become the good creation . . . the new creation . . . that God has always and everywhere intended. (Walter Brueggemann)

God seeks not only to save us from something (sin, death, destruction, hell, etc.) but also to something and for something. “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10) “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (Jeremiah 29:11)

At various points within the story of God, God has attempted to start over, to try again. We see that God has never been satisfied just to wait until Revelation 21 and 22 breaks through into history as a complete restoration of the original vision. Rather, God has been and still is attempting to bring restoration to creation as we experience it now in our own lives. We see God making this attempt with Noah, Abraham and others. However, there came a time when God realized that the world needed a second Adam to whom God could pose that same question that (I believe) was in God’s mind regarding the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden—“Can I trust you?”

And so, in the fullness of time, Jesus came. The question was asked, Jesus said yes and then he backed up his answer with faithfulness unto death. He also backed it up with his faithfulness in life. He proved himself as God’s agent of change, restoration, and transformation, not just regarding the new heaven and earth that is yet to come, but also the present heaven and earth that we now experience.

The coming of the Kingdom

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

We know that Jesus came to die so that we might be set free from sin, but was there more to the mission of Jesus than that? Read Luke 4:16-21. What is the context of this story, and what is the significance of what took place and what was said?

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In a sense, we can think of the coming of Jesus as an invasion. Certainly he is Savior, the picture of the sacrificial lamb, but he is also Lord, the King of Kings, the great “I AM.” He came to take back what is rightfully his—all that came under the power of the god of this world that day in the garden of Eden when humanity invited evil into a creation that before that moment had only experienced “It is very good.” John 1:1-3, 14 describes the coming of Jesus in the following terms:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The very One who had made all things came to dwell within his creation. The King had come, but not only the King, for along with him, he brought his kingdom. Jesus later taught his disciples the following words as a prayer: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” What is the will of the great King that he came to reinforce through this invasion of his? What is it that he wills to do? Well, he said it himself, didn’t he?

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

In the year 1719, Isaac Watts, the very well known Christian hymn writer wrote the words to one of most loved carols that churches around the world have been singing at Christmas time ever since.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders, of His love.

Perhaps because it is nearly Christmas time that I thought of that hymn as I write this portion of this MA course, but I only just now thought of it in regard to the theme of the invasion of God, the coming of the King to establish his rule and will within creation. It is that third verse that I find particularly striking: “He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found.” That is it; that is what Jesus stood up to say that day in the synagogue as he read from Isaiah—wherever he would find the effects of the curse of evil and sin, he would reverse it and in its place bring blessing – the Shalom of God. Now that is good news indeed! Perhaps we could think of it as development and social change from God’s perspective.

How far and to what extent can the curse be found in today’s world? We considered that question in Unit 2 as we considered the state of the world as it currently exists, but let us look again at one more dimension, that for me is even more troubling.

In the early 1990s, the African country of Rwanda was looked upon as one of the greatest successes of missionary efforts in modern times.

On an April morning in 1994 I heard the radio transmission of the BBC’s report—my wife Laura and I were far from our home, working with a Christian school in Nairobi, Kenya, and not more than several hundred miles from the strife. The airplane carrying the president of Rwanda had crashed. Foul play was suspected, and the terror had begun. But at that point, no one appeared to have any premonition of the extent of the slaughter soon to occur. Over the next several months, Rwanda—the “most Christian country in Africa,” with as much as 90% of the population claiming some Christian Church affiliation—became the site of genocide unlike any in recent history, with as many as 800,000 men, women, and children slaughtered within a 100 day period. (Camp, pp. 15,16)

Christian Hutus, primarily using machetes, clubs and farming tools horribly murdered their Christian Tutsi neighbors and even extended family members. In response, many Tutsi Christians sought revenge in similar manner. The haunting question? **What went wrong with this Missions “success”**

story? In his very informative book, Lee Camp goes on to provide his personal reflections on that question.

. . . the Rwandan genocide highlights a recurrent failure of much historic Christianity. The proclamation of the "gospel" has often failed to emphasize a fundamental element of the teaching of Jesus, and indeed, of orthodox Christian doctrine: "Jesus is Lord" is a radical claim, one that is ultimately rooted in questions of allegiance, of ultimate authority, of the ultimate norm and standard for human life. Instead, Christianity has often sought to ally itself comfortably with allegiance to other authorities, be they political, economic, cultural, or ethnic. Could it be that "Jesus is Lord" has become one of the most widespread Christian lies? Have Christians claimed the lordship of Jesus, but systematically set aside the call to obedience to this Lord? At least in Rwanda, with "Christian Hutus" slaughtering "Christian Tutsis" (and vice versa), "Christian" apparently served as a faith brand name—a "spirituality," or a "religion"—but not a commitment to a common Lord. (Camp, p. 16)

I want you to study what I consider to be one of the most disturbing photos I have ever seen; and I have seen many in my lifetime. I believe this is an AP photo. I found it on the internet some years back and have not been able to trace its exact source, but I do know its context. It is a picture taken during the initial invasion of Iraq by the United States military under the direction of the George W. Bush junior administration.

It is an American soldier. What is he reading? Yes, it is the Bible. And where in the Bible is he reading? To me it appears roughly where the gospels are located, perhaps he is reading the words of Jesus himself.



If you look very closely you can see he has a book marker. And what is the word written on it? It can barely be made out, but it is the word "**life**." Now look at the cloth he has wrapped around his head. What words are written there? An abbreviated form of "**Kill Them All**." Now, I ask you, how can this be possible? If Jesus is his Lord, is it the Lord Jesus that he is following into battle? Is it the Lord Jesus who is commanding those troops? Is it the Lord Jesus seeking to destroy the enemies of the American political structure and economic elite? Is it the Lord Jesus finding excuses to explain away the killing and maiming of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilian men, women and children conveniently labeled as "collateral damage?"

Could it be that "Jesus is Lord" has become one of the most widespread Christian lies? I would consider this question put forward by Lee Camp to be no less than an inspired prophetic call to which each of us who claims that Jesus is our "personal Lord" would be wise to consider. In fact, it would be very advantageous that we do so now, because it will be no less than Jesus himself who will one day ask that question directly of us: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46) Of one thing we can be certain, the Prince of Peace never said the words "Kill them all!"

In the time of Jesus, he was not the only one whom people were claiming to be Lord. In fact, it was a relative handful who were making such a claim. To do so publicly was like signing your own death certificate. Why? Because in Rome it was shouted throughout the empire that there was no lord but Caesar! To suggest otherwise was considered treason and treachery against the throne. Caesar was also proclaimed to be "king of kings." That is why Pilate was so preoccupied with the claims being made about Jesus, to the point of asking him directly, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Where there is a king, there also must be a kingdom. Jesus spoke more about the Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, etc. than any other topic. Now, every time I present this material in various workshops, I always ask the question: "How many of you have sat under preaching or teaching that focused specifically and at length on the Kingdom of God, or how many of you have ever given your own time and energy to preaching and teaching on that topic?" So far, the responses are almost always consistent—one or two people raise their hand at the most! And yet, this is the topic that Jesus preached and taught about most often. It is no wonder we have situations like Rwanda, Lebanon, Northern Ireland and many other places around the world and throughout history where people on both sides of a conflict, claiming Jesus as their king, do battle with each other and with others over religious convictions! That is how the kingdoms of this world under the power of the god of this world (Satan) operate! I cannot emphasize this enough—it is because we do not understand, we have not been taught or perhaps we have rejected the central message of Christ: the Kingdom of God has come.

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I challenge you to do what I did recently. I wrote down the most common themes that fill our Christian talk, be it in sermons, teachings, books, songs, prayers or whatever. Then I went to the gospels and searched through them to find out how often Jesus used those words or focused on those themes. A few samples of what I discovered are listed below.

- Jesus speaks of being “Born again” only twice in the four gospels—both times in John 3:3-7. “Personal salvation” is never mentioned by Jesus. He mentions being “saved” eight times.
- He mentions “scripture(s)” 13 times; “It is written,” 30 times. He refers to “reading” 11 times.
- He speaks of “tithing” on two occasions, both in a negative tone—contrasting it with true giving (Matthew 23:23; Luke 18:12). He mentions “offerings” once but “giving” to people in need 21 times
- He never mentions “going to church” and speaks of gathering together in a group only once—“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20)
- He refers to “buildings” only once—that they would be torn down. He speaks of the “temple, synagogue” as a meeting place for his disciples 1 time—that they would be “put out” of them
- “Baptizing” is mentioned only once—Matthew 28.
- He never mentions that we will “go to heaven,” but to the thief on the cross, he mentions he would join him in Paradise. The meaning of “paradise” is widely believed by scholars to always represent the state of the earth as it was in the Garden of Eden.
- However, Jesus spoke specifically about the Kingdom 91 times.

What is this Kingdom that Jesus speaks so much about?

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

Reflect upon the attached reading at the end of this unit by David Bercot titled *A Different Kind of Kingdom* and then answer the following questions.

- 1) What did the people of Jesus’ day believe the Messiah would do when he came, and what his Kingdom would look like when it was established? (See also Luke 24:17-21; John 6:14-15)
- 2) How did Jesus actually behave as Messiah, and how does that compare to what people of his day were expecting? (See also Matthew 9:10-12; Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:36-39; Matthew 26:50-56; Mark 10:42-45; Mark 11:15-17; John 3:1-2; John 10:11)
- 3) How did Jesus describe his kingdom, and how does that compare to the concept of “kingdom” not only among both Jews and Romans but also in our world today? (See also Matthew 6:9-10; Matthew 13:31-33; Matthew 13:44-45; Mark 4:26-29; Luke 10:5-9; John 18:36)

There are four prominent theological viewpoints regarding the nature of the Kingdom:

- 1) It is the purely subjective relationship between the human spirit and God’s Spirit—an inward power that enters the human soul and lays hold of it, exercising a few basic religious truths of universal application.
- 2) It is an entirely futuristic realm to be established at the end of the age in which God supernatural and dramatically brings a close to current history and inaugurates a new heavenly order.
- 3) It is the realm of the Church’s influence. Wherever the Church grows, the kingdom grows. Wherever the Church gains control, the kingdom gains control. It is the Church’s responsibility to grow and exert itself until the whole world is eventually brought into the Kingdom.
- 4) It is the ideal pattern for human society—a model and collection of practices and norms that, if practiced, could put to right all the wrongs experienced by mankind. It is generally a social, economic order with little emphasis upon individual spiritual transformation. (Source: Based on the writings of the late George Eldon Ladd, Professor of New Testament Theology, Fuller Seminary)

Based on your reflections related to the questions in the above answer box, which of those theories do you feel match the historical and Biblical understanding of what the kingdom is? In my mind, none of them match! And so we need to consider another way of defining it.

The primary meaning of both the Hebrew and Greek words used in scripture is always that kingdom refers to the “rule, authority, will” of the King himself. The Kingdom of God

exists anywhere and everywhere that the will and purposes of God are being fulfilled. It is with this understanding that Jesus teaches us to pray “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In like manner Jesus tells us to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.” The object of this seeking is not the Church, nor is it a place - be it heaven or earth. Rather, it is seeking that the manner in which we live life reflects God’s will and purposes. The kingdom is a way of living and being. (Source: the writings of the late George Eldon Ladd, Professor of New Testament Theology, Fuller Seminary)

When will the Kingdom come?

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

Reflect on the attached reading at the end of this unit by N.T. Wright, titled “*On Earth as in Heaven,*” and then answer the following questions.

- 1) If we were to think of a timeline which moves from past, to present, to near future, to the distant future, what do the following scriptures instruct us regarding the coming of God’s kingdom? (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 7:21; Matthew 12:28; Matthew 21:31; Mark 9:47; Mark 10:23; Mark 14:25; Luke 11:52; Luke 16:16; Luke 17:20-21)
- 2) In what manner do the above passages and Wright’s comments in the attached reading line up with or conflict with common views among Christians in your context regarding the coming of the kingdom?
- 3) Why is it important to have a correct understanding of when the kingdom is to come?

The biblical consensus is that the kingdom of God has come, is now coming and will come in the future. This kingdom currently exists wherever and within and through whomever the way of the King is realized at any given time. However, scripture is equally clear that God’s kingdom will never be fully realized in this present world of competing and adversarial kingdom interests and agendas—those of the kingdoms of this world and those of the kingdom of Christ.

Why is this so important to understand as it relates to our topic in this course? Many Christians have given up hope for the world in which they now live. One reason for this despair is that their understanding of the kingdom of God is a place where everything will be made right, and this is only a future phenomena. Why try to fix something that can’t be fixed and will ultimately be destroyed by God anyway? It is true that the scripture speaks of the current heaven and earth being subjected to fire. But the scripture also speaks of fire having another function—not to destroy, but to purify, to make something which is marred into something that is like a radiant jewel. Jesus said the Kingdom is among us. The invasion has already begun. What is wrong is already being made right. Can we now understand why this “gospel” was described by Jesus as being such Good News to the poor?

What the Bible teaches about God’s heart for the poor and oppressed

I came to understand the message of the prophets and the message of Jesus; that the God who revealed Himself to us is not a neutral God, but a God who takes sides with the poor. And therefore we, as priest-prophets of the church of the New Testament can’t be neutral either. (Philip, Peter. *Journey with the Poor*. Australia. Collins Dove. 1988. Pg. 17.)

“Jesus wept.” This text is the shortest passage in the Bible. John 11:35 is only two words, but those two words speak volumes about God. We got a glimpse of God’s heart in Genesis 6. When God looked on the capacity for evil within the human heart, instead of experiencing anger, God experienced grief and pain. To the questions or perhaps challenges we sometimes face, asking for proof that this God we worship is worthy of the praise, adoration and loyalty of all people, I have come to a place in my life where this is the answer I prefer to give: “*Because he is the God who grieves, who weeps, whose heart is filled with pain; who could destroy everything and everyone in an instant, but who chooses instead to redeem and restore.*”

I believe Christendom should spend far less time studying and debating theology and far more time studying and understanding the heart of God. Not only we Christians, but also the world around us would be better off if we did so. Allow me to put this very clearly and very simply, but thoroughly emphatically—God is not blind to the sufferings of creation. God’s ears are not deaf to the cries of the poor and all the inhabitants of creation. God’s mind is not dull to the plans and mockery of creation’s

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exploiters. Our God is bountiful in mercy, but God is also just, and as stated in the book of Micah, God's justice will one day roll down like thunder upon those who continue to choose evil over good.

I have just recently finished a very quick search of the NIV Bible and found over 300 references which speak of some aspect of God's concern for the poor, hungry, oppressed, needy, widows, fatherless, displaced people, etc. Below is a sample of those verses:

- "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing." (Deuteronomy 10:17-18)
- "But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless." (Psalm 10:14)
- "My whole being will exclaim, 'Who is like you, O LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them.'" (Psalm 35:10)
- "I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy." (Psalm 140:12)
- "He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked." (Psalm 146:7-9)
- "You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat." (Isaiah 25:4)
- "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." (Isaiah 41:17)
- "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh." (Luke 6:20-21)
- "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?" (James 2:5-6)

But my search was conducted in a manner of maybe an hour. Others have made far more extensive investigations of scripture to find out what it says about God's Good News for the poor. One such search is described by Jim Wallis, a leading Christian activist.

I've told the story many times about how we discovered a "Bible full of holes," when it came to the question of the poor. Here's what we did. Our band of eager young first-year seminary students did a thorough study to find every verse in the Bible that dealt with the poor. We scoured the Old and New Testaments for every single reference to poor people, to wealth and poverty, to injustice and oppression, and to what the response to all those subjects was to be for the people of God.

We found several thousand verses in the Bible on the poor and God's response to injustice. We found it to be the second most prominent theme in the Hebrew scriptures Old Testament—the first was idolatry, and the two often were related. One of every sixteen verses in the New Testament is about the poor or the subject of money (Mammon, as the gospels call it). In the first three (Synoptic) gospels it is one out of ten verses, and in the book of Luke, it is one in seven!

After we completed our study, we all sat in a circle to discuss how the subject had been treated in the various churches in which we had grown up. Astoundingly, but also tellingly, not one of us could remember even one sermon on the poor from the pulpit of our home churches. In the Bible, the poor were everywhere; yet the subject was not to be found in our churches.

Then we decided to try what became a famous experiment. One member of our group took an old Bible and a new pair of scissors and began the long process of literally cutting out every single biblical text about the poor. It took him a very long time. . . . When the zealous seminarian was done with all his editorial cuts, that old Bible would hardly hold together, it was so sliced up. It was literally falling apart in our hands. What we had done was to create a Bible full of holes.

I began taking that damaged and fragile Bible out with me when I preached. I'd hold it up high above American congregations and say, "Brothers and sisters, this is our American Bible; it is full of holes." Each one of us might as well take our Bibles, a pair of scissors, and begin cutting out all the scriptures we pay no attention to, all the biblical texts that we just ignore.

We still have that old Bible full of holes. It serves as a constant reminder to me of how you can miss so much, even when it is right in front of your eyes. I learned in my little home church that people can really love the Bible, believe they are basing their lives

upon it, and yet completely miss some of its most central themes. We don't see what would most challenge us and perhaps change our lives.

Yet, down deep in our souls, we do know the poor are there: in the heart of God, in the compassion of Christ, and in our own communities—if we would just open our eyes. Revealing the poor in the scriptures and in our own world is always the prophetic task of faith. To discover the forgotten poor is more than the work of "social action," as some would call it. It is rather to put our Bibles back together again. Indeed, it is nothing less than to restore the integrity of the Word of God—in our lives, our congregations, our communities, and our world. What could be more important? (*God's Politics: Why the Right gets it wrong and the Left doesn't get it*, Jim Wallis. Pages 212-214)

I recall the first time I became aware of this emphasis within scripture. It was about thirty years ago. Having already served with a mission agency in several countries primarily doing evangelism, my wife and I had been asked by some friends to come and help them start a Christian relief and development agency to work among refugees pouring out of a particular country which had been very closed to the gospel. We looked on this situation as God's hand bringing people out of a context within which they had been nearly impossible to reach through evangelistic efforts. Now they were fleeing by the millions—uprooted, lives shattered and hopefully, set adrift from religious moorings which had kept them bound for centuries. To us, the whole scenario looked like an apple ripe for picking—easy visas to do evangelism among unreached people, but then we began to hear their stories and to learn their names.

Our first child was born in a small remote mission hospital not too far from a major refugee camp. While there we noticed a young woman alone with a small child. We could see they were refugees and that they felt very much out of place and shy of the strangers around them. We spoke some of their language by then, so we befriended them and learned their tragic story. While fleeing the fighting and en-route to the camp nearby, the young girl had been hit by a truck, her bones shattered from the waist down. It did not take us long to begin to care deeply for them. Even though we parted ways without ever having "witnessed" to them in the traditional sense to which we were so accustomed, we had prayed for the girl and her mother at her bedside, helped them as best we could and then visited them in their camp after they and we were released from the hospital.

About that same time I began to notice how often the Bible mentioned those who are poor and oppressed, those who were like the millions of refugees all around us. I also noted that it was not just their spiritual state that concerned our heavenly Father. He was concerned not only about saving souls for heaven but also about saving and restoring lives now. It changed my whole way of thinking about mission and "outreach."

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

Below are three sets of Bible passages. Read the verses in each set and then answer the question which follows.

- 1) Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Leviticus 19:9; Psalm 82:2-4; Proverbs 29:7; Proverbs 31:8-9; Jeremiah 22:3; Micah 6:8; Luke 3:7-11. What should be our response to the poor and oppressed?
- 2) Deuteronomy 15:9-10; Proverbs 14:31; Proverbs 19:17; Proverbs 22:9; Jeremiah 7:5-7; Jeremiah 22:16; Luke 12:33; Luke 14:12-14; Acts 10:1-4. What will happen if we respond as God wishes?
- 3) Isaiah 3:14-15; Jeremiah 5:27-29; Ezekiel 16:49; Amos 2:6-7; Amos 8:4-7; Luke 16:19-25; James 5:1-6. What will happen if we do not respond as God wishes?

Now it should be obvious that God is quite serious about the plight of the poor and oppressed. Scripture explains that in the future there will be a great day of judgment coming for all of us. It is actually to be a day, not so much of punishment, but of recognition and separation. God will publicly recognize those who have proven they are fit to live eternally in the new creation spoken about in the books of Isaiah and Revelation. It will not matter what we claim to be, what theology we believe or how "religious" we have been. Each of us will have to give account for how we have responded to the needs of those around us. The picture is presented very clearly by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will

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separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me, I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

Then they themselves will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' *And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

Henry Drummond is considered by some to have preached one of the greatest sermons in history when in the early 1880s he spoke words of rare clarity, insight and prophetic urgency regarding the text we have just read:

In the book of Matthew where the judgment day is depicted for us in the imagery of the One seated upon the throne and dividing the sheep from the goats, the test of a man then is not, 'How have I believed?' but 'How have I loved?' The test of religion, the final test of religion, is not religiousness, but love. I say the final test of religion at that great day is not religiousness, but love; not what I have done, not what I have believed, but how I have discharged the common charities of life.

It is the Son of Man before whom the nations of the world shall be gathered. It is in the presence of humanity that we shall be charged. And the spectacle itself, the mere sight of it, will silently judge each one. Those will be there whom we have met and helped; or the un-pitied multitude whom we neglected or despised. No other charge than lovelessness shall be preferred.

Be not deceived. The words which all of us shall one day hear sound not of theology, but of life, not of churches and saints but of the hungry and the poor, not of creeds and doctrines but of shelter and clothing, not of bibles and prayer books but of cups of cold water in the name of Christ.... Who is Christ? He who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick. And where is Christ? Where? 'Who so shall receive a little child in my name receiveth me.' And who are Christ's? 'Everyone that loveth is born of God.'

Ron Sider, the author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* and the founder of Evangelicals for Social Action, wrote an article which was published in *Sojourners Magazine* in October 1977. It is reprinted as Additional Reading at the end of this unit. Read the article and respond by completing the following exercise.

Think About It

Answer Box # 8

We live in a world where so many different religious, ethnic, political and economic factions are claiming that God is on "their side." What are the main arguments that Sider uses to suggest that if God were to actually choose sides, God would not hesitate to be on the side of the poor?

What the Bible teaches about God’s heart for the environment and animal life

Last evening I listened to an interview in which the idea was put forward that the United States government should add a new secretarial position to its presidential cabinet – in addition to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, etc., there should also be a Secretary of the Future. The rationale given is that there needs to be someone at that level of leadership who constantly reminds everyone else of the implications their decisions and planning will have on future generations. In one area alone – the environment, the past and present trends of the amount of damage and depletion of natural resources that we are causing was cited as being, not just alarming, but immoral. One particular author calls it “suicidal.”

We have been looking at the heart of God toward the poor and oppressed. We have studied a lot of scriptures in that regard. We should now clearly understand what God expects from us – nothing less than what he himself is busy doing in response to their need. But to avoid the mistake of slipping into a limiting human-centric view of God’s heart, we need to also look at what scripture teaches us about his heart for the environment and animal life. We must not forget that we came rather late in the story of creation. The words “It is good” were not said only of us.

Think About It

Answer Box # 9

Reflect upon each of the following three sets of scriptures. Write what you think each of them teaches us about God’s concern for the rest of creation.

- 1) Genesis 6:11-13; Isaiah 24:4-6; Jeremiah 2:7; Jeremiah 4:18-28; Jeremiah 12:4; Hosea 4:1-3; Revelation 11:18
- 2) Genesis 9:8-10; Psalm 65:9-13; Psalm 84:3; Isaiah 35:1-2; Isaiah 55:12-13; Hosea 2:18
- 3) Leviticus 25:1-7; Leviticus 25:23; Exodus 23:10-12; Jonah 4:10-11; Romans 8:19-22

It often astonishes me that even after all these years of reading and studying the scriptures, I still find myself coming across texts that I must have read often but seem as if I am seeing them for the first time. I call this phenomenon “the lenses through which we read the Bible.” Many of us read through lenses that were given to us long ago, by teachers, preachers, schools of theology, authors, etc. I know that is true of me. We read the text in a sort of pre-conceived manner. And then, if we have sight that is still adjustable, a new pair of lenses comes along and we begin to see new and different truths. Oh, they were there all along, but we just did not have the capacity or perhaps the interest to see them in a way that was different than we were taught or had concluded.

That is how I felt when I came across those texts upon which you have just reflected. For example, I had not realized that the covenant spoken to Noah and sealed with a rainbow was a covenant with the earth, plants and animals as well! Nor did I understand the words of mercy that God spoke to Jonah regarding the people of Nineveh included the animals in Nineveh as well. I had never considered the numerous times that God spoke about the Sabbath and was establishing it in consideration of the needs of the land and livestock to rest as well. I certainly had not understood the strong words God uses about those who destroy and misuse the creation originally placed in the care of humanity.

Think About It

Answer Box # 10

Take at least 30 minutes and find a place outdoors where there are some trees, flowers, plants and hopefully enough quietness where you can focus your thoughts in reflection. Read Psalm 104 and then look around you and find something God, not mankind, has created. Study it, not as a scientist, but as an admirer. If it is an object within reach, touch it. Ponder, feel, listen. Feel? Yes, feel. Ask God to allow you to feel as God feels toward it. Listen to the thoughts God has about it.

Then consider this fact—God has placed that piece of creation and all other pieces into our hands, to care for them. Before leaving your place of reflection, take time to praise this God who has made all things and called them good.

Now, write about your experience. Describe in some detail that upon which you gazed or touched. What was that like? What thoughts and feelings did you have or discover?

Unit 3 – A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World – Part 2

I have been delighted with what I have heard back from students what they discover when they truly take the time to do that exercise in a reflective manner. With his permission, I want to share what one student in particular reported to me in his assignment.

I gazed upon a mango tree. It looked so tall and majestic above me. I wondered whether it was older than me or younger. It had bunches of mango fruit hanging down within easy reach of my hands. I stretched out my hand and touched the leaves and the fruit. The leaves were smooth but robust, stretched out flat to trap the light and air, not muffled, not folded and disorderly but straight. The fruit looked mature but not ripe yet. It was plump and smooth, with a colorful skin, which whetted my appetite.

I wondered: Why did God create a mango? How does He feel about it? The Lord God said: "I created the mango to demonstrate who I am; even this mango represents my image, my heart and my character. It gives shade and shelter to my creatures. It is home to millions of lives. This single mango tree is an eco-system in its own right. Through this mango, I give you shelter from the heat of the sun. Birds build their nests in this mango, crawling insects, termites and black ants live in here. The ground under this mango is cool and moist in the dry season. Anyone who destroys this mango destroys thousands of my creatures and also destroys the face of the earth. This mango cools and preserves the earth; it protects the house against the wind".

I discovered that the mango is not just meant for me to eat. It is a unique part of God's gigantic vision. God loves this mango tree as much as He loves me. He wants peace, harmony and inter-dependence between me and this mango. I must care for it, nurture it, help it flourish and develop. I may enjoy its fruit, while other creatures also enjoy its shelter for as long as God sustains the lives of us all – the mango, myself and the rest of the creatures.

I praised God for His great vision and all the things He has created. I thanked Him for the mango. I picked up a little branch bearing several mango fruits and took it to the house. Just the next morning they were ripe - soft, with a golden yellow skin; they looked so delicious and so sweet to the eye. I did not want to eat and finish them up all by myself in my house where I live alone. So I kept them a few more days and carried them for over 500 km, on a one hour flight from Arua, Northern Uganda to the capital Kampala where my family lives. I remember that evening when we shared those mangoes, we ate them together and I felt it was not the ordinary experience of eating a mango. I felt a deep sense of God's love and care; I could not help but praise and worship Him for Who He is. (Martin Mwandha – DAI MA student, Uganda, 2006)

Think About It

Answer Box # 11

The final reading in this unit is entitled "Creation Care and the Mission of God" by Howard A. Snyder. From a missions perspective the author presents five reasons why Christians should be actively involved in "creation care". Which of those reasons do you feel would most motivate you to start acting more like the caretaker God created you to be and why do you say that?

We must come to understand that God is the Father of all creation, not just of us human beings. God is the giver and sustainer of life—all life, in all forms. Not a sparrow falls to the earth of which God is not aware and, I believe, moved with tender compassion and sorrow. I want to share one more story that I trust brings this point into clear focus.

.... I failed as a steward over creation, in particular in the area of animal husbandry. I call this event "the slaughter of the innocents." A few years ago my husband, Jackie, and I raised poultry on our small farm. Besides chickens, we kept a few guinea hens. Raising guineas is a long-standing southern tradition. Guineaes make good watch animals because if someone comes on your property they will let out piercing screams. Another benefit of raising guineas is their ability to control bugs, especially ticks. However, their maternal instincts are lacking. Guineaes have a tendency to lay their eggs where predators can easily destroy them. After losing several nests to opossums and raccoons, we decided to incubate a few eggs. Not knowing the gestation period of guineas (and failing to find out), we guessed at how long it would be until the eggs would hatch. Day after day, week after week, we carefully tended the eggs, turning them each day.

After a while, what seemed like a long while, it appeared that the eggs were not going to hatch. Fearing the eggs were going bad I suggested to Jackie that we dispose of

them. He agreed that the eggs seemed past their due date. So he took the eggs and threw them over the fence into the back pasture. Almost immediately we realized our mistake. As the eggs hit the ground and shattered they revealed tiny, live and seriously injured baby guineas. We rushed out to gather up the injured babies and hurriedly put them back into the incubator. But their trauma was too much. The guineas were too premature and too injured to survive. One by one they died...until only one baby guinea remained.

This baby guinea was a stubborn one. It seemed to will itself to live. All afternoon I kept a death watch over the premature guinea. Every few minutes I would lift the top off the incubator, expecting to see a dead guinea. Upon first glance it appeared that the guinea was dead, but when I would softly call to it, the baby guinea would lift its head and attempt to make a chirping sound. It seemed to respond to my touch, so I would stroke its tiny head and speak softly to it. As the afternoon wore on we bonded, that guinea and I. I became its companion in a valiant struggle between life and death. Eventually, however, death won over. When the guinea died I cried tears of the penitent, knowing I had caused this premature death. That afternoon I became totally pro-life. The guinea taught me painful lessons about the fragility of life, the will to live that is present in every living creature, and the breath of God that fills all of life.

We often fail to see our connection to all of life and because of this failure we fall short in our stewardship over creation. Evangelicals, as heirs of the Enlightenment, emphasize individual autonomy. While there is much to celebrate about this emphasis, it has weakened our view of the economy of salvation. When sin is only personal and redemption is only for individual souls, we miss the fact that our redemption is part of Christ's restoration of the whole created order. Indeed, as Paul reminds us in the epistle of Romans, all creation is under the curse of sin. Creation waits in eager expectation for its liberation from the bondage to decay. The whole creation, notes Paul, "has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Romans 8:22).

There are times when we hear this groaning of creation. It is especially poignant at the deathbed of a loved one. Is there anything equal to the pain of watching the person you love struggle to breathe? At these times we stand helpless before the bondage to decay. Yet, we know that our groaning is in expectation of resurrection and the liberation from the power of death. Even in death there is hope. The groaning is not the final word.

Within my tradition there is the experience of praying in the Spirit to the depths that we utter sighs too deep for words. In this form of prayer we groan in the Spirit and with the Spirit. We are invited into companionship with the same Spirit who brooded over chaos at creation is even now brooding over the brokenness of a cursed creation. Our groaning in the Spirit and with the Spirit is a form of cosmic prayer that calls for the restoration of all things. It is painfully delightful to pray in this manner.

While we wait in eager expectation of this day of restoration, we do not do so passively. We actively pray in the Spirit and we give care to creation, knowing that one day we will give an account for our stewardship. We wait with hope that all things will be made right and that harmony will once again be established in creation.

We were not present at the dawn of creation when the morning stars sang together. The majestic beauty of that music must have been glorious. We will, however, be present at the singing of redeemed creation. It is a song whose music is even now stirring within us:

"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is on them singing, 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'" (Revelation 5:13).

Editors Note: Dr. Cheryl Johns is Professor of Discipleship and Christian Formation at The Church of God Theological Seminary in Cleveland Tennessee. This was the opening devotion at the CT-NAE-EEN Creation Care Conference, presented on June 28, 2004.
(<http://www.creationcare.org/magazine/fall04.php#mission>)

Readings

A Different Kind of Kingdom

Excerpt from *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*. David W. Bercot. Pages 10-16

The year A. D. 30 began like any other year. Jewish priests still offered daily sacrifices in the temple. Farmers worked in their fields, and women washed their clothes in the streams. Fishermen hung up their nets to dry on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. But suddenly a prophet named John burst upon the scene! Clothed in camel's hair and a leather belt, John made a striking figure. And he brought with him a startling message—the kingdom of God was at hand!

The kingdom of God was at hand? To the Jews, this meant that the Messiah was about to come. It meant the overthrow of Rome! It meant they would soon have back their independence as a nation. No wonder that John's message caught everyone's attention. People began flocking to him to find out what they needed to do to prepare for this kingdom.

However, when John identified Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah, most Jews were not excited. Jesus of Nazareth? He didn't seem at all like the Messiah they were expecting. He was obviously no warrior. And He didn't even attempt to organize an army to liberate the Jews from Rome. In fact, He didn't even preach against the Romans.

What did He preach about? I would like to ask you, the reader, that question. What was the theme of Jesus' preaching? Man's need for salvation? God's love for mankind? The necessity to be born again? The fact that Jesus would die as a ransom for us?

Jesus certainly spoke about all of these things. And they are all essential truths. But none of them was the theme of His message. The scriptures record only one occasion on which Jesus spoke about the new birth: his private talk with Nicodemus. He mentioned His dying as a ransom for us only one time. There are only five or six passages in which He even used the word "salvation."

No, the theme of Jesus' message was the kingdom of God. There are nearly one hundred references to the kingdom throughout the Gospels. Furthermore, most of Jesus' parables were about the kingdom. In fact, Jesus said that the reason He was sent to earth was to preach about the kingdom: "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent" (Luke 4:43). That's not what we're used to hearing, is it? We've all been given the impression that the primary purpose of Jesus' coming to earth was to save us from our sins. And that definitely was one of the purposes of His coming here. But it was not the only purpose.

Wherever He went, Jesus preached about the kingdom of God. "From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ...And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. ...But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. ...Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Mt. 4:17,23; Luke 9:11; Mt. 9:35).

The irony is that although the kingdom of God was the theme of Jesus' preaching, the message of the kingdom is almost totally missing from the gospel that's preached today. What's the theme of most preaching today? It's man's personal salvation, isn't it? It's not the kingdom of God.

What the Apostles Preached

You may be thinking to yourself, "Okay, maybe Jesus preached about the kingdom, but it was different with His disciples. He told them to preach about the new birth and salvation, not about the kingdom, right?" Wrong. When Jesus commissioned His disciples. He specifically told them to preach about the kingdom.

Notice His preaching instructions: "As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ... He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ...Heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'(Mt. 10:7; Luke 9:2, 10:9). Please understand that these are not a few isolated proof texts. In nearly every passage where Jesus gave preaching instructions to His disciples, He told them to preach about the kingdom.

You no doubt remember the disciple who said he would follow Jesus, but that he first had to bury his father. What did Jesus tell him? "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God (Luke 9:60).

But please don't misunderstand me. I am in no way minimizing our need to be born again and to be saved. These are crucial aspects of the gospel. However, they are a means to an end—entering the kingdom of God. Jesus never intended that His followers would preach about salvation and the new birth apart from the kingdom. The kingdom is an absolutely crucial aspect of the gospel. When we tell people about salvation— but say nothing about the kingdom—we are not preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And what gospel was it that Jesus said would be preached in all the world before the end? He said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Mt. 24:14). A gospel is being preached throughout the world today, but is it the gospel of the kingdom!

What Is This Kingdom of God?

Every kingdom has four basic components: (1) a ruler or rulers, (2) subjects, (3) a domain or area of rulership, and (4) laws. God's kingdom is no different. It has a ruler, subjects, domain, and laws. However, because God's kingdom is a revolutionary kind of kingdom, these four basic components take on unique aspects.

To begin with, God's kingdom has no earthly ruler. Its ruler is Jesus Christ, who reigns from heaven. Earthly kingdoms periodically change rulers and policies. In contrast, Jesus is eternal, and His policies don't change. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

Who are the subjects of the kingdom of God? The Jews? No, Jesus told the Jews quite pointedly, "I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Mt. 21:43). Who was this nation to whom Jesus said He would give the kingdom? The Romans? The British? The Americans? No, it was none of these, for the scriptures tell us, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28,29).

So all of us who belong to Christ—all of us who are genuinely born again—we are the subjects of this kingdom. We have become the heirs of God's promise, the citizens of His new nation. In writing to Gentile Christians of his day, Peter addressed them with the following words: "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. 2:9-11).

So the subjects of God's kingdom are called to be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests just as the Israelites had been called (Exod. 19:5,6). However, the kingdom was taken from the Israelites and given to a nation that would produce the fruits of righteousness—the nation of born-again believers.

One unique aspect of the kingdom of God is that its subjects don't occupy a certain portion of the earth, like the subjects of other kingdoms. The citizens of God's kingdom are interspersed among all nations of the world. This feature has caused continual conflict for the kingdom of God. That's because its citizens always live under two different kingdoms—a kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21). God's kingdom would have no earthly capital or holy shrine.

All of this was something beyond the experience of both the Jews and the Gentiles of Jesus' day. The kingdom of the Israelites had encompassed a specific geographic area. So had all of the kingdoms of man. The Israelites had always had a physical location where their tabernacle or temple was placed. For a thousand years, that place had been Jerusalem. Every human kingdom has an earthly capital, but God's kingdom does not.

The Kingdom of God Is Within You

If all of this was not astonishing enough, Jesus told the Pharisees something even more startling: "Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20,21).

What kind of kingdom is this? A kingdom that's within you? Jesus was truly introducing something marvelously new—something revolutionary. This was not just a new kingdom. It was a new type of kingdom. It was a type of kingdom that was totally different from what anyone—Jew or Gentile—had ever heard of before. A kingdom that is "within you."

"Oh, I see," you may be thinking. "Jesus was talking about a spiritual kingdom, not a real one." No, Jesus was talking about a real kingdom. The ancient kingdom of the Israelites was definitely a real kingdom, wasn't it? It had real kings, real subjects, and real laws. The kingdom of God is just as real as the ancient Israelite kingdom. It too has a real King, real subjects, and real laws. Its domain encompasses the entire earth, even though most of the earth's population are not citizens of this kingdom.

What did Jesus mean when He said that the kingdom of God is within you? Tertullian, an early Christian writer, commented on this phrase, "*Now, who is there who does not understand the phrase, 'within you,' to mean in your hand or within your power? That is, if you hear and do the commandments of God?*" (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Book IV, Ch. 26; ANF, Vol. III, 409). Anybody can choose to be a citizen of the kingdom of God if he is willing to make the needed commitment. A person doesn't have to travel anywhere or pay any sum of money to become a citizen.

Now, many Greek scholars today feel that Luke 17:21 should be translated, "The kingdom of God is in your midst," rather than "within you." In other words, the King and some of His subjects were already

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standing there in the midst of those religious leaders who asked Jesus when the kingdom was coming. The kingdom was in their midst, but they didn't realize it.

Whichever significance Jesus intended by the phrase, "within you" or "in your midst," the principle is still the same. His kingdom has no national boundaries, no earthly king, and no military forces. His subjects live within the midst of the peoples of this world, yet the world cannot see this kingdom. Becoming a citizen of God's kingdom is within reach of everyone. In fact, what makes God's people the subjects of this kingdom is something within them—the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Kingdom of God Is at Hand

A lot of Christians have the idea that the kingdom of God is something only in the future. But, no, the kingdom of God is something that is here right now. Paul wrote to the Colossians, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). Paul speaks in the past tense. God has already conveyed us into His kingdom. He doesn't bring us into His kingdom after we die. He brings us into His kingdom as soon as we are born again.

Strangely, many Christians don't realize that the kingdom of God is a present reality on earth. In fact, many Christians don't even know what the kingdom of God is. Like the Pharisees, they don't see the kingdom of God. And so they never make the kingdom commitment.

Notes:

1. H. W. Hoehner, "Maccabees," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986) 196-199.
2. R. H. Smith, "Pella," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
3. *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*. Copyright © 2003 by David W. Bercot. Published by Scroll Publishing Company, P. O. Box 4714, Tyler, TX 75712. www.scrollpublishing.com.

On Earth as in Heaven

Excerpt from a May, 2007 sermon by Bishop N.T. Wright (www.ntwrightpage.com)

The Collect for Ascension Day speaks of Jesus being ascended into heaven, and of us 'in heart and mind thither ascending, and with him continually dwelling'. Today's Collect speaks of Jesus having been exalted with great triumph to God's kingdom in heaven, and of the Holy Spirit being sent to comfort us and exalt us to the place where he is gone before. And this image is so familiar, so obvious, so deeply rooted in the whole tradition of western Christianity both Catholic and Protestant, that unless we have our wits about us we may fail to realise that it is profoundly unbiblical.

I have just finished writing a small popular-level commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. And I was struck right from the start by the fact that Acts, which of course begins with the story of the Ascension, never once speaks in the way those Collects – and the whole tradition which they embody – so easily does. At no point in the whole book does anyone ever speak, or even sound as though they're going to speak, of those who follow Jesus following him to heaven. Nobody says, 'well, he's gone on before and we'll go and join him'. And for a very good reason. When the New Testament speaks of God's kingdom it never, ever, refers to heaven pure and simple. It always refers to God's kingdom coming *on earth as in heaven*, as Jesus himself taught us to pray. We have slipped into the easygoing language of 'the kingdom of heaven' in the sense of God's kingdom *being* 'heaven', but the early church never spoke like that. The point about heaven is that heaven is the control room for earth. Heaven is the CEO's office from which earth is run – or it's supposed to be, which is why we're told to pray for that to become a reality. And the point of the Ascension, paradoxically in terms of the ways in which generations of western Christians have seen it, is that this is the moment when that prayer is gloriously answered.

Paradoxically, of course, because we have been used to seeing 'heaven' as a place separated from earth, somewhere far away, way beyond the blue. But that's not how the Bible sees it, not at all. Heaven is God's space, and earth is our space. 'The heavens belong to YHWH,' declares the Psalmist, 'and the earth he has given to the human race.' But the point of God's split-level good creation, heaven and earth, is not that earth is a kind of training ground for heaven, but that heaven and earth are designed to overlap and interlock (which is, by the way, the foundation of all sacramental theology, with the sacraments as one of the places where this overlap actually happens), and that one day – as the book of Revelation makes very clear – one day they will do so fully and for ever, as the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven to earth.

And that is why, in the Acts of the Apostles, the point of the coming of the Spirit, which we shall celebrate next week, isn't that the Spirit will comfort us in our loss of Jesus and take us to be with him. The point is that the Spirit is given so that through the work of the church the kingdom may indeed come on earth as in heaven. That is why Acts is what it is. And in case you think that might lead us into some kind of triumphalism, with the church striding through the world imposing a theocracy on it – lots of people today do indeed think that's what it would look like to have the Christian faith impinge at all on public life,

and tell scare stories about the wickedness of theocracies in order to bolster their own secular vision – in case you imagine that God's kingdom will be forced on an unwilling world by an all-powerful church, Acts makes it quite clear that the *method* of the kingdom will match the *message* of the kingdom. The kingdom will come as the church, energized by the Spirit, goes out into the world vulnerable, suffering, praising, praying, misunderstood, misjudged, vindicated, celebrating: always – as Paul puts it in one of his letters – bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifest.

And it is one of the most spectacular stories about Paul that we heard just now in the reading from Acts 16. Here we see what it looks like when the gospel impacts a new community. Paul has been praying with a small group of Jews and proselytes by the river in Philippi in Northern Greece, a town which prided itself on its Roman connections. And one day Paul heals a slave-girl whose strange prophetic gift had been used by her owners as a source of wealth. As elsewhere in Acts, once the gospel touches local spiritual powers on the one hand and local economic interests on the other, you can expect fireworks, and we get them. Paul and Silas are dragged off, accused of anti-Roman behavior and teaching, thoroughly beaten and imprisoned. Not much triumphalism there. But the gospel is not imprisoned, and as they are singing hymns later that night – goodness knows what the other prisoners made of that – there is an earthquake, the prison doors fly open, the jailer is about to commit suicide, and Paul and Silas rush in and stop him, convert him, baptize his household and sit down to an extraordinary midnight feast. (I am reminded that Bishop Stephen Neill, who died over twenty years ago, once insisted to me that when the Philippians jailer said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' what he really meant was, 'Gentlemen, will you please tell me how to get out of this mess?' That is a very important Lukan point, because for Luke 'salvation' is never, as we say, 'purely spiritual', but is always about a rescue which is both earthly and heavenly.)

Actually, it's a shame the reading stopped where it did, because there's an important point in the sequel. In the morning the magistrates send the order to have them released and sent away. But Paul knows what's what, and he points out that they are Roman citizens and have been beaten and imprisoned without trial. That's a very serious offence on the part of the magistrates; he knows it, they know it, and so when he asks for a public apology he gets it. And the point of the whole thing is this. *This is what the kingdom of God looks like when it's on the road, arriving on earth as in heaven.* Prayer and testimony bring healing and hope to people, but this will often result in a challenge to an economic or political power structure at one level or another. This may well bring resistance against the message, and perhaps suffering for the church. But the church is not in the business of simply saying 'a plague on all your houses' to all local magistrates and governments. Rather, the church must remind them of their God-given duty, must hold them to account.

Here is the paradox of Christian political theology, a paradox which the western church has all but ignored for many years, assuming that the main object of the game was to forget earth and concentrate on heaven instead. Precisely because we believe that Jesus Christ has been exalted to heaven, into God's space, so that he can be present to the whole earth simultaneously (not so that he can be absent from it – heaven forbid!), and so that he can be its rightful Lord, we believe that the church has a responsibility, not to usurp the proper and God-given functions of governments and authorities, of magistrates and officers, but to support them in prayer and to remind them of what they are there for – and to point out when they're getting it wrong. God has established authorities in the world, as part of the goodness of creation, because without them the bullies and the malevolent would always get away with it. But the problem of evil includes the problem that the people who are supposed to be keeping evil in check may themselves become part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

That's why, in early Christianity and Judaism, those who believe in God's kingdom coming on earth as in heaven are not particularly concerned with how rulers get to be rulers. They are not going around campaigning for an early form of parliamentary democracy. They are extremely concerned with what rulers do once they become rulers, knowing that a bad ruler is worse than an ordinary bad person, because their evil is becoming part of the system. And so the church, at its most characteristic from that day to this, in hailing Jesus as the ascended Lord, doesn't declare a plague on all other lords in the sense of advocating a kind of holy anarchy, or a straightforward theocracy. But the church claims the right, in invoking Jesus as Lord, to challenge the systems of corruption that dehumanize people and enslave them, and to remind the powers that be of what their duty actually is.

I hope it is fairly obvious that we need to learn this lesson today, and need to learn it as a matter of urgency. We live at something of a crisis point in contemporary politics, with a new Prime Minister waiting in the wings but with a country, and a parliament, that has almost forgotten what public debate, not to mention parliamentary debate, actually is, and is drifting this way and that on currents of politically correct opinion, manipulated all too easily by the media and those who control it. And of course, as with the crowds in Philippi, there is a constant desire to accuse the church of being out of step, whether it's on assisted suicide or marriage and family or campaigning to end global debt or working for proper treatment of prisoners in our jails. And the church has for so long forgotten that it's normal to be out of step, has for so long supposed that as long as it was getting people ready for a distant destination called 'heaven' it really shouldn't be worrying about what went on earth, that we have forgotten the real message of Acts,

the real message of the Ascension, which is that of course the church, in the power of the Spirit, will be called to bear witness to Jesus Christ precisely at the pressure points, the places where society and governments are drifting away from the good order which God wills for his world and for all his human creatures.

And the vision we find in John's gospel, in our Gospel reading, is not in fact any different – though again some have read John as though it was so heavenly minded as to lift us beyond the life of earth altogether. John 17, the majestic High-Priestly prayer whose conclusion we heard, is not about the disciples being caught up into the life of heaven, but about the Father and the Son being with them as they go out into the world to live for God's glory and to bear witness to Jesus' victory. And when we turn over the page to John 18 and 19 we find Jesus himself standing before Caesar's representative, speaking of a kingdom which is not *from* this world but which is decidedly *for* this world, speaking of a truth which will blow Caesar's kingdom right out of the water, speaking of power which comes from God and because of which the earthly wielders of power are to be called to account.

My friends, in this Ascension season we have a chance to re-learn these lessons, which the church has been in severe danger of forgetting. May our praying, our living, our thinking, our debating, our campaigning, our common life in Christ, not least our sacramental life as here at this Eucharist, our fearless witness before the world, be upheld in the prayer of Jesus himself for his church, be inspired by the Spirit who comes at Pentecost, and be focused in a fresh and much-needed way on the urgent issues that face us in this new moment, this new generation; that we may not be fearful or muddled, but may bear clear and uncompromised witness to Jesus Christ, risen, ascended, glorified and highly disturbing, in this world over which he rules by right and in love.

Is God Really on the Side of the Poor?

by Ron Sider

Is God, as some liberation theologians have recently suggested, biased in favor of the poor? The Bible has a clear answer. God is not partial. He has the same loving concern for each person he has created. For precisely that reason he cares as much for the weak and disadvantaged as he does for the strong and fortunate. By contrast with the way you and I, as well as the comfortable and powerful of every age and society, always act toward the poor, God seems to take a special interest in the poor and oppressed.

Might there in fact be some important sense in which one should say that God is on the side of the poor? I want to examine four strands of biblical teaching related to this question.

The Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches a fundamental point that we have often overlooked. At the crucial moments when God displayed his mighty acts in history to reveal his nature and will, God also intervened to liberate the poor and oppressed.

The Exodus

God displayed his power at the Exodus in order to free oppressed slaves. When he called Moses at the burning bush, God's intention was to end suffering and injustice: "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:7-8).

Now of course the liberation of oppressed slaves was not God's only purpose in the Exodus. God also acted because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He wanted to create a special people to whom he could reveal himself. The liberation of a poor, oppressed people, however, was right at the heart of God's design (Exodus 6:5-7).

The preamble to the Ten Commandments, probably the most important portion of the entire law for Israel, begins with this same revolutionary truth. Before he gives the two tables of the law, Yahweh identifies himself: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Deuteronomy 5:6, Exodus 20:2). Yahweh is the one who frees from bondage. The God of the Bible wants to be known as the liberator of the oppressed.

The Exodus was certainly the decisive event in the creation of the chosen people. We distort the biblical interpretation of this momentous occasion unless we see that at this pivotal point, the Lord of the universe was at work correcting oppression and liberating the poor.

Destruction and Captivity

When they settled in the promised land, the Israelites soon discovered that Yahweh's passion for justice was a two-edged sword. When they were oppressed, it led to their freedom. But when they became the oppressors, it led to their destruction.

When God called Israel out of Egypt and made his covenant with them, he gave them his law so that they could live together in peace and justice. But Israel failed to obey the law of the covenant. As a result, God destroyed Israel and sent his chosen people into captivity. Why?

The explosive message of the prophets is that God destroyed Israel not just because of idolatry but also because of their economic exploitation of the poor.

The middle of the eighth century B.C. was a time of political success and economic prosperity unknown since the days of Solomon. But it was precisely at this moment that God sent his prophet Amos to announce the unwelcome news that the northern kingdom of Israel would be destroyed. Penetrating beneath the facade of current prosperity and fantastic economic growth, Amos saw terrible oppression of the poor. He saw the rich "trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth" (2:7). He saw that the affluent lifestyle of the rich was built on oppression of the poor (6:1-7). Even in the courts the poor had no hope because the rich bribed the judges (5:10-15).

God's word through Amos was that the northern kingdom would be destroyed and the people taken into exile (6:4-7; 7:11, 17). Only a very few years after Amos spoke, it happened just as God had said.

We must not ignore other very important factors. The prophet Hosea (a contemporary of Amos) disclosed that the nation's idolatry was another cause of impending destruction. But the catastrophe of national destruction and captivity reveals the God of the Exodus still at work correcting the oppression of the poor.

The Incarnation

Christians believe that God revealed himself most completely in Jesus of Nazareth. How did the incarnate one define his mission?

His words in the synagogue at Nazareth, spoken near the beginning of his public ministry, still throb with hope for the poor. He read from the prophet Isaiah: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.* (Luke 4:18-19). After reading these words, he informed the audience that this scripture was now fulfilled in himself.

Some avoid the clear meaning of Jesus' statement by spiritualizing his words. Certainly, as other texts show, he came to open our blinded hearts, to die for our sins, and to free us from the oppression of guilt. But that is not what he means here. The words about releasing captives and liberating the oppressed are from Isaiah. In their original Old Testament setting, they unquestionably referred to physical oppression and captivity.

Jesus' actual ministry corresponded precisely to the words of Luke 4. He spent most of his time not among the rich and powerful in Jerusalem, but among the poor in the cultural and economic backwater of Galilee. He healed the sick and blind. He fed the hungry. And he warned his followers in the strongest possible words that those who do not feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoners will experience eternal damnation (Matthew 25:31-46).

At the supreme moment of history, when God himself took on human flesh, we see the God of Israel still at work liberating the poor and oppressed and summoning his people to do the same. That is the central reason for Christian concern for the poor.

God not only acts in history to liberate the poor, but in a mysterious way that we can only half fathom, the sovereign of the universe identifies with the weak and destitute. Two proverbs state this beautiful truth. Proverbs 14:31 puts it negatively: "He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker." Even more moving is the positive formulation: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord" (19:17). What a statement! Helping a poor person is like helping the creator of all things with a loan.

Born in a small, insignificant province of the Roman Empire, Jesus' first visitors, the shepherds, were persons viewed as thieves by Jewish society. His parents were too poor to bring the normal offering for purification. Instead of a lamb, they brought two pigeons to the temple. Jesus was a refugee (Matthew 2:13-15) and then an immigrant in Galilee (Matthew 2:19-23). Since Jewish rabbis received no fees for their teaching, Jesus had no regular income during his public ministry. Nor did he have a home of his own (Matthew 8:20). Jesus also sent out his disciples in extreme poverty (Luke 9:3; 10:4).

His identification with the poor and unfortunate was, he said, a sign that he was the Messiah. When John the Baptist sent messengers to ask Jesus if he were the long-expected Messiah, Jesus simply pointed to his deeds. He was healing the sick and preaching to the poor (Matthew 11:2-6). Jesus also preached to the rich. But apparently it was his particular concern to preach to the poor that validated his claim to Messiahship.

Only as we feel the presence of the incarnate God in the form of a poor Galilean can we begin to understand. "...as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Mt. 25:40). If this saying of Jesus is awesome, its parallel is terrifying. "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me" (v. 45). What does that mean in a world where millions die each year while rich Christians live in affluence? What does it mean to see the Lord of the universe lying by the roadside starving and walk by on the other side? We cannot know. We can only pledge, in fear and trembling, not to kill him again.

Unit 3 – A Theology for Engaging a Hurting World – Part 2

Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus echoes and illustrates a third teaching prominent throughout scripture: The rich may prosper for a time but eventually God will destroy them; the poor, on the other hand, God will exalt. Mary's Magnificat puts it simply and bluntly:

My soul magnifies the Lord. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. (Luke. 1:46-53)

"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you" (James 5:1) is a constant theme of biblical revelation. Why does scripture declare that God regularly reverses the good fortunes of the rich? Is God engaged in class warfare? Actually our texts never say that God loves the poor more than the rich. But they do constantly assert that God lifts up the poor and disadvantaged. They insist that God casts down the wealthy and powerful—precisely because they became wealthy by oppressing the poor and because they failed to feed the hungry. Why did James warn the rich to weep and howl because of impending misery? Because they had cheated their workers:

You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. (James 5:3-5)

God does not have class enemies. But he hates and punishes injustice and neglect of the poor. And the rich, if we accept the repeated warnings of scripture, are frequently guilty of both.

Through the prophets God announced devastation and destruction for both rich individuals and rich nations who oppressed the poor (Jeremiah 22:13-19; Amos 6:4-7; Jeremiah 5:26-31; Isaiah 1:21-26). Nowhere is this clearer than in Isaiah. Through Isaiah God declared that the rulers of Judah were rich because they had cheated the poor (Isaiah 3:14-25).

Sometimes scripture does not charge the rich with direct oppression of the poor. It simply accuses them of failure to share with the needy. But the result is the same.

The biblical explanation of Sodom's destruction provides an illustration of this terrible truth. If asked why Sodom was destroyed, virtually all Christians would point to the city's gross sexual perversity. But that is a one-sided recollection of what scripture actually teaches. Ezekiel shows that one important reason God destroyed Sodom was that she stubbornly refused to share with the poor:

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it. (Ezekiel 16:49-50).

The text does not say that they oppressed the poor. It simply accuses them of failing to assist the needy. Affluent Christians remember Sodom's sexual misconduct and forget her sinful unconcern for the poor. Is it because the former is less upsetting? Have we allowed our economic self-interest to distort our interpretations of scripture? Undoubtedly. But precisely to the extent that our affirmation of scriptural authority is sincere, we will permit painful texts to correct our thinking. As we do, we will acknowledge that the God of the Bible wreaks horrendous havoc on the rich. But it is not because he does not love rich persons. It is because the rich regularly oppress the poor and neglect the needy.

Since God cares so much for the poor, it is hardly surprising that he wants his people to do the same. God's command to believers to have a special regard for the poor, weak, and disadvantaged is the final theme of biblical literature I want to explore.

Equal justice for the poor in court is a constant theme of scripture (Ex. 23:6; Psalm 72:1-4; Amos 5:10-15). Widows, orphans and strangers also receive particularly frequent attention (Ex. 22:21-24).

The Bible specifically commands believers to imitate God's special concern for the poor and oppressed. In the Old Testament Yahweh frequently reminded the Israelites of their former oppression in Egypt when he commanded them to care for the poor (Ex. 22:21-24; Deuteronomy. 15:13-15). Jesus taught his followers to imitate God's mercy in their lending as well (Luke. 6:33-36).

When Paul took up the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, he pointedly reminded the Corinthians that the Lord Jesus became poor so that they might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). When the author of 1 John called on Christians to share with the needy, he first mentioned the example of Christ: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). Then, in the very next verse, he urged Christians to give generously to the needy. It is the amazing self-sacrifice of Christ which Christians are to imitate as they relate to the poor and oppressed. We have seen that God's word commands believers to care for the poor. In fact the Bible underlines the command by teaching that when God's people care for the poor, they imitate God himself. But that is not all. God's word teaches that those who neglect the poor and oppressed are really not God's people at all—no matter how frequent their religious rituals or how orthodox their creeds and confessions.

God thundered again and again through the prophets that worship in the context of mistreatment of the poor and disadvantaged is an outrage. Isaiah denounced Israel (he called her Sodom and Gomorrah!) because she tried to worship Yahweh and oppress the weak at the same time:

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God you people of Gomorrah! What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?... Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates..... Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. (Isaiah 1:10-15)

God wants justice, not mere religious rituals, from such people. "Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice; correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:16-17; also 58:3-7).

Jesus, Religion, and Justice

Nor has God changed. Jesus repeated the same theme. He warned the people about the scribes "who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers" (Mark 12:38-40). Their pious-looking garments and frequent visits to the synagogue were a sham. Like Amos and Isaiah, Jesus announced God's outrage against those who try to mix pious practices and mistreatment of the poor.

But he was even more blunt and sharp. To those who do not feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the prisoners, he will speak a terrifying word at the final judgment: "Depart from me you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). The meaning is clear and unambiguous. Jesus intends his disciples to imitate his own special concern for the poor and needy. Those who disobey will experience eternal damnation.

But perhaps we have misinterpreted Matthew 25. Some people think that "the least of these" (v. 45) and "the least of these my brethren" (v. 40) refer only to Christians. This exegesis is not certain. But even if the primary reference of these words is to poor believers, other aspects of Jesus' teaching not only permit but require us to extend the meaning of Matthew 25 to both believers and unbelievers who are poor and oppressed. The story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29ff) teaches that anybody in need is our neighbor. In light of the parable of the Good Samaritan and other clear teachings of Jesus, one is compelled to say that part of the full meaning of Matthew 25 is that those who fail to aid the poor and oppressed (whether they are believers or not) are simply not the people of God.

Lest we forget the warning, God repeats it in 1 John 3:17. "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth." (See also James 2:14-17). Again the words are plain.

What do these words mean for Western Christians who demand increasing affluence each year while fellow Christians in the Third World suffer malnutrition, deformed bodies and brains—even starvation? The text clearly says that if we fail to aid the needy, we do not have God's love—no matter what we may say. It is deeds that count, not pious phrases and saintly speeches.

But the question persists. Are professing church believers no longer Christians because of continuing sin? Obviously not. Christians know that sinful selfishness continues to plague them. We are members of the people of God not because of our own righteousness but solely because of Christ's death for us.

But that response is inadequate. All the texts we have explored surely mean more than that the people of God are disobedient (but still justified all the same) when they persistently neglect the poor.

Certainly none of us would claim that we are fully implementing the biblical call to side with the poor. And we cling to the hope of forgiveness. But there comes a point (thank God, he alone knows where) where neglect of the poor is no longer forgiven. It is punished. Eternally.

Is it not possible that large numbers of Western Christians have reached that point? North Americans earn 14 times as much as the people of India but we give a tiny amount to the church and most churches spend much of that pitiful pittance on themselves. Can we seriously claim that we are imitating God's concern for the poor and the oppressed?

God is not biased. But neither is God neutral in the struggle for justice. The Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that God is at work in history casting down the rich and exalting the poor. Why? Because the rich have failed to aid the needy. Or because they have often become rich, as scripture points out, precisely because they have oppressed the poor. The God revealed in scripture is on the side of the poor precisely because he is not biased, precisely because he is a God of impartial justice.

God longs for the salvation of the rich as much as for the salvation of the poor. He desires fulfillment, joy, and happiness for all his creatures. But that does not contradict the fact that he is on the side of the poor. Genuine biblical repentance and conversion lead people to turn away from all sin—including economic oppression. Salvation for the rich will include liberation from their injustice. Thus God's

desire for salvation and fulfillment of the rich is in complete harmony with the scriptural teaching that God is on the side of the poor.

God's concern for the poor is astonishing and boundless. We can only begin to fathom the depth of his identification with the poor as we see it disclosed in the incarnation. His passion for justice compels him to obliterate rich societies and individuals who oppress the poor and neglect the needy. Consequently, God's people—if they are indeed his people—follow in the footsteps of the God of the poor.

Ron Sider, the author of Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger and founder of Evangelicals for Social Action, was part of the Jubilee Fellowship of Germantown in Philadelphia when this article appeared.

"Is God Really on the Side of the Poor?" by Ron Sider. *Sojourners Magazine*, October 1977. Source: SojoMail, <http://www.sojo.net/sojomain>

Creation Care and the Mission of God

By Howard A. Snyder

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? - Job 38:33

Biblically speaking, creation care is an integral part of the good news of redemption and new creation in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. But if this is true, why is creation care not a more prominent theme in much of contemporary Christianity? Evangelicals claim to believe in the full authority of the Bible. Yet in the United States especially, Evangelicals for the most part read the Bible in such a way as either to positively exclude creation care, or to relegate it to such a low priority that it gets lost among other concerns. Evangelicals who claim to believe the Bible fail to take the Bible seriously in this area. My impression from living most of my life in the Evangelical community is that most American Evangelicals do not believe that the Bible teaches creation care as an essential part of the Good News of Jesus Christ, or that it must be an indispensable part of faithful Christian witness.

I am thoroughly convinced that the human race today faces a growing ecological crisis, particularly with regard to biodiversity and climate change. We are well beyond the point where further scientific evidence is needed to confirm this. Failure to recognize and address environmental issues is not fundamentally a scientific issue; it is an ideological and political one. In other words, from a Christian standpoint, the issue is fundamentally theological. It has to do with how we think about God, God's world, and the human place within it.

There is no life in the sea, No creature in the river, Nothing in the heavens, That does not proclaim God's goodness. There is no bird on the wing, No star in the sky, Nothing beneath the sun, That does not proclaim God's goodness. —Celtic Christian

When we explore scripture with these challenges in view, we find a richly textured, comprehensive, and profound biblical mandate for creation care. And we find it is integral, not tangential, to the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The Bible offers numerous reasons and motivations for creation care. Here I will explore five from a missional perspective.

1) Creation care for God's sake. "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). God created the universe to glorify himself and to assist his human creation in praising him. We are to praise God through, and also because of, his beautiful but complex world.

The primary reason for faithful creation care, therefore, is that caring for God's world is a fundamental way of glorifying God. We glorify him by the proper stewardship of the world he has made. Scripture affirms that "whether [we] eat or drink, or whatever [we] do," we should "do everything for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). God is glorified when we see him in the created order, and when we take care of the world he has made. Creation care is part of our acceptable worship (Rom. 12:1).

One of the main lessons Job had to learn was that the created order testifies to the vast wisdom of God and therefore is a motive for praising God. "Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God" (Job 37:14). We see God in his works, and lift our eyes from nature to nature's God—but then look back again at nature with new eyes, seeing the garden we are to tend. Fulfilling God-given stewardship through the God-like powers that have been given us for good, not for evil, we glorify the Creator.

Caring for and protecting the world God has made is part of our worship and service. We care for creation for God's sake.

2) Creation care for our own sake—for human well-being. We should care for creation as if our life depended on it—because it does.

We often forget how dependent we are upon the physical environment—"few hundred yards of atmosphere and few inches of topsoil," as someone said. Scientific evidence is mounting not only of our vulnerability, but of serious threats to human health and well-being.

If we are passionate about people, we will be passionate about their environment. Christians have often been concerned with feeding the hungry and providing shelter for the homeless. It is time that we understand that this Christ-like human concern must expand to include the environmental conditions that enable food production and the well-being of the planet that is our home.

Scripture is in part the story of God's people serving God in God's land. If God's people are faithful, the land prospers. Conversely, if the land suffers, we suffer. This is a repeated theme in much of Old Testament literature—in the law, the prophets, and the wisdom literature. It comes to particular focus in the Jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25-26.

If we care about people, we will care for the land and air and multi-plied species on which our well-being depends.

3) Creation care for creation's sake. We should care for the created order because it has its own God-given right to exist and flourish, independently of its relationship to us. The world after all is God's handiwork, not ours. God created the universe for his good purposes, not all of which are yet known to us. We need, therefore, a certain eschatological humility and reserve. We are to honor God's creative work, and to fulfill our responsibilities as stewards of what he has made.

Scripture says that "the whole creation" groans "in labor pains" as it "waits with eager longing" for the final redemption. We know that in God's timing "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-23). Until God finally brings the new heavens and the new earth, the creation groans, suffering the effects of the fall and of ongoing human exploitation. It is our responsibility to care for creation, to work to relieve its suffering. The disorder and suffering that entered the world through human sin is not the final word, and it is not God's final intention. Like our own gardens and house plants and pets, the creation depends on us to see its need and to respond with God's compassion and care.

In great measure, God's other creatures depend on us for their well-being and survival. Increasingly, in fact, we see that the whole biosphere is more dependent on human nurture and care than we would have imagined. We need to recover the biblical sense of why creation exists, how it proclaims God's glory, and of how all nature will participate in God's salvation. Since all God's creatures reflect God's glory and have a place in God's plan, they are part of legitimate Christian concern. If God cares for and about the creatures, so should we.

4) Creation care for the sake of mission. Another major reason Evangelicals should be passionate about creation care is that this is essential for effective mission in today's world. The church is in mission because God is in mission. God loved the world so much that he sent his only Son to give us eternal life through faith in him. Therefore the church is to love the world and bring the Good News to people everywhere. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn. 20:21).

The biblical doctrine of creation assures us that mission is not truly holistic unless it includes the church's mission to and in behalf of the earth. In the biblical vision, God acts in Jesus Christ not to save men and women out of their environment, but with their environment. The biblical vision has always been God's people serving God's purposes in God's land.

The theological truth here is based in both creation and fall. God created man and woman in harmony with himself, with each other, and with the created world. Man and woman were at peace (shalom) with God, with themselves and each other, and with the plants and animals God had made.

Sin, however, brought disruption in a fourfold sense. As Francis Schaeffer pointed out years ago, human disobedience brought alienation between 18 humans and God and as a result an internal alienation within each person (alienation from oneself), alienation between humans, and alienation from nature. All derive from sin; all distort God's good purpose in creation. These are all concerns therefore of the gospel of reconciliation, and they clarify the church's mission agenda. Faithful Christian mission focuses on healing the four alienations that have resulted from the fall. Creation care, therefore—working for reconciliation between humans and the created order—is an indispensable element in Christian mission. It is part of the gospel.

The argument here is both theological and strategic. Theological, because a fully biblical view of mission will necessarily include the dimension of creation care. But also strategic and pragmatic, because a holistic theology and practice of mission that incorporates creation care is much more persuasive. Do we want people of all nations and cultures to come to faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world? Then we should proclaim and demonstrate that Jesus is the renewer of the whole creation, the whole face of the earth. Salvation is that big. This is a grander portrayal of Christ than we sometimes present. It both honors our Savior and makes the gospel more persuasive and attractive when we present a gospel of

total healing—the healing of creation; the restoration of all things. This is truly the whole gospel for the whole world.

5) Creation care for the sake of our children and grandchildren. There is a final persuasive motive for creation care today: For the sake of our children and grandchildren. For our descendants yet unborn. As scripture teaches, we have a responsibility—a stewardship—in behalf of the generations yet to come.

Today we look back at Christian slaveholders in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and ask, How could they not see that slavery was incompatible with the gospel? What did they think they were doing? Our grandchildren, as they wrestle with ecological issues, will look back on this generation and ask: Why could they not see the Christian responsibility for earth stewardship? Why did they wait so long? What did they think they were doing when they failed to defend the forests and the seas and to protect earth's endangered species? Did they not understand what they were doing to their own descendants?

We today are the generation that must rediscover and proclaim creation care as part of the gospel, part of the mission of God. We hope that our children and grandchildren will know and serve Jesus Christ, and we hope also that they will inherit a world that is not choked and poisoned by pollution or made scarcely habitable by environmental disasters. If that is our hope, the time for action is now. We should treat future generations the way we would want to be treated.

Editor's Note: Howard Snyder is Professor of the History and Theology of Mission at Asbury Theological Seminary. This article is adapted from his presentation given June 28, 2004, at the CT-NAE-EEN Conference on Creation-care at the Sandy Cove Christian Conference Center in Maryland. <http://www.creationcare.org/magazine/fall04.php#mission>

Development and Social Change

Unit 4

Living as Citizens of the Kingdom



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Version 2.5

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Unit 4 - Living as Citizens of the Kingdom

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “Kingdom Living,” Excerpts from a 2002 interview with Dallas Willard
- 2) “Has Anyone Done This in Real Life?” by David Bercot
- 3) “Integral Mission in a World of Violence” by Peter Kuzmič, writing for the Micah Network

Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe the mandate which God has given to the church in Matthew 28:19-20 and how this text and other teachings of Jesus define what it means to be a disciple.
2. Explain what it means to be both a citizen and an ambassador of the kingdom of God.
3. Describe the importance of being a reconciler and a peacemaker.

Introduction

Following in the footsteps of Jesus

For Paul, the human problem is not how to please a legalistic God whose law we have broken. The problem is much deeper, much more complex: the problem is rooted in the reality of slavery to sin, a submission to the power of evil that is both personal and social, both individual and communal. Indeed, for Paul "the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now" (Rom. 8:22). What is needed is some salvation—some rescue, some "redemption"—from the predicament in which we find ourselves.

It is precisely in the work of Christ that that rescue is manifested in human history. And so rather than having to continue in slavery, we are freed to walk in the way of Christ. Grace that is merely "forgiveness" is what Paul calls "sinning that grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1). Or it is what Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace." Grace does not merely provide forgiveness so that we may be forgiven, but empowerment to be the people of God, to be the body of Christ, to continue the work and ministry of Christ in human history. (Lee Camp, *Mere Discipleship*, pg. 114)

In Unit Three we noted that Jesus had a mission statement in which he summed up why he had come into the world. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

As we can see from his own words, Jesus' purpose was more than dying for sins and more than proclaiming the gospel, although that was certainly an important part of it. We find in the life of Jesus that he constantly applied himself to reversing the curse of sin and the consequence of evil being experienced by people he met during his journeys. We see him restoring God's purposes, transforming lives into what his Father had intended from the beginning.

In Mathew 11, we find John the Baptist in a critical state of mind. He had baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, had witnessed the Spirit of God descending upon him and heard the voice from heaven say: "This is my beloved son." But time had passed and times had become very hard for John. Hunted down, arrested and thrown in prison, he was no longer sure. Was Jesus truly the Messiah, the one for whom all Israel waited to free them from the oppressors occupying their land? John himself was anything but free, and he seemed to be losing hope as well. He needed assurance, so he sent some disciples to find Jesus and ask him straight to his face: "Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replied with words meant to convince John that he in fact was the One. "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." (Matthew 11:4-5)

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

What do you think is the significance of what Jesus says here to convince John that Jesus was indeed the One who was to come?

If we look closely we can see that the report Jesus gave to John was almost word for word the same as what he had declared in the synagogue some time earlier regarding his mission in the world (the Luke 4 passage). He was telling John that he was in fact practicing what he had preached. The kingdom had truly come. Do you think John was consoled and/or convinced by those words? We do not know for sure because the text does not provide us that information. But I am not totally sure that he would have been. Why do I say that? Well, it would certainly be odd if John was not already aware of such reports about the things Jesus was doing. Even while in prison, news would still flow back and forth through visitors, as it had been happening between John and his disciples already. I think we need to consider that John, as an Old Testament era prophet would have the same expectations as did most other Jews of his day—that the Messiah would come from the Davidic blood line and like David he would rally the soldiers of Israel as their warrior king, crush their Roman oppressors and regain the ancient glory of Israel, God's chosen nation.

If this was the kind of Messiah John was expecting, then no wonder he had doubts about Jesus. Even Jesus' own disciples had such doubts, reflected by the statement of two disenchanted disciples on the road to Emmaus: "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel." (Luke 24:21)

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And so what exactly was Jesus saying in that report to John? He was reemphasizing that his kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world. Israel was a kingdom of this world, as was Rome. Jesus' Kingdom was something new—new wine, coming in a new wineskin.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

Some years later, in a very different setting, another man was offering proof of who Christ was. Read Acts 10:37-38. What does Peter remind Cornelius about regarding the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth that offers proof that Jesus was indeed God's chosen One?

How can we be sure that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised one? We know because God was with him. And how do we know God was with him? Peter answered that question for Cornelius this way: because he went about **doing good**. God is always trying to make things very good, just as it had been at the end of the six days of creation.

The mission of Jesus was to restore humanity's eternal, life-sustaining relationship with God and to usher in the kingdom of God on earth. The moment before he died on the cross, he said, "It is finished." But what was finished? Was his mission finished, completed? In part, yes; but it wasn't completed in full. When Christ died, salvation became possible for all humanity; freedom from the cruel master of sin and Satan became possible. That was finished, fully finished, and no one can add anything to what he accomplished on the cross and in the tomb. But has the kingdom fully come? Was that finished? Has God's vision been fully restored? Was that finished? No, it was not. So, now what happens? Do we all just wait until Jesus comes back to complete the rest of it? Do we bide our time, finding whatever grace we can to help us cope in a world which continues to fall toward its calamity and final destruction? Is that our mandate, our plan - to wait to be raptured out of a broken and hurting world? Is that caretaking?

For many, it seems that is precisely the plan. It is a plan I call the free bus tickets to heaven plan. Everyone who has a personal salvation ticket will get a seat on the bus. Between now and when the bus leaves the station, a good number of people are spending their time chanting, "Halleluiaah, we have a ticket!" Others are fretting their lives away fearing they might lose the ticket they do have. Some others engage in arguing about who should be allowed to even have a ticket.

Meanwhile, a large group of people is busy praying that the bus will come soon, and until it does, they are doing what they can to protect themselves and their loved ones from the influence of those who seem to care less about busses to heaven and salvation tickets. And finally there are the seemingly faithful few who, wanting to make the bus owner as happy as they can, frantically hand out as many free tickets to others as possible, especially those they would be most comfortable sharing the bus station with until the journey finally begins!

Many Christians seem to be either nervously waiting for the kingdom to finally come, or trying to get as many people a secure place in it as possible so they are not left outside when it does arrive. They are not even aware that all the while, God is trying to get the kingdom into as many of us as possible, right now, right here. You see, the Kingdom is not a place or a destination; it is anywhere and everywhere that the rule and the will of the King is carried out. The kingdom is where God's heart is active. Jesus came to demonstrate the fullness of what that looks like in human form, in this life, while still on this earth. Jesus is no longer physically present, but his mission must be continued. The invasion of the kingdom must continue through the lives and efforts of its citizens. Our mandate is to follow in his footsteps.

Living as citizens of the Kingdom

We already saw in Unit 3 that to enter the kingdom of God, a person must be reborn. There is no dual citizenship as far as the kingdom of God is concerned. We must declare absolute allegiance. This is accomplished only through death. Through faith and identification with Christ we die to our citizenship in the kingdoms of this world and we are raised to new life as citizens of God's kingdom. We are given new hearts, fit for new service.

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

How can we identify a uniquely Kingdom citizen among the various other citizens in the world? (See Matthew 10:27; Matthew 25:31-46; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46-49; Romans 12:10; Romans 15:1-2; Philippians 2:3-4; I Corinthians 10:24; I John 3:16-18; I John 4:7-12)

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The community of those who submit to Christ's lordship are in a real sense to be Jesus to the world. For through the church Christ himself continues to expand the reign of God in the world. We collectively are his "second" body as it were, through which he continues to do what he did in his "first" body. Through us Jesus continues to embody the kingdom of God in the world. . . . This, in a nutshell, is the primary thing God is up to in our world. He is not primarily about getting people to pray a magical "sinner's prayer" or to confess certain magical truths as a means of escaping hell. He's not about gathering together a group who happen to believe all the right things. Rather, he's about gathering together a group of people who embody the kingdom—who individually and corporately manifest the reality of the reign of God on the earth.

When the kingdom is manifested, it's rather obvious. It doesn't look like a church building. It doesn't necessarily look like a group of religious people professing certain things—including the profession that they are Christian. It doesn't necessarily look like a gathering of people advocating the right political or ethical causes. It doesn't look like a group who are—or who at least believe themselves to be – morally superior to others, telling them how they should live. It doesn't look like a group using swords, however righteous they believe their sword-wielding to be. It rather looks like people individually and collectively mimicking God. It looks like Calvary. . . . It always looks like Jesus. . . .

By God's design, people are not to be won over to his kingdom primarily by our clever arguments, scary religious tracts, impressive programs, or our sheer insistence that they are going to hell unless they share our theological opinions. No, they are to be won over by the way in which we replicate Calvary to them. They are to see and experience the reality of the coming kingdom in us.

If we accepted the simple principle that the kingdom of God looks like Jesus, and if we were completely resolved that our sole business as kingdom-of-God citizens is to advance this kingdom by replicating Jesus' gracious love toward others, neither we nor the world would have to deliberate about where "the true church" is. Once we understand that the kingdom looks like Jesus, attracting tax collectors and prostitutes, serving the sick, the poor, and the oppressed, it is as obvious when it is present as it is when it is absent. (Gregory Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation*, Pages 30, 52-53)

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

How do John 14:12 and John 20:21 relate to Luke 4:18-19? What connection do you see between those passages and with this discussion of kingdom citizenship?

God invites people to cross over, to change citizenship: "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." In effect, God says to the people of this world: "Come, consider a new Kingdom, a Kingdom made up of those with new hearts who desire to walk in new ways that are good . . . very good; ways that I intended from the beginning of time. Come, consider, and join with us."

The Kingdom has come, it is coming even now and it will come in fullness in the future. Throughout "His-story" we find the Kingdom breaking through like beams of sunlight which penetrate an otherwise cloudy sky. It appears wherever God's heart is active in creation and wherever human hearts are conformed to God's heart. We find the Kingdom fully operative in three places in scripture: in Genesis 1 and 2, in Revelation 21 and 22, and in the life of Jesus. When we gaze at the world around us we see fragments of the Kingdom, small enclaves of its citizens, "signs" of its coming, but it is not fully operative. That will happen, but not yet.

How can we identify a Kingdom of God citizen among all the other citizens of the various kingdoms of this world? Ultimately it is because they will be doing the things that Jesus himself did. That is God's mandate to the Church: carry on the works and the mission of Jesus—heal the brokenhearted, set the captives free, help the blind to see and let the poor and oppressed know that there is good news for them. There is a kingdom, a society, a community of people who are here to bring blessing . . . far as the curse is found.

In order to clearly understand our role and responsibilities as followers of Christ in the world today, we must clearly understand who we are and where we come from. You might say, "I know who I am and where I come from; my passport leaves no doubt as to my identity!" And I think that is precisely

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the wrong answer for a Christian to give. We give it because we have not been taught or have not reflected on what scripture clearly teaches about this subject.

My passport has “The United States of America” printed on the front, the back, and on every page in between. To be a citizen of the USA gives me certain rights, but also claims certain responsibilities. For example, I have the right to own property and to earn income, but by law I must pay taxes on almost everything I own and all that I earn, even if those taxes are used to make war on innocent people, take the lives of unborn children and subsidize the interests of industries and big businesses whose practices often run counter to my personal ethics. I have the right to be protected, but I also have the responsibility to obey all the nation’s laws and take up arms in its defense if commanded—a “defense” defined by those who may have very different values and interests than I do. I have the right for my children to be educated, but I have a responsibility to ensure the state is not denied the right to teach them what it wants my children to learn, regardless of my personal beliefs.

In Unit Three we looked at Paul’s teaching regarding the new birth about which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus. Paul said we died with Christ when he died on the cross. We rose with Christ when he got up and left the tomb three days later (Romans 6:2-14). Becoming a follower of Jesus means our citizenship in any kingdom of this world came to an end and we became citizens of a new kingdom—God’s own kingdom. We have a different allegiance, different laws. We no longer have a President, Prime Minister or whatever it is we had before. We now have a King. The Apostle Peter wrote, “You are a kingdom of priests, God’s holy nation, his very own possession. This is so you can show others the goodness of God. . . . Dear brothers and sisters, you are foreigners and aliens here.” (1 Peter 2:9, 11 – NLT). Most Christians will say they know this, but do they truly understand its significance? The early followers of Jesus did. And that knowledge both set them apart and also often placed their lives in conflict with the kingdoms of the world in which they lived. As followers of Jesus we are aliens, foreigners and perhaps some might go so far as to say we are refugees among the kingdoms of this world.

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

Turn to the attached Readings section at the end of this unit and reflect on David Bercot’s writing titled “Has Anyone Done This in Real Life?” In what ways did the early followers of Jesus demonstrate they understood they were citizens of a different kingdom—that they were foreigners and aliens in the countries in which they lived?

Apprentices of Jesus

What many would describe as a “model” Christian or a “true disciple” is probably more a description of a “model church-goer,” rich in public piety, strong in proper behavior and customs, and very busy with church meetings and programs. Of course the term “church-goer” is nowhere to be found in the New Testament, but among the Jews of Jesus’ day, the Pharisees would be the closest fit for the profile. They were model Jewish church-goers, and depending on whom you ask, they might represent what many consider a model Christian church-goer as well!

So far, we can see from our discussion about kingdom citizenship the kind of life with which God seems impressed. But what name do we use for such a life? “Christian” was not actually the term used by the early followers of Jesus. They were later called that by others. The early followers of Jesus referred to themselves as “People of the Way” or as “Disciples of Jesus.”

The “Way” was of course in reference to John 14:6, where Jesus declares himself to be “the way, the truth and the life.” That reference means more than a path or road to God. Although it certainly includes that, it refers to a totality of life. Jesus demonstrated the way to live life to the fullest, to live life as God intends. He is that Way, and only through his enabling can we also be that way. He made this very clear in John 15:4-5.

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Think About It

Answer Box #6

Reflect on the attached Reading at the end of this unit by Dallas Willard, titled “Kingdom Living,” and then answer the following questions.

- 1) In the minds of many, the mandate God has given to the Church is what we refer to as the “Great Commission.” What is that commission according to Matthew 28:18-20?
- 2) How does that text define a disciple of Jesus?
- 3) How does that definition of a disciple relate to Jesus’ words in Luke 10:27?
- 4) What does it **really** mean to be a disciple according to Dallas Willard?

The Mathew 28 text teaches us that the great commission is not to preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel is not the goal. Getting people into heaven is not the goal. Making disciples is the goal. We are to preach the gospel because unless people understand the good news of redemption and restoration they cannot become disciples in the first place, but the preaching is a means to that other end.

We might think of a disciple as someone who believes in Jesus. But that is not really a disciple; that is a person who is a believer. Scripture tells us that even demons are believers. We might think of a disciple as someone who follows Jesus. Well, yes, a disciple needs to follow, but that still does not tell us much because Judas was a follower. We might think of a disciple as someone who claims Jesus is Lord! And yet in Matthew 7, Jesus himself says that many call him Lord but he does not recognize them.

Jesus defines disciples as those who “. . . obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:20) The disciple is one who is being taught how to act, how to live life in a certain manner, in a certain way. It is not an academic, degree-oriented learning, but rather an applied attitude and behavior-oriented learning. In John 13:17, Jesus said, “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” Oh my, how wrongly has a large segment of Christianity understood this for so very long. The blessing is not in how much we know, and the “blessed” are not those who know so much. The blessing comes from what we do with what we know, and the blessed are those who may know very little but demonstrate with their lives what little they do know. A disciple is not what in our times we call a student, but what we call an *apprentice*—someone who learns alongside the master craftsman as they both engage themselves in carrying out their trade, their occupation, not in just collecting and studying information about it.

And what is the trade to which we have been called to occupy ourselves as apprentices of Jesus? Jesus defines that trade in Matthew 28:20. It is to obey all things that he has commanded. And what has he commanded? Jesus summarizes the whole of scripture as it speaks to that question with these few words: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

A central theme in Jesus’ teaching and preaching was the Kingdom of God. But equally as central was his emphasis upon love. He both instructs and demonstrates to his apprentices how to love God with all that we are, with every facet of our person: with our heart, our soul, our strength, our mind; and in the same breath, to love our neighbor as if they were ourselves. To Jesus, love is one coin with two sides. But it is not currency to put into our savings account; rather, it is to be invested in the world around us. We are to use it as he did: to heal the brokenhearted, to give sight to the blind, to set captives of oppression free, to proclaim God’s good news of jubilee: sufficiency and justice for the poor.

A people of paradox – blending truth and love

Standing before Pilate was a man to be pitied, or so Pilate thought. A religious eccentric as such only the Jews could produce. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he jested. The man replied that his kingdom was from another place. “Hah!” responded Pilate, “So you are a king then!” The man answered that he came into the world to testify to the truth and only those on the side of truth listen to and recognize him. With disdain Pilate poses one last question, a rhetorical one not meant to be answered. “What is truth?”

What is truth? People had asked that question long before Pilate was even born, and it has been asked ever since then, to this very day. What is truth? What is meaning? What is real? For some it is only a philosophical question; for others a more serious enquiry, and among them are those who desperately want to know. For centuries Christianity has responded that we have the truth. By some it is said as an invitation to inclusive discourse; by others it is said as a somewhat triumphant and exclusive declaration of fact—take it or leave it. For the latter group, “truth” has taken center stage in how they view themselves and most certainly how they view others. They would firmly identify themselves as those to whom Jesus referred when he mentioned that he was listened to and recognized by those who are on the side of truth. These people see themselves as the faithful guardians of God’s truth and they have energetically fought off any who would challenge it, dilute it, or worse, move it away from being central to the life and focus of the Church.

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If Pilate were alive today, how would these *guardians of truth* answer his rhetorical question of “What is truth?” I could imagine a large mobile Christian bookstore being rushed to the scene, replete with a mind-boggling array of systematic theological textbooks, the various favorites of all the diverse denominational streams that comprise Christendom. Not long after that would arrive a group of eager recruiters for the many thousands of seminaries and Bible colleges that cover the globe, equally as diverse in their claims to know the truth. And of course there would be those in the crowd who would solemnly shake their heads (or their fists perhaps) and raise their Bibles in one accord, shouting, “Sola Scriptura!”—the declaration that only one book is needed to answer that question. Of course upon closer look, one might notice that even they do not represent a common interpretive translation or tradition. Poor Pilate! I wonder if he would wish he had never even bothered to ask such a question!

But ask it he did, not to us, but to Jesus. The text does not tell us if Jesus made any sort of reply to Pilate. Perhaps there was no reply Jesus felt he needed to give, other than to stand there, to be there, to live out his life in that moment as he had lived it each and every day—entirely true to himself as the One who said, “I am the Way; I am the Truth; I am the Life.” Jesus taught; he preached; he discussed. His words were truth, but people said he had an authority that went far beyond the trade of teaching. What was that authority? Was it the words? Was it the manner with which he spoke to and engaged them? Or, was it both? Jesus not only imparted words, but he also was the “Word which in the beginning was with God, which was God, and which became flesh and dwelt among us”. (John 1) Jesus spoke not only with his mouth, but also with his entire being. He enacted truth; he brought it to life, for he is both truth and life. Being with Jesus was like being with a living book and each day he was adding more pages - “It is written..., but I say unto you....”

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

Read II Corinthians 3:2-3 and Ephesians 4:15. What do these passages communicate to you regarding Pilate’s question to Jesus?

Missionaries in Nepal were not often called to the homes of military personnel, especially this one. This was the house of one of the top ranked generals in the Nepali armed services, and more. He was the uncle to the reigning queen.

I had met the general before. Recently retired, he was avidly experimenting with small scale organic farming methods, and once I had been asked to bring him two large plastic owls from America to be placed at strategic positions in his garden to keep the birds away.

After I arrived, he took me out to the garden to sit and drink tea. Following some rambling but pleasant conversation he looked intently at me and said, “We know what you are doing” [“we” meaning his circle of influence]. Those steeled eyes gave me the uneasy feeling I was about to be interrogated. “What do you mean?” I asked. With a dangerous smile, he dismissed my question and went on to say that I knew exactly what he was talking about and that he could have me and my family thrown out of the country that very day. In fact, he could have all the missionaries arrested and thrown out of the country at a moment’s notice if he so chose.

I was beginning to regret having eaten the biscuits he served earlier, my stomach feeling very unsettled. I remained silent as he returned to some general chatting. Soon he made another comment about his concern and went on to state himself more clearly. “You know very well Nepal is a Hindu kingdom and that our law prohibits conversion to other religions. You also know very well that your mission signed an agreement with my government stating you would not convert our people, and yet everywhere you work they are becoming Christians!”

Again I remained silent, and after a moment he continued. “We are very powerful, but you have put us between a rock and a hard place [in a very difficult dilemma]. We hate that because of you Nepali people become Christians, and yet no one shows as much love or offers as much help to our poor people as you missionaries do.”

I gained an invaluable insight from the Hindu general that day. God has given to the Church a great power—the power of paradox. We have the power to place members of our families, our neighbors, people in our community and those with whom we work into a major dilemma. To all of them we can “speak the truth . . . in love.” We can extend the gospel with the arms of a loving attitude, loving behavior and loving action. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we too can declare that the Spirit of the Lord is on us, because Jesus himself has now anointed us to preach good news to the poor. He has sent us to

proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

In cultures where words have lost their meaning, as is often the case in the West, deeds are necessary to verify what the words mean. Saying we are Christians is ambiguous, since almost everyone claims to be Christian. If we want to know what people mean when they say they are Christian, we look at the quality of their lives. The way we live and act declares to others what we mean when we say we are Christians. . . . Finally, just as we cannot understand who God is without reference to what God is doing, the same applies to human beings. We are made in the image of a God who is and who is acting. Thus, we must be who we are—bearers of the image of a relational God—and do what we were made by God to do—be fruitful in self-giving relationships. (Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*)

Do the non-Christians that you and I know feel we have them “between a rock and a hard place?” Do we present to them a dilemma? Perhaps we consider ourselves as someone who is quick to speak the truth, but do we do so in love? Are our words clothed in the garments of charity, graciousness and humility? Perhaps we are recognized for our acts of kindness, but do we risk speaking the good news as well? Do we share the message of the One who redeems and restores damaged lives? Jesus did both; he was known for both. He presented himself as a paradox. But what about us? The Apostle Paul said we are living epistles read by all. When people read the letter of our life, will it speak loudly of the one who not only said “I am the truth,” but also demonstrated it fully each day of his life? Are we God’s “love letter” to the world around us?

Ambassadors of the King

We have looked at what it means to be and live like a citizen in the kingdom of God. Such citizens are true disciples of Jesus—apprentices who are following the example of their teacher, not only repeating his words to themselves and to others. But in II Corinthians 5:20, Paul adds another dimension to our discussion. He states that we are also Christ’s ambassadors. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? What does that role involve?

The Cambridge dictionary defines an ambassador as: *An important official who lives in a foreign country to represent his or her own country there.*

Answer Box # 8

- 1) List what you think might be the most important duties of your country’s ambassadors.
- 2) When we think of a disciple of Jesus being his ambassador, how does your above list of duties fit in this regard? What might you add to or delete from it?
- 3) What is significant about the embassy and/or consulate buildings and property your country has on the soil of the other countries they are located in? What might that also suggest to us about our role to be Christ’s ambassadors among the kingdoms of this world?

Among the list of duties that most ambassadors carry out, we find things such as representing the political, economic and other interests of their government. In fact, this is to be carried out to such a degree that they are careful not to voice their own opinions about such matters. Throughout history, various ambassadors have been recalled because they were not able to keep to the “script,” the role-play given to them by their government. Other duties include facilitating bilateral agreements and treaties. They play host or hostess to dignitaries and key business leaders. They process legal matters of concern to their nation’s citizens residing in the host country.

Did you know that the embassy of your country—its buildings, property, etc.—even though it exists in the United States of America, actually belongs to your nation? It is like a small country within a very large country. Once a person enters that property, it is as if they are no longer on American soil; they are no longer under American law. It is almost as if they entered a small door right back into their own country, even though in reality it may be many thousands of miles away. In the Old Testament, there were within Israel what were referred to as “Cities of Refuge.” A person who committed an offence, even as severe as killing another person, could escape and seek refuge in such a place, and even the victim’s family members could not lay a hand upon them until it was clearly established where justice lay in the manner. In like manner, a citizen of your country who commits a crime in my country, if they are able to,

can seek refuge in your embassy. If that happens, my government cannot just break in and take them, but rather must enter into negotiations with your government.

As I think of myself as an Ambassador of Christ, it is this point that is most striking to me—my life, my home and my sphere of influence are outposts of the Kingdom of God. I operate under a different set of laws; I represent a very different set of interests than the kingdoms around me, including the one of which I am a legal citizen.

I also represent a place of refuge and safety for those who are trying to escape the control, the domination of the kingdoms of this world. With his permission, I want to quote a former MA student of mine who reflected on this point and wrote the following in his assignment:

As an ambassador of the kingdom of God therefore, my house and compound represents the kingdom of God. The house and compound of a disciple represents the kingdom of God, and all who enter it are actually entering the territory of God's kingdom. What they see, what they hear and how I treat them must reflect what the kingdom of God looks like. Wow! This is a great challenge, but a wonderful inspiration as well. (Martin Mwonda, Uganda)

Reconcilers and peacemakers

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (II Corinthians 5:17-20)

One role of an Ambassador of Christ's Kingdom is that we have a ministry of reconciliation. The word reconciliation refers to a relationship which has been cut off or broken. When there is a serious dispute between two people which leads them to separate and to cease interaction and contact, those who care for them plead and reason with them to be reconciled. To reconcile means to restore relationship, to come together once more, to solve and/or lay aside dispute. It does not mean that one party gives in outwardly but still harbors those inner feelings of resentment and conflict. That would not be true reconciliation. Some differences might not be fully "solved" in terms of coming to complete agreement, but they can be satisfied to the extent that they are laid aside, meaning they are no longer obstacles to restoring the relationship.

Jesus has given us a message—the gospel of the kingdom. That word *gospel* means Good News. The message is one of invitation. God wants to be reconciled with all people. The relationship that has been broken; God wants to restore it. The dispute God has with us is this: we have given ourselves over to the other masters of sin and Satan, and as a consequence we have contributed to the evil our world has experienced. God wants to settle that. As the prodigal son experienced, we can come home now. Our father is waiting, not to punish, not to settle a score, and not to demand we repay the life we have squandered. But rather, God is waiting to run with open arms and welcome us back to where we belong, to the place we were born to be. To all who have been enemies of God, he offers peace. Relaying that message of reconciliation is one duty of an Ambassador of Christ. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." How blessed it is to offer people the news that God wants to make peace with them.

About twenty years ago I came to a place in my life where I began to react against my evangelical heritage. I was tired of those who, upon hearing of my service among the poor and oppressed, would ask questions or obviously be thinking thoughts (you know when someone is thinking accusing thoughts by their awkward, discomforting body language) such as, "Yes, but how many souls have you led to Jesus?" Or, "But we thought you were doing real mission work." I was equally weary of those missionaries who considered works of mercy and compassion as just a guise for doing clandestine evangelism, or at best, thought of such works as having some value, but were second class kingdom activities regardless.

One day I was walking in some rural villages with a colleague. Upon passing a Hindu temple he said quietly, something to the effect of, "This religious nonsense is the curse that keeps my people poor." Although he came from a Hindu background, I began to wonder if he might have secretly become a communist! But no, he was just a young man who longed for people caught in the cycle of poverty and oppression to find a way out, and religion seemed to have little to offer; and worse, seemed to have little concern; or worse yet, was used by the elite as an instrument of oppression.

I realized that I shared his feelings and that shocked me somewhat. As time went on, that experience pressed me to consider deeply what my allegiance to Evangelical Christianity truly was. My discovery was that deep in my heart I knew it was very, very weak. I still considered myself a devoted follower of Jesus, but I began to consider "outreach" to be better represented by Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16: "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise

your Father in heaven.” He didn’t say, “Hear your good words.” My focus was soon turned fully toward development and social change.

Several years later, in another rural village area, I was discussing with the same Hindu friend how difficult we were finding it to effect lasting change through the community development process and experience. He was saying that we needed to find better methods and technologies, but most importantly, that people needed to be educated. I responded that I thought the issue was deeper than that, because it seemed that every time a group of village people started making progress, powerful and more educated people in the community would either resist that progress or take it over and use it for their own purposes and benefit. I said that I believed the root issues were those of domination and greed and that history had already demonstrated that more education does not fix those things.

I realized in that conversation with my Hindu friend that ultimately successful development and social change is determined by the condition of the human heart. And I knew that Jesus had some good news regarding that; he came to change us at the core of our being. Development and social change work best from the inside out. Get the issues of the heart right and then the methods, resources and technologies will have a much better chance of assisting people to move toward sustainable betterment. It is not a question of one or the other, but it is a commitment to one and the other.

Think About It

Answer Box # 9

- 1) As you reflect on the personal story I just told you, have you also experienced anything similar in your life that has led you to the same conclusion as mine: “development and social change work best from the inside out?”
- 2) How can we best practice that principle in the way we go about the mission of Jesus in the world today?

And so, as Christ’s Ambassadors we have this message of reconciliation. God reconciled us to himself, and now we have this experience to share with others. In Christ, God approaches people, not in anger, but in peace. God comes, not with a message of condemnation, but with a message of mercy.

He arrived on the scene with a message that did not emphasize a vengeful God who would destroy the wicked, but a loving God who extended mercy and forgiveness. He opened the way for all to a kingdom that was available to man or woman, Jew or Gentile, slave or free, as long as they make themselves “like little children” and opened their hearts to recognize its presence among them. (Lee Cantelon)

God invites the sinner because he truly loves the sinner, and not with clenched fists or grinding teeth. Jesus was scandalous in the eyes of religious people because he was known to be the “friend” of sinners. They were not evangelism “contacts” to him, nor did they become “converts.” They were his friends, and he invited them to be adopted into his family as equal members with all who were already his brothers and sisters.

Much evangelism lacks kindness and civility. Why is that? There seems to be an underlying “in your face,” angry attitude that accompanies much of it. In a church where I was at one time serving on the pastoral staff, an elder came into my office to have a chat. He was telling me that he had just reread one of his favorite sermons of all time. The title of it was “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” preached in 1741, by Jonathon Edwards, an infamous American religious figure of that century. Speaking of the “unconverted,” in his sermon Edwards said among other things:

They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth: yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.

I too had at one time favored this sermon. It was not long after I had been converted and was beginning to excel in self-righteousness, much like the Pharisee who looked over at a tax collector praying nearby and began to thank God that he was not like that despicable man. Or like that other Pharisee named Simon, who not only was deeply offended that Jesus, a guest in his home, would allow a prostitute to come see him there, but then looked with disdain at the outrageous spectacle of her washing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying them with her hair! Simon muttered to himself something like, "How could such a religious person not recognize the disgusting sinful nature of the woman handling him?" Reading his thoughts, Jesus said to Simon that those who have been forgiven much, love much. And of course we already know Jesus' thoughts about love – we are to love not only God with our whole being, but also love others as if they were ourselves, even, or perhaps better said, especially if that other is a prostitute.

To this elder sitting in my office, I posed a question. "If you were to substitute the name Jesus for the name God in the title of that sermon, does it still work the same way for you—Sinners in the hands of an angry Jesus?" He paused for a moment and then said no, it didn't work the same way for him. This man was my friend, and I was relieved to hear that reply.

I know others who would have responded differently. Why? Self-righteousness is one reason, but I think many who approach evangelism and mission work with a condemning attitude have never encountered nor understood the heart of God toward others and even toward themselves. I read somewhere that Amy Carmichael, an Irish missionary to India's temple prostitutes in the early 1900s, sent a message to her mission asking them not to send anyone to India who would be coming out of a sense of duty or out of a stern obedience to God, but to only send those who would come out of their love for people, love that God himself had placed in their hearts.

For the followers of Jesus engaged in development and social change, we need to be certain that we are committed to giving voice to the good news of the Kingdom, the news that Christ can turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. Without that, our efforts to see significant lasting change in people's lives will be frustrated and ultimately of little value to them. But we also need to be equally certain that our motivation for sharing that news is the same as Jesus': "For God so loved . . ."

Above everything else related to development work, compassion is the area in which we as followers of Jesus should shine as stars because the Holy Spirit has injected our hearts with God's love. And love, if it is God's kind, will always lead us beyond words to activism. "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:18)

As God's Ambassadors, our roles as peacemakers and reconcilers are not limited to the relationship between God and humanity. We are called to be peacemakers between people as well. Cain told God that he was not his brother's keeper, in other words, that he had no responsibility for anyone but himself. It was not the kind of statement that brought much delight to God I think. The history of the human race has not brought us very far from those words of Cain, except perhaps to extend the responsibility of being keepers of ourselves to also include a small circle of family, tribe, nation, church, religion, etc.

This call to peacemaking starts within God's own household. In John 17, we read about Jesus praying that his disciples would have unity among themselves and that because of this unity the world would believe that Jesus truly had been sent by God into the world. Christianity as we know it does not seem to give much credibility to Jesus' words. The extent of fighting and power struggles within churches and between church groups all around the world must weigh heavily upon his heart. Paul understood what Jesus meant, which is why we find him writing in Philippians 4:2-3, "I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."

Think About It

Answer Box # 10

- 1) In light of John 17:23, how do you think it is possible for there to be so many different denominations and splinter groups who demonstrate animosity toward other Christians?
- 2) What is your personal experience with this? How do you feel about it and respond to it?

The role of peacemaking between people is not restricted to relationships within the church. Paul also writes in Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." I think this is a good example of what the scripture refers to as a "hard saying." We are to live at peace with everyone sounds inspiring, but what if they do not want to live at peace with us? What if they are not content just to leave us alone either?

I think some Christians are “persecuted” because they are the “in your face,” judgmental kind of person. They tend to provoke an angry response unnecessarily, even exalting in it and wearing it as some sort of badge for Christian bravery. I wonder if it is often more a badge of Christian naivety or even stupidity.

I received an e-mail message some time back calling for urgent prayer to unite against the godless liberal humanists persecuting a group of American Christians and attempting to strip away their rights as American citizens. As I read on, the story was about a small group of fundamentalists who had gathered at a peaceful rally of advocates for gay and lesbian rights. Then, with loud speakers they began shouting at the rally members their version of Jesus’ “good news,” news that the rally members were all going to hell to burn and suffer torment for eternity because God hated them.

I did some things like this in my early days of wayward discipleship as well. At the time I thought the angry response I received in return meant I must be doing the right thing, because didn’t such people also persecute Jesus when he told them the “truth?” I now look back and cringe at the judgmental spirit I had and the completely wrong idea of what it means to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

Righteousness means “right acting,” and I certainly do not consider my behavior at that time right in any way. Why do I say that? Because I can’t imagine Jesus, the friend of sinners, standing up with a loudspeaker and hurling curses of damnation to anyone, except perhaps to self-righteous and judgmental religious people, which I was at the time.

Nevertheless, there have been many people throughout history who have been truly persecuted for right acting, and it is the awful reality for many Christians in the world today. We know them as the persecuted church. They want to live in peace, but they are not allowed to. They do not provoke reason for their treatment, but it does not matter because they are the victims of hate. I think each of us would agree, at least I hope we would, that in their case, we are responsible to be our brother’s and sister’s keeper, and in the very least we should be upholding them in prayer.

Think About It

Answer Box # 11

- 1) Do you feel Christians have any obligation to be peacemakers, apart from interpersonal and inter-societal conflicts, in situations that directly impact other Christians in some manner?
- 2) Why do you take that position?

And what of those who do not share our faith but who are nonetheless victims of persecution through no fault of their own, but simply because they were born into a certain ethnic group, geographical location, caste or other state of being that marked them as objects of hate by some group trying to gain dominance over them? Are we their keepers as well?

In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up. (German theologian and Holocaust survivor, Martin Niemoller)

Former President of the United States, Bill Clinton, who calls himself a committed Christian was asked to name the single greatest regret he had about his tenure as President. He said it was that he did nothing to stop the killing in Rwanda. While so-called “Christian” America was enjoying an especially robust economy and no national crisis to disturb the abundant life Americans feel entitled to, an estimated 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered during a period of 100 days from April 6th through mid-July 1994. The Bible tells us that all human beings have been created in the image of God. Are we our Rwandan brother’s keeper?

I believe another American President who claims to be born-again will (or should) look back and answer that same question about his presidency in a similar manner. While his administration had been busy spending \$4 billion a month to violently “win the peace” and thereby further American economic and political interests in Iraq, in another place called Darfur, a policy of ethnic cleansing by the Sudanese government had already left an estimated 50,000 to 80,000 dead and 1.2 million to 2 million people displaced, many of whom are barely surviving in refugee settlements where they face severe shortages of food and clean water. Are we Americans our Sudanese brother’s keeper?

Think About It

Answer Box # 12

- 1) Stop and read the article written by Peter Kuzmic found at the end of this unit. Other than assisting people in reconciliation with God, in what other ways did the believers in that situation feel called to be peacemakers and reconcilers? How did they demonstrate that?
- 2) Do you agree with what they did? Why or why not?
- 3) What do you think the mayor of Bihac meant when he said, “I am not the kind of Muslim your friends from the West think about when they hear the word Muslim, and you are not the kind of Christian that Muslims think about when we hear the word Christian”?

As one set of statistics we looked at in Unit Two so pointedly demonstrates, we live in an extremely violent world. As followers of Jesus, what is the response to which we are called? It is this: “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” (Romans 12:18) We are to pursue peace with everyone, but Paul qualifies that statement by saying to do so as far as it depends upon us. I believe he means we are to do our part; we are to do whatever we can; we are not to run and hide, and thereby shirk our responsibilities of being caretakers of humanity.

I do not condone a violent response to violence. I have yet to see a fire put out by throwing petrol on it. Violence can subdue and control an enemy, but the rage within does not die easily, and sooner or later revenge will be taken. However, I do believe we have an obligation to give shelter and protection to the innocent who are victimized by people of hate. This involves both self-sacrifice and placing ourselves in harm’s way, a place where we might jeopardize our external peace as well. Paul himself did not have a life of external peace; he was often persecuted and finally martyred, as was Christ himself. While being peacemakers, they were both killed by those who had no interest in peace. And yet it is Paul who wrote those words because he lived them. We shouldn’t be too surprised though, after all he was a follower of the Prince of Peace.

Think About It

Answer Box # 13

- 1) In your own country, are there innocent people who are being victimized by people of hate? If so, who are they and why are they being victimized?
- 2) What is the Christian community doing to support these victims of hate?
- 3) What can individual Christians like you do?

Readings

Kingdom Living

Excerpts from a 2002 interview with Dallas Willard by *Christianity + Renewal* magazine, a United Kingdom publication, <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=92>

People, including pastors, don't see the need for discipleship. What you present as the gospel, will determine what you present as discipleship. If you present as the gospel what is essentially a theory of the atonement and you say if you accept this theory of the atonement, your sins are forgiven and when you die you will be received into heaven, there is no basis for discipleship. I ask pastors '*does your gospel have a natural tendency to produce disciples?*' By disciple I mean someone who is learning from Jesus how to lead their life as he would lead their life if he were in their place. The New Testament defines a disciple as someone who is with Jesus learning how to be more like him.

But if your gospel focuses on the gospel of the kingdom, that we are invited to live in the kingdom of God, then the basis for discipleship becomes clear. The new birth should be seen as an entrance into the kingdom of God. John Chapter 3 is not a 'forgiveness of sins' passage but a new life from above passage. Forgiveness from sins is essential - but it is not the whole package. One of the main barriers is that people see the teachings of Christ as laws that they have to obey. They are not. They are expressions of the life that comes to you, through the new birth and is naturally disposed to develop a new kind of person inside.

So when many look at the teachings of Christ, they are demoralized. They say, '*I have to do these as I now am?*' Of course it's impossible, but if you say instead that this is the sort of person I can become, then they open up and appear as things that are good and not an imposition.

I believe that the greatest gift of Jesus, outside the gift of himself and 'regeneration' is the Sermon on the Mount. But the way most interpret it actually makes it sound like bad news. This extends for example to the Beatitudes. People read: '*Blessed are the Poor*' and say, '*oh I've got to become poor in order to be blessed*'. This is a total misunderstanding of his teaching. All of his teaching is about the kingdom of God, entering the kingdom of God through faith in him and the process of being transformed so that the kinds of behavior taught, and indeed the old law, are a natural expression of who we have become.

I didn't come to understand the kingdom through theologians. I came to the understanding when I was a young Baptist Minister. I noticed that I spent a lot of my time trying to get people to come and hear me, and other ministers did the same. But when I looked at Jesus his problem was getting away from people! So I said there has to be something different here. So I found what every scholar will tell you, that Jesus' message was the kingdom of God. He proclaimed it, he manifested it and he taught it. When he sent out his disciples, he didn't send them out to teach (that's the hard part), but to proclaim and manifest (the easy part!) It was very powerful.

When you look at the Bible you see that the kingdom of God is God acting. It is the range of God's effective will. When I pray '*thy kingdom come, thy will be done*' I am praying first that God's will may be done in my own life and then around me. This is the open door for his teachings, for it is his effective will that I bless and don't curse, that I let my yes be yes and my no be no, that I not be motivated by anger and contempt etc. (as outlined in the Sermon on the Mount). So as someone who is living in the kingdom, I am praying that this may become a true expression of who I am by inner transformation. Discipleship is learning how to do that.

I would say that neither manifestation [*healings, prophecies, speaking in tongues, words of knowledge, etc.*] nor teaching [*Bible study, book learning, Theological study, etc.*] transforms character . . . neither leads to transformation spiritually. The only thing that transforms us spiritually is the action of following Christ. You seek to follow, you fail and you learn. But in order to engage in following, you have to have a clear understanding of life in the kingdom of God; that you are accepted by the grace of God in Jesus and that lays the foundation for as much true doctrine as you can manage and as much manifestation of the Spirit as you can stand.

Has Anyone Done This in Real Life?

Excerpt from: *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*.
David W. Bercot, Pages 117-120; 122-124

Jesus didn't merely teach us how a kingdom Christian should live. No, He lived the kingdom life Himself, leaving us a real-life pattern of kingdom living. And God chose the perfect time to send His Son to earth—a time that would precisely illustrate the very things Jesus would be teaching. To appreciate God's timing, we first have to understand some of the historical background leading up to the birth of Jesus.

Unit 4 – Living as Citizens of the Kingdom

Most of us remember how the Jews had been taken captive and exiled in Babylon. After the Persians overthrew Babylon, a remnant of Jews returned to Judea and rebuilt the temple. However, they were not an independent nation. The Persians continued to rule them for more than two hundred years. However, in 335 B.C., the Greeks defeated the Persians, and they became the new rulers over the Jews.

Finally, in 142 B.C., under Simon Maccabce, the Jews gained their independence. For the first time since the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews no longer had to submit to any foreign king. What a time of rejoicing that brought!

The Rise of Rome

While the Jews were struggling against the Greeks, Rome was slowly rising to become the dominant world power. Since Greece was the mutual enemy of both Rome and Judea, the Jews had signed a treaty of friendship with the Romans. In this treaty, Rome affirmed that Judea was an independent nation, and it warned the Greeks not to try to reconquer Judea.¹

Despite this treaty, in 66 B.C., the Romans took control of Judea themselves. And they soon began taxing the Jews quite heavily. And what were those taxes used for? To benefit the Jews? No. To support the very armies that were keeping the Jews subjugated.

The Jews had been a free people for over seventy-five years, and they weren't about to submit meekly to Rome. So at the time that Jesus was born, Jewish nationalism ran high. In fact, by the time Jesus reached manhood, there already had been a number of Jewish uprisings against the hated Romans. But Rome had brutally suppressed them all.

Jewish Traitors

However, not all Jews hated the Romans. In fact, some Jews profited from Rome. This was because the Romans did not personally collect the taxes they levied against the Jews. Rather, they farmed the job out to other Jews. After all, it was easier for a Jew to collect Jewish taxes than it was for a Roman. A Jew would be wise to the tricks and schemes his fellow countrymen might use to evade taxes. Furthermore, he lived right in the midst of them. He knew what was going on—who was prospering and who wasn't.

Traitors! Turncoats! The Jews detested the men who served as tax collectors for the hated Romans. "Just wait until we get our independence, and we'll hang you from the highest gallows," was surely what most Jews were thinking.

Naturally, most of the Jewish nation yearned eagerly for the coming of the promised Messiah. They firmly believed that surely he would lead the Jews in a victorious war of liberation against Rome. If the Maccabean family had been able to overthrow the Greeks, how much more so would the Messiah overthrow the Romans!

But then here comes this carpenter's son named Jesus, and He tells them to love their enemies. Love the Romans? That borders on treason! And what's this? If a Roman soldier commands you to carry his pack for one mile, carry it two miles instead? That's not only treason, that's insanity! Pay all of the onerous taxes that Caesar demands? Surely this can't be the long-awaited Messiah. And what's worse, this Jesus actually befriends the traitorous tax collectors and eats with them. (Luke 7:34).

If there was ever a time and place when a patriot was needed by his country, it was in first-century Judea. The Romans had no legal right to be in Judea. And the only way to get them out was going to be with the sword. To His fellow countrymen, Jesus was a coward and a traitor. Not only would He not join their cause, He treated the Romans like friends.

Why didn't Jesus help the Jews in their struggle for independence? Because He was simply a sojourner here on earth. He lived in Judea, but his citizenship was in God's kingdom. God's kingdom rendered Jewish national affairs irrelevant. What difference would it make to the kingdom of God whether the Jews obtained independence from Rome? Struggles for earthly power and earthly independence are meaningless in the realm of eternity. Earthly patriotism has no place in God's kingdom.

What Did the Disciples Do?

Some Christians make the claim that Jesus didn't get involved in the Jewish struggle for independence only because He had come to lay down His life as a ransom for mankind. But if this were the case, then surely His disciples—who were nearly all Jews—would have been closely involved with that struggle.

However, Jesus' disciples ignored the Jewish fight for freedom, just as Jesus had. In fact, from reading Acts and the Epistles, a person would never even know that such a struggle was going on. Acts and the Epistles never even mention it—even though most of the New Testament writers were Jews. That's how irrelevant the Jewish struggle for independence was to the kingdom of God.

In fact, history shows that Christian Jews didn't join the fight for Jewish independence. Rather, the Christians abandoned Jerusalem after the Jews had freed it (briefly) from the Romans. Instead of helping their countrymen, they fled to the city of Pella, outside Judea.² Like Jesus, the Jewish Christians in Judea

Unit 4 – Living as Citizens of the Kingdom

weren't Jewish patriots. They didn't care if Judea was ruled by Romans or by Jews, for they had no interest in promoting any earthly kingdom—Jewish or Gentile!

Does that sound unpatriotic? Indeed, it was. The banner of Jesus' disciples wasn't "God and country!" It was God or country. Either a person's heart is entirely devoted to God's kingdom, or it's devoted to the kingdoms of this world. We can't have a divided heart or serve two masters. The love of country that the first century Jewish Christians had once had for Judea was now transferred to the kingdom of God.

It was the same for Roman Christians. Like their Jewish brethren, they didn't care whether Judea was ruled by Romans or Jews. They didn't take part in the war against the Jews, and there was no rift between Jewish and Roman Christians over the issue of Judea's independence.

As I have said, obtaining citizenship in the kingdom of God is similar to obtaining citizenship in the United States. To become a United States citizen, a person must transfer his allegiance from his former country to America. He can't maintain allegiance to both. It's no different when we seek citizenship in the kingdom of God.

Living as Foreign Residents

When the church was still close to the time of the apostles, Christians truly lived in this world as strangers and foreign residents. They lived by kingdom values, which made them noticeably different from the world around them. Because their focus was on Jesus Christ and His kingdom, the public affairs of this world were essentially irrelevant to them. Hennis, who wrote around the year A.D. 150, or perhaps earlier, from the city of Rome, had this to say:

You know that you who are the servants of God dwell in a strange land. For your city is far away from this one. If, then, you know your city in which you are to dwell, why do you here provide lands, and make expensive preparations, and accumulate dwellings and useless buildings? He who makes such preparations for this city cannot return again to his own. ...Do you not understand that all these things belong to another, and are under the power of another? ...Take note, therefore. As one living in a foreign land, make no further preparations for yourself except what is merely sufficient. And be ready to leave this city, when the master of this city will come to cast you out for disobeying his law.³

Tatian, who lived in the Middle East, wrote a defense of Christianity around A.D. 160. In it, speaking on behalf of all Christians, he proclaimed: "I do not wish to be a king. I am not anxious to be rich. I decline military command. I detest fornication. I am not impelled by an insatiable love of [financial] gain to go to sea. I do not contend for chaplets. I am free from a mad thirst for fame. I despise death. ...Die to the world, repudiating the madness that is in it! Live to God!"⁴

Clement of Alexandria was a Christian instructor in the church in Alexandria, Egypt. His writings, which date to around A.D. 195, express the early Christian detachment from the politics, patriotism, and events of this world. He summed up the early Christian spirit when he wrote, "We have no country on earth. Therefore, we can disdain earthly possessions."⁵

Tertullian, who wrote between the years A.D. 195 and 212, was a fiery author who belonged to the church in Carthage, North Africa. Like his fellow Christians of that age, he testified that Christians have no interest in the political and governmental affairs around them:

All zeal in the pursuit of glory and honor is dead in us. So we have no pressing inducement to take part in your public meetings. Nor is there anything more entirely foreign to us than the affairs of state. We acknowledge one all-embracing commonwealth—the world. We renounce all your spectacles. ...Among us, nothing is ever said, seen, or heard that has anything in common with the madness of the circus, the immodesty of the theater, the atrocities of the arena, or the useless exercise of the wrestling ground. Why do you take offense at us because we differ from you in regard to your pleasures?⁶

Addressing his fellow Christians, Tertullian wrote, "As for you, you are a foreigner in this world, a citizen of Jerusalem, the city above. Our citizenship, the apostle says, is in heaven."⁷

Origen was one of the most brilliant men of his day. For several decades, he served as a teacher in the church in Alexandria. Later, he moved to Caesarea, where he was ordained as an elder or presbyter. One of Origen's most valuable works was his reply to Celsus, a pagan critic of Christianity:

Celsus also urges us to 'take office in the government of the country, if that is necessary for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion.' However, we recognize in each state the existence of another national organization that was founded by the Word of God. And we exhort those who are mighty in word and of blameless life to rule over churches. ...It is not for the purpose of escaping public duties that Christians decline public offices. Rather, it is so they may reserve themselves for a more divine and necessary service in the church of God—for the salvation of men.⁸

Cyprian served as bishop of Carthage around the year A.D. 250. He left a considerable body of correspondence with other Christians and with other churches, which gives us valuable insight into the beliefs of Christians in his day. Corroborating what his fellow Christians were saying, he wrote, "We should ever and a day reflect that we have renounced the world and are in the meantime living here as guests and strangers."⁹

Notes:

1. H. W. Hoehner, "Maccabees," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986) 196-199.
2. R. H. Smith, "Pella," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
3. Hermas *The Shepherd*, Book 111, Ch. 1; ANF, Vol. II, 31.
4. Tatian *To The Greeks*, Ch. 11; ANF; Vol. II, 69.
5. Clement of Alexandria *The Instructor*, Book III, Ch. 8; ANF, Vol. II, 281.
6. Tertullian, *Apology*, Ch. 38; ANF, Vol. III, 45,46.
7. Tertullian *De Corona*, Ch. 13; ANF, Vol. II, 101.
8. Origen *Against Celsus*, Book VIII, Ch. 75; ANF, Vol. IV, 668.
9. Cyprian *On Mortality*, Ch. 26; ANF, Vol. V, 475.

Integral Mission in a World of Violence

Peter Kuzmič

Writing for the Micah Network

International politics has been preoccupied in the last decade with the task of managing conflict, specifically inter-ethnic conflict. We have recently witnessed violence and brutality in Kosovo and East Timor despite the fact that the international community in these places intervened at an earlier stage than in Rwanda and Bosnia. In 1999 there were 29 inter-ethnic conflicts in the world and there are a dozen places in the world where new ethnic violence could break out. According to the UNHCR between 1991 and 1995 the number of refugees in our world increased from 17 to 27 million. When you talk to refugees you discover what human dramas these people bring. How to manage international and inter-ethnic conflicts will continue to remain a major task of the international community. For the last nine years we in the Balkans have lived on a war-driven roller coaster after the communist ideology was replaced by conflicting nationalistic ideologies. As Leon Trotsky said in a different context: 'If anyone longs for a quiet lifestyle, they have certainly chosen the wrong epoch to live in.' As Christians we are asking the question: *how is the believing community to respond?*

A Christian Perspective on Conflict

The last century had more soldiers and civilians killed in wars than the previous 5,000 years of recorded history and four times as many as in the previous four centuries cumulatively. But why so many wars and victims in just one century? Theories abound yet many are deficient from a Christian perspective for they fail to address the deepest ambiguities of human nature and that fundamental alienation of human beings from their Creator that results in their alienation from each other. Over 112 million (some estimates go much higher) people were killed in what at its outset was expected to be the 'century of elevated human reason'. As Reinhold Niebuhr said, the Christian doctrine of sin is the least popular doctrine and yet the one for which we have the most overwhelming empirical evidence everywhere.

Samuel Huntington, in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*, highlights the role of religion in shaping new kinds of warfare driven primarily not by issues of economics or territory, but by clashes of different ideologies and civilizations.¹ But while the international diplomats are discovering the destructive role of religion, they also discover that religion has a great potential for social healing, for forgiveness, for reconciliation, for building bridges of understanding and confidence across the ethnic and other divides. Frequently modern conflicts are explained as 'normal' reactions to the processes of globalization. Small ethnic communities and their cultures feel threatened by the aggressive forces of globalization as they invade their territories.

Kenneth Waltz offers three explanations for the origins of wars in Western history.² One is what he calls *folly of the nations*. Nation states are organized to pursue wars, whether the wars are due to the

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). For a more Christian and constructive approach see Douglas Johnson and Cynthia Sampson (eds.), *Religion: the Mission Dimension of Statecraft* (New York/Oxford: OUP, 1994); Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Reflection on Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996); and Donald Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies: The Role of Forgiveness in Politics* (Oxford: OUP, 1998).

² See Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, 2001).

economic self-interest, national pride, national insecurity or the political pressure of the masses or sometimes the military on the political leaders. A second explanation is *international anarchy* or *disorder*. Waltz says that as long as there is no ruler to enforce order, autonomous units of the international system will resort to armed conflict to resolve their tensions. These tensions may be due to economic competition, exaggerated nationalism, border disputes, territorial claims or ideological clashes, but it is international anarchy that permits wars. But Waltz looks at yet a third explanation. Thirdly, Waltz speaks not only of the folly of the nations, but of flawed *human nature*. This of course is an euphemistic reference to what we Christians call sin, a recognition that humans are flawed. This 'weakness of persons' is due to the fundamental alienation from our Creator who is a 'God of peace'. Whether the major cause be ignorance, pride, greed, or social estrangement, the problem lies in human nature.

The problem with a Marxist approach is not only its problematic use of class struggle and violence but also its optimistic anthropology. Marxism has an optimistic view of human beings that is marked by theoretical absence of sin. This is why it is important for Christians to bring the perspective of the kingdom of God. Alexander Solzhenitsyn said that the twentieth century was ending as 'the most cannibalistic centuries of all.' I think that we have a unique opportunity as Christian theologians and missiologists to bring a perspective on the present reality that has been lacking. A Christian perspective illuminates this tragedy of human beings' reliance on their pride and their selfish search for power. They do not submit to the Lord of the nations, but rather submit in their vanity to work out their own destiny and to decide the fate of their nations. Dethroning God inevitably leads to human tragedy.

A Christian Response to Inter-ethnic Violence

Let us briefly look at Bosnia as a case study of a Christian response to interethnic violence. The ancient boundary between east and west runs through former Yugoslavia whose modern complex make-up included six republics and two autonomous regions, five South Slavic nationalities along with several strong national minorities, two alphabets and three main religions (Orthodox, Roman Catholicism and Islam). Misha Glenny calls Bosnia-Herzegovina 'the paradise of the damned'.³ There were three myths about the war in Bosnia. One was that it was primarily an ethnic or tribal conflict due to an uncontrollable eruption of ancient ethnic hatreds. This explanation, however, fails when faced with the fact that every third marriage in Bosnian cities was inter-ethnic and that there was a peaceful coexistence between ethno-religious communities for centuries. The second myth was that in Bosnia we had a classical civil war. In reality, it was an imported war, engineered and supported by Belgrade and shaped by their expansionist concept of 'Greater Serbia'. The third myth speaks of 'the defense of the Christian West against the onslaught of fundamentalist Islam' in Europe. But for most Bosnians Islam is more of an issue of cultural identity than a religious designation. Many Bosnian Muslims are atheists or religious agnostics and it is certainly inaccurate to describe them as 'militant fundamentalists' threatening 'Christian Europe.' The genesis of the war was ideological and territorial, not ethnic or religious. Political leaders with ambitions to enlarge their territories regardless of the human cost manipulated ethnic and religious sentiments. It was in their interest to create the perception that it was an inevitable ethno-religious war and they were able to create it by the manipulation of media over which they had almost total control.

When the war began, the international community imposed an arms embargo on the whole of Yugoslavia. Serbian generals controlling the old Yugoslav Army had monopoly on arms and thus a distinct military advantage over the republics. They staged an aggressive war in strategic alliance with the communist oligarchy still ruling in Belgrade. Prodemocratically oriented Slovenes, Croats and Bosnians became victims who initially had no arms to defend themselves while the Belgrade aggressors armed the Serbian minorities. This explains why one third of Croatia was occupied in a short time, as was seventy percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina, leaving 200,000 dead and about 3 million as refugees.

How do you respond to a situation like that as a Christian? Allow me to share a personal story. I had evacuated my family from the city of Osijek although not in time to prevent my daughter being traumatized for years by what she experienced during the intensive bombing. We had also evacuated the seminary of which I was the director. Now I was sitting in my office at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, working on a book in a safe and peaceful environment. As I was writing one day the phone rang. It was Dr. Kramaric, the major of Osijek. The city was under severe bombardment. Every third house had been hit. Out of a population of 125,000 only 19,000 people were left. The nearby Vukovar was totally destroyed and some hospitals in the area were about to start operating without anaesthesia. He said: 'You are a Christian and as a Christian, you cannot be indifferent.' Suddenly I pushed my manuscript aside because I noticed tears coming down my cheek as I came under conviction that I was involved in a selfish academic exercise of promoting my own career while priority should be given to saving lives.

I traveled back, entering Osijek on a small, dangerous road along with several of my former students who were now themselves refugees. We discovered there was no food and no medical

³ Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin, 1992), chapter 5.
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assistance. When my hands touched a limbless boy in the basement of that bombed out hospital something revolutionary started taking place in both my heart and my mind. I almost dare to say that my theology changed.

Risking our lives for the second time, my friends and I went back to Zagreb in search of food and medical assistance. I went to visit an old friend, a Catholic priest who was a good friend of Protestant evangelicals and a man with a great heart. We both cried as Father Jurak told me that he had 7,000 people to feed with only one day's food for 200. Despite three days without sleep, I spent the night calling people around the world. 'If you believe in God,' I pleaded with them, 'please send us some food, do something about it.'

With some of our evangelical ministers we founded a relief agency called *Agape*. It would be a two hands ministry: with one hand we would give daily bread because people were physically hungry, with the other hand we would offer the eternal bread because they were spiritually hungry. Just a few months later war would break out in Bosnia and we would have the opportunity to help thousands of lives there and many more during the Kosovo crisis.

What have we learned about responding to pain and suffering in inter-ethnic violence in the Balkans? Let me briefly answer that question by *three C's of integral mission*.

1. Context

Evangelicals emphasize the text of God's word, the Bible, as authoritative for belief and practice. Ministers of the gospel must be competent interpreters of the Scriptures. The text is, however, neither proclaimed nor practiced in a vacuum but always in a concrete situation or context. All of Christian life and mission is a two way street with constant traffic between the text and the context; between God's holy word and God's alienated world. If we ignore the world, we betray the word because the word sends us into the world. If we ignore the word, like some of our liberal friends, we will have nothing to bring to the world. People need a message of hope and life for situations of despair and death. We have learned that there is no authentic mission from a safe distance. Mission with integrity does not take place in antiseptic conditions.

I have frequently struggled with the question of how to evangelize in painful situations without appearing to exploit human suffering. Entering the context is of crucial importance. Jesus did not pick up a heavenly megaphone to shout down to the inhabitants of the Planet Earth: 'Repent!' He entered human history and took on human flesh. He was hungry. He was thirsty. He became a refugee. Contextualization is not just knowledge about the other context, but being willing to identify yourself with the context and become vulnerable.

One of our American missionary educators in the Osijek Seminary, Chris Marshall, had been involved in a small traffic accident and was left in hospital when we evacuated. After her release she decided to stay in the basement of our seminary taking care of the elderly and wounded, and caring for our Serbian neighbours whom we were sheltering from possible Croatian revenge. Despite being the only American left in Croatia, she refused to leave. When confronted with the order of her government she calmly responded: 'I have higher orders to obey.' She stayed throughout the war and became known in the city as the 'Evangelical Mother Theresa of Osijek.' Integral mission is always incarnationally contextual.

2. Compassion

We evangelicals know about the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19). But we must read it in the context of Christ's claim to have been given all power and authority (Mt. 28:18). Jesus can legitimately make that claim because he is the only one who walked this earth whose hands never stole, whose lips never lied, whose heart was without any wrong motive and in whose mind there was no erroneous thought. Although fully human, he was the only one without sin, which uniquely qualified him to take the sins of humanity to the cross. And he is the only one who came back from the death. This Christ-event and his supreme authority are the theological basis for the evangelizing task. 'Therefore, as you go, you make disciples of all nations.'

We, as 'Great Commission Christians,' discovered in the basements of Croatia and Bosnia Matthew 25. Jesus says the results of the final accounting day will depend on how we treated the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the refugees and the prisoners. Matthew 25 is the *Great Compassion Chapter* while Matthew 28 is the *Great Commission Chapter*. Both are the words of our Lord and we must keep them together if we are to be authentic witnesses for Christ in painful situations of our broken world.

We have learned that proclamation alone in such situations can be counter-productive because it smacks of religious propaganda and senseless proselytizing. People do not only have souls that we register for heaven; they also have bodies that need to be taken care of. They have not only ears to hear what we say, they also have eyes to observe whether we truly live according to what we proclaim. There is no authentic mission without the motivation of love and the practice of compassion. Indifference to suffering and injustice is sin. George Bernard Shaw once stated: 'The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent of them. That is the essence of inhumanity.'

Time magazine made the same point: 'Death in Rwanda in harrowing proportions came not only from massacres and cholera, but also from apathy.' Jesus, we are told, 'saw the crowds and was *moved* with compassion' (Mt. 9:36). He loved them to the point of pain. Having the eyes and heart of Jesus is a key to integral mission. Vision and love are basic pre-conditions for any missionary work.

3. Credibility

In one of our Lausanne congresses we met under the slogan: 'How shall they hear?' We had a serious polarization between Third World evangelicals and Western, especially North American, evangelicals. The latter emphasized the priority of evangelism in the sense of the verbalization of the message of salvation. Some of us living at that time under Marxism or in other antagonistic contexts of our broken world said 'How shall they hear?' is a biblical question because it is taken from Romans 10, but it is not fully biblical because in many places of the world the first question is not 'How shall they hear?' but 'What shall they see?' What they see will determine their response to what they hear.

Money, management and methods are not sufficient for evangelism. A purely managerial approach to mission is a secular, consumerist, pragmatic and unbiblical view. In many place of the world the Christian church must regain its credibility because it has been so compromised. When taking theological students on pioneering mission trips in former communist Yugoslavia I would often tell them that our first task may be simply to wash the face of Jesus because it has been distorted and dirtied by the compromises of institutional Christianity through the centuries and through Marxist atheistic propaganda in more recent times. We have a credible message of a credible Saviour, but the more difficult question is whether we have credible communities and credible messengers.

At the end of the war in Bosnia I met with the Muslim mayor of the city of Bihac. Bihac was cut-off from the rest of the world for over three years. Over one thousand children lost at least one parent as a result of indiscriminate shelling. The hospital operated without anaesthesia for months. Some of Agape's volunteers risked their lives to help and now Agape was to be honoured 'for saving lives'. During our pleasant visit I asked the mayor, 'You are a Muslim and I am a Christian. How is it that we get along this well?' He smiled and said, 'That's because I am not the kind of Muslim your friends from the West think about when they hear the word Muslim, and you are not the kind of Christian that Muslims think about when we hear the word Christian. I have a Muslim name; I am culturally Muslim; but I am not really a devout follower of Islam. I don't have a deep commitment to Allah but I am increasingly interested in Jesus because of who you people are and what you do. You are not the kind of Christians that fit our mental image and prejudice, because you have not come for territorial gains or with a political agenda or ethnic exclusivity. You did not come like the crusaders with the sword in one hand and the cross in the other. Instead, you have loved us without pushing your religion down our throats.' Then he added that we were free to open a church in his city because they trusted us. When I asked why they trusted us he simply responded: 'You are credible with us because you became vulnerable with us.'

Credibility depends on our availability, which includes our vulnerability. The mayor's comment gave me a wonderful opportunity to share with him the story of the most credible person that ever walked the earth. Jesus is the most credible person because he became vulnerable by his incarnation and the cross. He is our model missionary whose gospel we are to live, proclaim and practice with contextual sensitivity, compassionate engagement and credible witness. That is what integral mission is all about.

Development and Social Change

Unit 5

How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 5 - How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “How History Changed Evangelicals,” an excerpt from an article by Robert Linthicum
- 2) “The Role of Church in Society,” an excerpt from an article by Dr. Robert Moffitt

Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe to what extent Christianity has been faithful to Jesus’ mission throughout the time periods beginning with his ministry on earth up to the 4th century, from the 4th century to the Protestant Reformation, and from the Reformation to current times;
2. Explain why the Fundamentalist and Evangelical Sector of the Church turned from social activism to spiritual isolationism in the late 19th and in the 20th centuries.

Introduction

One cannot read the Gospels and come away without being thoroughly convinced that Jesus responded to human need, both physical and spiritual. Some years back I went through all four gospels and looked at each scenario where Jesus was personally engaged in public ministry or instructed his disciples regarding such engagement. I was looking specifically at the number of individual instances he focused on either proclamation or on good deeds.

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

Read each of the following scenarios and state whether in each one Jesus is focused on proclamation, on good deeds or on both:

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Matthew 4:23-24 | Mark 1:38-39 | Luke 10:17 |
| Matthew 5:13-16 | Mark 6:54-56 | John 2:11 |
| Matthew 26:13 | Luke 7:20-22 | John 2:23 |

I have only asked you to look at a total of 9 passages, but I found 27 different scenarios and when I divided them into proclamation only, good deeds only or both proclamation and good deeds, this is what I found:

Proclamation only (4 scenarios) - Matthew 26:13; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:38; Luke 4:42-44

Good Deeds only (12 scenarios) - Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 6:2-7; Matthew 14:14; Matthew 16:19; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 1:34; Mark 6:54-56; Mark 7:37; Mark 8:1-3; Luke 10:17; John 2:11; John 2:23

Both Proclamation and Good Deeds (11 scenarios) - Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 9:35-38; Matthew 10:1-8; Matthew 11:1-5; Mark 6:6-13; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 4:17-19; Luke 5:15-16 and 7:20-22; Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1-11

We can see clearly that Jesus lived out his mission; he practiced what he preached that day in the synagogue when he read the passage from Isaiah which described his mission (Luke 4:18,19). But did his immediate disciples carry on what he began? We know for certain they continued to preach and teach—the proclamation part of the mission. We also know from Acts and elsewhere that they continued to heal the sick and set free those oppressed by demonic forces, but what about Jesus’ emphasis on assisting the poor?

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

Read each of the following passages and to the right of them write down the action (i.e. proclamation, good deeds or both) they refer to:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Acts 2:44-45 | Galatians 2:9-10 | James 2:5-6 |
| Acts 4:32-35 | Ephesians 4:28 | James 2:14-18 |
| Acts 9:36 | I Timothy 5:16 | James 5:1-4 |
| Acts 24:17 | I Timothy 6:17-18 | I John 3:17-18 |
| Romans 12:13 | Hebrews 13:16 | |
| Romans 15:25-26 | James 1:27 | |

There can be no denying that what Jesus began, his group of apprentices took up and continued. Some might observe that many of the above passages seem to focus only on the needs within the churches themselves, not to the poor in general. That is true. The believers were taught to make sure their brothers and sisters in faith received material help when it was needed. But we dare not conclude that this meant they did not help the poor outside their own community as well. To the people around them they were bearing witness by demonstrating the kingdom of God is a society in which its citizens care for one another’s welfare.

Paul speaks to this issue in Galatians 6:10: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” The “especially” notation by no means suggests any sort of exclusion as regards to the poor in general society. Nor do I believe it can be

argued that it set an order of priority, meaning if there is anything left after we Christians have plenty for ourselves, only then are we expected to give to others. What it does suggest to me is that we must be very diligent to ensure that our generosity to people outside of the family does not mean our own brothers and sisters are neglected! That, in my mind, would lead to mockery by those critical of Christians in the same manner as would their charge that we only care about our own. God causes the sun to rise and rain to fall as a blessing upon all people, not only the household of believers.

An historical review of our faithfulness to Christ's mandate

From the Apostolic age until the 4th century

And so Jesus and his Apostles both demonstrated and taught that the Church is to respond to issues regarding human need such as justice, poverty, illness, oppression, etc. Scripture indicates the first church fellowships continued that practice at least until late in the 1st century. But what happened after that? We have the writings of the early church leaders and other historians of the era as reference. For example, in the early 300s, Lactantius wrote:

If we all derive our origin from one man, whom God created, we are plainly all of one family. Therefore it must be considered an abomination to hate another human, no matter how guilty he may be. For this reason, God has decreed that we should hate no one, but that we should eliminate hatred. So we can comfort our enemies by reminding them of our mutual relationship. For if we have all been given life from the same God, what else are we but brothers? . . . Because we are all brothers, God teaches us to never do evil to one another, but only good—giving aid to those who are oppressed and experiencing hardship, and giving food to the hungry. (Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* bk 6, chap. 10)

The writings known as the Apostolic Constitutions show that offerings were set apart for the support of the sick, infirm, poor, and disabled: "They are to be doers of good works, exercising a general supervision day and night, neither scorning the poor nor respecting the person of the rich; they must ascertain who are in distress and not exclude them from a share in church funds, compelling also the well-to-do to put money aside for good works." (1908: 1:161).

In a fascinating and masterful piece of historical research titled *The Rise of Christianity*, Rodney Stark, a professor of Sociology and Comparative Religion, asserts that one of the primary reasons Christianity grew so rapidly within the Roman Empire is because of the works of mercy carried out by followers of Jesus, especially during several devastating epidemics. One of those epidemics, assumed to be either small pox or measles, wiped out up to 5,000 people a day in the city of Rome alone, and it is suggested that up to two-thirds of the population of the Egyptian city of Alexandria also perished.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage wrote that he considered the plague something of an opportunity for light to shine in darkness, even though Christians themselves were not spared: "How suitable, how necessary it is that this plague and pestilence, which seems horrible and deadly, searches out the justice of each and every one and examines the minds of the human race; whether the well care 'for the sick, whether relatives dutifully love their kinsmen as they should, whether masters show compassion for their ailing slaves, whether physicians do not desert the afflicted . . ." Pontianus reports in his biography of Cyprian about how the bishop instructed his Carthaginian flock to respond to the epidemic:

The people being assembled together, he first of all urges on them the benefits of mercy. . . . Then he proceeds to add that there is nothing remarkable in cherishing merely our own people with the due attentions of love, but that one might become perfect who should do something more than heathen men or publicans, one who, overcoming evil with good, and practicing a merciful kindness like that of God, should love his enemies as well. . . . Thus the good was done to all men, not merely to the household of faith. (Quoted in Harnack 1908: 1:172-173)

Stark reports that another Bishop, Dionysius of Alexandria, also viewed the plague as a time of great witness for the Christian community, many of whom exposed themselves to the disease while caring for non-believers, losing their lives as a result. Around 260 AD Dionysius wrote:

Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead. . . . The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner, a number of presbyters, deacons, and laymen winning high commendation so that death in this form, the result of great piety and strong faith, seems in every way the equal of martyrdom.

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Dionysius contrasted the response of Christians to the crises with how the pagan population around them responded: "The heathen behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treated unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease; but do what they might, they found it difficult to escape." Stark further states there is compelling evidence from pagan sources that the manner in which Christians responded to the epidemics was generally characteristic of their behavior. He writes:

Thus, a century later, the emperor Julian launched a campaign to institute pagan charities in an effort to match the Christians. Julian complained in a letter to the high priest of Galatia in 362 that the pagans needed to equal the virtues of Christians, for recent Christian growth was caused by their "moral character, even if pretended," and by their "benevolence toward strangers and care for the graves of the dead." In a letter to another priest, Julian wrote, "I think that when the poor happened to be neglected and overlooked by the priests, the impious Galileans observed this and devoted themselves to benevolence." And he also wrote, "The impious Galileans support not only their poor, but ours as well, everyone can see that our people lack aid from us." (quoted in Johnson 1976:75; Ayerst and Fisher 1971:179-181) Pg. 84

After concluding his research, Stark, even though he did not claim to be a Christian, obviously was deeply moved by how Christians of the second and third centuries responded to human need. He seems to sum up his feelings when he quotes the early church leader Tertullian: "It is our care of the helpless, our practice of loving kindness that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Only look,' they say, 'look how they love one another!'" (*Apology* 39, 1989 ed.).

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

What impresses you most about the views and practices of the early believers in this period from the time of the Apostles to the end of the third century when compared to the views and practices of most Christians in your current context?

From the 4th Century to the Reformation

The history of Christianity from the fourth century forward is well documented. There continued to be a witness that remained true to the original mission of Jesus, but by 400 AD, we also see that the Church adulterated herself by becoming wed to a new bridegroom—power, wealth and politics, beginning with the emperor Constantine and continuing until the present time to a significant degree in many parts of the world. Bitter conflict, retribution, oppression and violence became a natural response to disagreements within the church as well as a method used by the church to dominate others in society. It got so bad early in our history that even the secular Roman historian, Ammianus Marcellinus wrote that the enmity Christians had for each other surpassed the fury that savage beasts have against man. (*The Later Roman Empire*, New York, Penguin Books, 1986, pg. 239)

A turning to power, wealth, politics and violence does not lead us to the kind of kingdom Jesus demonstrated and spoke about. It seems rather to only put different clothes—religious garments—on the kingdoms of this world, which may at times express genuine concern for those in need, but which at their core are primarily committed to self-preservation and advancement at the expense of others.

And yet, in spite of the great darkness of church history in the years following the third century, small lights continued to shine. Some movements within Catholicism demonstrate times where true witnesses of Jesus sprung forth, such as the followers of Francis of Assisi, the Waldensians and others who focused not upon power and prestige, but upon the needs of the poor, both physical and spiritual. Though they were largely ignored by the powerful institutional Church, and at times severely persecuted by it, they kept the flame alive. About this period in Church history, Cal Patterson wrote:

Within Christianity the obligation to be merciful was carried out as a personal or possibly congregational matter prior to 325AD. Concurrently, such social services as there were fell to the state. (However, social services as we know them did not exist. The state did provide free or heavily subsidized grain to help feed the poor. Taxes supported the acquisition of the grain.)

In 325 AD Constantine recognized the Church as the State Religion and (to save money) explicitly mandated that much of the burden for the public welfare be transferred

to the Church, where it largely remained to the Reformation. We find evidence of this state of affairs throughout the Middle Ages (roughly the 1000 years from sometime in the AD 400s to sometime near the end of the AD 1400s). Throughout the Middle Ages charity (welfare for the poor and distressed) was the province of the Church. Church institutions were the focus for much of this care.

The medieval Church supported hospitals and orphanages, both of which evolved from monasteries or were operated within a monastery complex. The early hospitals were known as "Hotels Dieu." These were monasteries that had evolved to serve the specialized purpose of caring for the sick. Other monasteries evolved to institutions ministering to the elderly (nursing homes), to pregnant women (specialized hospitals), and to abandoned children (orphanages).

It was in this period that St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1182AD) established the first lay movement to help the poor, the sick and the aged. The son of a rich merchant, Francis was very worldly as a youth. However, following an episode during which he was imprisoned (during a dispute between his town Assisi and Perugia, a neighboring community), and a period of illness, he renounced his father's wealth and turned to a life of prayer and service to the poor.

Recognized by the Pope (and ordained a deacon), Francis developed a substantial following. Called friars (meaning "lesser brothers"), these new Franciscans lived a life of poverty, served the poor and preached on moral topics (as they were licensed to do by the Pope). With St. Clare, he founded (1212 AD) a branch of the order for women which continues to exist as the order of Franciscan nuns. Later he established a Third Order for lay men and women (1221 AD), which likewise continues to exist.

The Capuchins, too, are a Franciscan order. Disagreements about the ideal of poverty caused a split in the Franciscan orders in the 15th Century and in the 16th Century one of the original two divisions split again, creating the more strict, independent order of Franciscans we know as Capuchins. The good work of this order in providing basic human services today is well known.

During the 12th and 13th Centuries, the period of the Crusades, the activity of the Knights Hospitaller led to the formation of many hospices, facilities providing respite for travelers and care for the sick. Although they were a religious military order as well, a mark of the Hospitalers was their continuing concern and care for sick and needy pilgrims.

During the 14th century charity care took a new twist. It was the period in which one of every three people died as a result of the Bubonic Plague. It was a period of heroic individual acts of mercy and ministry to the dying. For example, Catherine of Sienna in Italy and countless other religiously inspired individuals there as well as in France, Germany, Poland and elsewhere served to alleviate pain and provide spiritual comfort.

In addition, it was the period in which cities emerged and with them a new class of free citizens, free from serfdom and bondage to the feudal system. This new group, needing systems of social and economic support, established guilds. In these guilds, which tended to center on areas of economic activity, we see the precursors of today's member benefit societies. They provided care for their own, even to levying assessments for life insurance to provide for widows and orphans.

During the Middle Ages the institutions of the Church did much to serve the needs of people. But there were more in need than facilities to care for them. Many were left on the streets and rural by-ways to fend for themselves. These unfortunates were those to whom the Church said it was charity to give continuing the ageless Judeo-Christian ethic.

This was the situation at the time of the Reformation. Martin Luther (1483-1546 AD) led the way in efforts to deal with the problem of the poor by urging creation a "common chest" in each community from which food, clothing and money would be distributed to the needy. The "common chest" concept did find acceptance and similar plans for providing for the needy were set up in other countries in Europe.

Also during the Reformation, the French Priest, St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660 AD) , founded numerous charitable organizations including the important lay organization, the St. Vincent de Paul Society. In addition, with St. Louise de Marillac, he founded the Daughters of Charity (1633 AD), an organization made up of peasant women who ministered to the needy and were the first sisters to carry out their work outside the confines of a convent.

Unit 5 – How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

During the 14th and 15th centuries in England legislation known as "poor laws" were passed largely to stem vagrancy. One such act in 1572 authorized each parish to levy a tax for relief of the poor in the event charitable contributions were inadequate.

However, following the reign of Henry VIII, during which all convents and monasteries had been secularized and their properties confiscated by the state, a new solution was needed to address the needs of the poor. Previously, care was provided by the Church. Now the responsibility rested with the secular authority, a state of affairs not known since the time of Constantine in 325 AD. (Excerpt from: "Charity, the Judeo Christian Tradition" by Cal Patterson, used with Permission from Learning to Give.org)

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

- 1) In this time period at which we have just looked, how did the views and practices of the dominant Christian institutions change from what we saw as the understanding and practices of believers in the 1st – 4th century period?
- 2) Why do you think those changes occurred?

From the Reformation to the 20th Century

When Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin and others put into motion what we call the Protestant Reformation, it started as a critique of the theology and practices that had come to typify the Roman Catholic Church, not a plan to separate from the Catholic fold. However, it led to a decisive blow against the powerful domination Rome had enjoyed as a Christian state for over a thousand years. The result was a breaking away of a vast number of Catholics into a variety of splinter groups who declared their independence from the rule of the Pope.

But as time went on, it became apparent that this "reformation" was more structural, political and theological than it was a return to the teachings and lifestyle of Christ's Kingdom. Before long much of the reformation movement settled back into an institutional and professional clergy dominated experience which, although different from its Roman Catholic roots, was at the same time strikingly similar. There were exceptions to this, such as the Anabaptist groups, Moravians and others, but they were by and large a small and ostracized minority.

Giving food to the hungry, nursing the sick, caring for orphans, providing education to poor children—all these activities we find in the major institutional streams of Christendom which emerged from the Protestant Reformation, but as time went on those efforts became less a primary focus and responsibility of the churches and more a task left to the care of government institutions.

And then in the 1700s, there was another major movement within Christendom, but this time it took place within Protestantism itself. This was the period of the revivals in England and what became known as the Great Awakening in the United States. It was the era of people such as John Wesley, George Whitfield, David Brainard and others whom we now regard as the vanguards of Evangelicalism.

It was also the beginning of the modern mission movement which would end up mobilizing thousands to take the gospel to Africa, Asia and other parts of the world through the efforts of early pioneer missionaries such as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone, Robert Moffat, Adoniram Judson, William Booth, and many others.

In the minds of most modern day Evangelical Christians, those names are associated with preaching, evangelism and church planting. However, many of those we consider the forbearers of the evangelical tradition were also very engaged in social change. Most Evangelicals are either unaware or have downplayed these other aspects of their ministries.

The United Methodist website reports that John Wesley taught that people must be Christians in both word and deed, by which they were to express the love of God. He believed that Christians must grow in God's grace, which first prepares us for belief, then accepts us when we respond to God in faith and sustains us as we do good works and participate in God's mission. John Wesley not only preached about works of mercy, he "practiced" what he preached. For example, he:

- lived modestly and gave all he could to help people who were poor;
- visited people in prison and provided spiritual guidance, food and clothing for them;
- spoke out against slavery and forbade it in Methodism;
- founded schools at the Foundery in London, Bristol, and Newcastle;
- published books, pamphlets and magazines for the education and spiritual edification of people;
- taught and wrote about good health practices and even dispensed medicine from his chapels.

Wesley believed that Christians could not have authentic personal holiness without social holiness. The last letter that John Wesley wrote was to William Wilberforce, a man who had been converted under Wesley's ministry and a member of [the English] Parliament. The letter concerns his opposition to slavery and encouragement for Wilberforce to take action for change. Parliament finally outlawed England's participation in the slave trade in 1807. (<http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/mission.stm>)

Introducing the infamous revivalist preacher Charles Finney to his readers, Donald Dayton writes in his book, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*:

. . . Finney, however, was greater than either the secular caricature of a ranting, hell-fire evangelist or the Evangelical images of a deeply spiritual preacher given totally to the "saving of souls." In the words of American historian Richard Hofstadter of Columbia University, he "must be reckoned among our great men." Though first and foremost an evangelist, Finney's work and the way he understood the gospel "released a mighty impulse toward social reform" that shook the nation and helped destroy slavery. (*Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 1976 by Donald W. Dayton. Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, NY)

Finney's social activism in the 1800s was not limited to anti-slavery, for he is credited by some to have also given voice to the early struggle for women's rights.

Jonathon Blanchard, founding president of the very well-known conservative evangelical Wheaton College, is not well known for serving as a vice-president of the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1843. In his time he was recognized nationally as a social reformer in the United States; the eradication of slavery was at the center of his activities.

Besides being a world renown evangelist, William Booth, who with his wife Catherine founded the Salvation Army, wrote a book named *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. The book speaks of abolishing vice and poverty by establishing homes for the homeless, farm communities where the urban poor can be trained in agriculture, training centers for prospective emigrants, homes for fallen women and released prisoners, aid for the poor and help for alcoholics. He also lays down schemes for poor men's lawyers, banks, clinics, industrial schools and even a seaside resort. He says that if the state fails to meet its social obligations it will be the task of each Christian to step into the breach. Catherine Booth became well known as an outspoken voice and laborer for women's rights. Regarding the Salvation Army, Dayton writes:

This movement originated in England as the Christian Mission founded in the 1860s by William and Catherine Booth. This mission was a protest against "respectable churches" whose life cut them off from the masses. Its dominant concern was to follow Christ, "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich, and who has left us an example that we should follow in his steps."

The Salvation Army came to America about 1880 and by the end of the century had thousands of officers engaged in relief and evangelism throughout the cities of the world. A living critique of the bourgeois churches and a disturber of the peace by revealing the sickening underside of a supposedly respectable society, the army generated intense opposition from both mobs and church people. In one twelve-month period about 1880, 669 Salvationists were reported "knocked down, kicked, or brutally assaulted", 56 army buildings were stormed, and 86 Salvationists imprisoned (the mobs attacked, but the Salvationists were arrested and imprisoned).

Though primarily concerned with salvation and preaching the gospel to the poor, the Salvation Army, like other slum workers, soon found itself providing other services. Most immediate were the needs for food, clothing, and shelter. A "poor man's bank" was established. Day-care centers were provided to permit mothers to get out to earn a living for their families. The army discovered that the legal system was biased toward those who could afford to hire counsel, and it therefore provided free legal aid....

Prostitution was a particular concern of the army. The Booths startled many with sympathy for the prostitute, arguing that social conditions more than inherent evil forced young women into the "world's oldest profession". The Booths joined forces with muckraking journalist W. T. Stead to expose the white slave trade in which young girls were kidnapped, tricked, or sold into prostitution. Stead arranged for the purchase of a young virgin and wrote up the incident in his paper. The controversy resulted in Stead's imprisonment but forced [the English] Parliament to provide a legal weapon against the practice by raising the age of consent.

Unit 5 – How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

This tradition of combining evangelism and social change found in the early evangelical movement within England and America spilled over into its mission work also, as typified by statements such as the following:

The history of Protestantism in Korea begins with Horace Allen, an American Presbyterian (Northern) missionary who arrived in Korea in 1884. Horace G. Underwood of the same denomination and the Methodist Episcopal (North) missionary, Henry G. Appenzeller, came from the United States the next year. From the beginning, Protestant missions simultaneously performed evangelical and social work. (Office of the Korean prime Minister – http://www.opm.go.kr/warp/webapp/content/view?meta_id=englishandid=77)

David Livingstone can be seen as a man of his time and place.... It is true that Livingstone bore splendid Christian witness and that the depth of his faith helps to explain his humbling simplicity. He was nevertheless more - much more - than an exemplary missionary. In a continent that had known its share of slave traders, fortune hunters and unprincipled adventurers, Livingstone stood out because of an almost unique combination of humanitarianism, scientific scruple and early perception that human dignity requires food as much as faith, together with the right to determine one's own destiny. (Excerpt from the Inaugural David Livingstone Lecture delivered by Professor R K A Gardiner, former Executive Secretary General of the United Nations Economic commission for Africa. at the University of Strathclyde, 16 April 1973)

The work of these 19th century missionaries includes a contribution to the fight against small pox, malaria and leprosy; the provision of clean water; the extension of primary education; the protection of native peoples against exploitation and injustice; the defence of human rights. Opposition to foot binding and the exposure of girl babies in China; opposition to widow-burning and infanticide and temple prostitution in India; and much, much more. (<http://www.eauk.org/public-affairs/howtoengage/christian-involvement-in-politics.cfm>)

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

Having read about this “early Evangelical” period in church history and the practices of its founding leaders, what surprises you the most as you compare their understanding of “mission” with that of most Evangelicals leaders in your context?

The Great Reversal

As we moved into the 20th century, there took place within the Fundamentalist and Evangelical sector of Protestantism what one theologian has termed “The Great Reversal.” The strong emphasis upon the need for Christians to engage the social concerns of their time and minister to those who suffered at the hands of their fellow human beings came to a somewhat sliding halt. What happened? The well-known British theologian and activist John Stott referred to five reasons which he felt explained this phenomena:

- *A reaction against theological liberalism, which became popular at the start of the century. Faced by challenges to the long cherished basic doctrines they retreated into the defence of historic biblical Christianity and lost much of their cutting edge.*
- *A reaction against what was called the social Gospel. Many of the advocates of this had ministered in areas of severe poverty and deprivation and they had tried to develop a theology which seemed relevant to these experiences. This thinking was based upon the idea of human perfectibility this side of heaven. Life should be transformed here on earth before we get to the Kingdom of God. Evangelicals of the day reacted badly to this.*
- *Thirdly, the effect of WWI (World War One) which engendered widespread disillusionment among evangelicals. The enormity of original sin and human evilness was brought to the fore like never before and Christians appeared to be overcome by it. They retreated into a feeling of social pessimism.*
- *Fourthly, Christians were encouraged, through a variety of sources, to take the view that whatever reform attempts were made, evil would continue to flourish and the condition of society would*

continue to deteriorate until Jesus' second coming. Some Christians were criticized for getting involved in social action because by improving society they may delay the return of Christ!

- *Lastly, some sociologists have suggested that Evangelicals have become alienated from social concern because of the spread of Christianity among the middle classes, who tend to be more conservative and concerned to preserve the status quo. It was basically a move towards self centered Christianity, saving your own soul*
(<http://www.eauk.org/public-affairs/howtoengage/christian-involvement-in-politics.cfm>)

The social activism that at one time was characteristic of Evangelical outreach was now given a derogatory name – “social gospel,” and looked upon as the domain of liberal Christians who they felt had betrayed not only the true Gospel, but through what became known as Biblical Criticism, they had betrayed the Bible itself. Evangelicals became a reactionary movement and reduced the mission of Jesus to those activities associated with teaching and adhering to a narrow set of absolute doctrinal statements and “spiritual” practices of personal piety. And of course, because the Bible Schools, Seminaries, pulpits, and ecclesiastical decision makers in the West dictated the direction of mission emphasis, the international face of evangelical witness also changed, as did its core teaching to the newly converted. By the 1950s several generations who had been raised under and formed by the adherents of the Great Reversal, were totally unaware that their beliefs and practices as related to social involvement were in fact a radical departure from the original evangelical tradition. In concluding his study of evangelical heritage, Dayton wrote:

In the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy and in succeeding decades the sociological, theological, and historical currents produced a movement that in many ways stood for the opposite of what an earlier generation of Evangelicals had affirmed. What had begun as a Christian egalitarianism was transformed into a type of Christian elitism. Revivalistic currents that had once been bent to the liberation of the slave now allied themselves with wealth and power against the civil rights movement. Churches and movements that had pioneered a new role for women became the most resistant to contemporary movements seeking the same goals.... Thus a great heritage of Evangelical social witness was buried and largely forgotten, and the stage was set for the ironic struggles of the 1960s in which the spiritual descendents of earlier Evangelical social activists would reject the modern manifestations of the reform impulse as inherently unbiblical and opposed to the spirit of Evangelical Christianity.

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

Stop now and read the excerpt “How History Changed Evangelicals” by Robert Linthicum located in the Reading Section. Describe in your own words how the evangelical movement, which began as being well recognized for involvement in social justice issues, became one which was very isolated from those concerns in a relatively short time.

In Isaiah 31:21, it is written, “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’” For many years that has been one of my favorite verses regarding guidance and how we are directed by the Holy Spirit. The voice comes as confirmation or affirmation of action which had already been initiated. This avoids a passive fear of making a move until there is the writing on the wall kind of guidance, but rather guidance springs from an understanding of God’s heart and what he is doing in the world—what his mission is and what has been clearly passed on to us with which we ought to be busy. But the negative could also be assumed from this insight; if we have made a wrong turn, we will hear a voice saying, “This is not the way; do not keep walking in this direction!”

Well, I think God had been shouting for many years that the Great Reversal was the wrong direction, but as is often the case, the doctrines of men can deafen their ears to the voice of God. But thank God for being persistent! In 1978, Walter Unger, writing for *Direction*, a Mennonite Brethren discussion forum states:

By the turn of the century evangelicals moved almost entirely out of the sphere of ministering to social needs, leaving these concerns to the “social gossellers” and “liberals.” Now, however, after many years of preaching a truncated gospel, the contemporary evangelical movement appears to be moving toward a more practical morality which unites active evangelism with compassionate social concern and involvement. (<http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?265>)

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

Read “The Role of Church in Society” by Robert Moffitt at the end of this unit. From that article and from what we have looked at in this unit, why do you think the churches of today have less impact on their culture and society than the early church?

Readings

How History Changed Evangelicals

(This writing is excerpted from the article "The Surprising History of Evangelicalism" by Robert Linthicum. It is used here with the author's permission.)

This examination of the origins of the evangelical movement seems very much at odds with contemporary evangelicalism. How could a movement so grounded in working for social justice change into a movement that seems privatistic, pietistic and isolated from life? Church historians are well aware of this phenomenon, and have even coined a term for it – the Great Reversal! What caused the Great Reversal? . . .

All three phenomena – evolution, communism and higher criticism – were birthed in Europe in the middle of the 19th century. But these theories took close to 50 years to reach the shores of the United States. When they arrived, however, it was as if a critical hurricane had gained landfall! . . .

Those battling the new ideas created the discipline of “apologetics” – seeking to defend Christianity before its cultured despisers. Those who went on the defensive sought to define clearly the fundamental beliefs of evangelical faith and simply refused to believe any concept that differed with those beliefs. . . . The result, however, for the evangelical movement, was devastating because it turned the movement into a defensive movement, isolating itself from the attacks of the world. Rather than seeking the world's transformation, over the years they became refugees from a hostile world.

The second force that caused the Great Reversal from a socially activist 19th-century evangelical faith to an isolationist 20th century faith was a profound theological shift. . . . Thus it was that evangelicals not only began to doubt their all-out effort to reform society. They began to question the theology on which that action was built. . . . From about 1880 through 1910, a massive switch occurred in the evangelical community, in which depression caused by seeing worsening urban conditions and escalating poverty was translated into an embrace of the new pre-millennial teachings that proclaimed, “Don't worry with how bad the world is becoming.” . . .

The third factor that thrust the evangelical church into a protectionist, isolated existence was that the constituency of evangelical Christianity changed. For the century from 1830 to 1930, a striking phenomenon occurred within evangelicalism. . . . And slowly, they moved into the middle class, became increasingly fiscally and politically conservative. And they sent their children on to college and perhaps even to graduate schools. And they began to build and manage significant wealth. . . . This is why the evangelical movement has changed so radically in the 20th century, losing its roots as a movement designed to be engaged in public life on behalf of the oppressed. It has become escapist to the inevitable hostility of society. It has embraced a theology that allows it to avoid social responsibility. Its constituency has changed to represent the self-interests of the middle class. . . .

But what makes evangelicals change? What makes them reclaim their roots in social reform? What makes them become engaged in sometimes uncomfortable and confrontive public life? I think it takes three things. The first is that of building significant relationships with them. . . . Second, they will get engaged if there is a cause that is compelling enough for them to join. Evangelicals are naturally compassionate people. . . . But third – and this is the crucial point -- it takes biblical reflection. Remember that evangelicals are first, last and always, people of the Word. They are grounded in scripture as their ultimate authority.

The Role of the Church in Society

*By Dr. Robert Moffitt, an excerpt from an article appearing in the "Vision Conference Training Workbook."
It is used here with permission*

How the Church Changed Ancient Rome

There are periods in Western history where God has used the church to transform society. One of the most dramatic examples is described in *The Rise of Christianity*, by Rodney Stark. Stark is an internationally recognized social scientist who specializes in the study of religious movements. He is not a biblical scholar—he does not examine the role of divine intervention in the growth of the first-century church. Instead, he applies theories and methods of social science to available historical data. The rise of Christianity, he notes, is the greatest social change in Western history in the last 2000 years. In this work, he examines how a tiny, persecuted, oppressed, rejected, reviled group of 120 people was able—within 300 years—to transform pagan Rome. (Acts 1:15)

Stark notes that the small group of early Christians introduced a new vision of humanity, one that had not existed in Greek or Roman culture. He identifies some of the early Christian beliefs and practices that brought radical change to Roman society and that introduced a new view of humanity to the world.

- 1) For the first time in the pagan world, there was a God who loves those who love Him. This was a radical change. In pagan Rome the gods had their own agendas. They spent much of their time fighting each other, competing for love and dominance. They had little interest in the people who worshipped them. The God of the Christians, though, actually loves those who love Him.
- 2) Moreover, since this God loves humanity and demonstrates His love through sacrifice, Christians must love and serve others, too. This was revolutionary. In general, pagan Romans didn't love anybody except their families, people of their own social class, and those whom it was politically or economically advantageous to love. This new God, though, was essentially saying, "I love you and because I have loved you, I want you to love as I love—regardless of blood relationships, class, political attachments, or economic attachments. I want you to love those who are poor and hurting. I want you to love, especially, those who are in a humble position in the world."
- 3) A related Belief and practice was that there is no rank or ethnicity among believers. This was different! In a worship service, a nobleman and a slave came together and called each other brothers. Why would a nobleman allow a slave to call him brother? Why would a nobleman call the slave his brother? This was a whole new vision of human relationships!
- 4) Another unique Christian belief was that God is a merciful God, who requires mercy. This was contrary to Roman paganism. Rome was well known for its casual cruelty. Stark told of an emperor who celebrated his son's fourteenth birthday—his coming into manhood—by bringing gladiators into the coliseum to fight and kill each other so that his son could experience the shedding of blood to death. Roman writers ridiculed Christians because they were merciful, especially to the poor. They couldn't understand why anyone would care for the poor, but that was a central belief and practice of Christianity.
- 5) Romans believed that men were better than women. They laughed at the Christian view that men must love their wives and children. Roman men owned their wives and their children. Roman men could actually kill their children without legal consequences because the children were property, and they could do anything they wished with their own property. In the new Christian religion, men were to love their wives as they loved themselves.
- 6) In addition, Christianity rejected abortion and infanticide, which were standard practices in Rome. Stark quotes a letter that a Roman soldier wrote to his wife from the battlefield: "If you are delivered of a child [before I come home], if it a boy keep it, if a girl discard it." (Stark, 98) That was typical, says Stark. Dozens of baby skeletons were found in the excavation of a Roman sewer. Stark assumes that these were unwanted baby girls. In this new religion, however, all of life—handicapped, unborn, male or female, slave or nobleman—all of life was sacred. What a revolutionary idea!
- 7) A final observation is exciting. These believers, observes Stark, loved other people whether they were Christian or not.

This was not easy! Stark says that living in Rome was not what people imagine when they hear about excavations of the forum and Pompeii, where the upper and middle classes lived. The poor lived in outlying areas in squalid, cramped quarters. It was so bad in their two-story ramshackle houses that people went home only when it was their turn to sleep. Sanitation was poor. There was no running water or toilets, and people threw human waste through their windows onto the streets. When severe illness came to those filthy, cramped quarters, it was likely that everyone would get sick. Epidemics claimed many lives.

Christianity stressed love and charity as central duties of faith. Yet, in times of raging epidemics, what difference would there be if Christians showed mercy and charity to the sick? Surprisingly, says Stark, peoples' chances for survival improved greatly if they received minimal nursing care, food, and water—which Christians provided. Christians were not afraid to die; they knew that death was not the end.

Unit 5 – How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

Meanwhile, Roman pagans—including doctors—had no reason to serve the sick. They fled infected cities whenever they could. Those who stayed took sick people outside and left them on the street, afraid of contamination.

Stark examines a hypothetical case study of Christianity's growth during epidemics. In this example, there were five Romans. One was a believer, and four were pagans. When an epidemic came, one of the pagans had adequate resources to flee. The other four—one Christian and three pagans—became ill. Two pagans died; one pagan and the Christian survived. All three pagans observed the Christian caring for himself, his sick family, and his pagan friends. Initially, there had been a one-to-four ratio. Eventually, there was a ratio of one living pagan to one Christian. What was the Christian's influence on the surviving pagan? I agree with Stark that the pagan would have been likely to convert to Christianity after witnessing the Christian's loving, sacrificial service.

In summary, the Christian religion provided a compelling new vision of humanity that drew many converts to Christianity. In AD 40, there were only 1000 believers—or .0017 percent (nearly two-thousandths of 1 percent) of the population of 63 million people. By AD 300, this group had grown to 6 million, or 10 1/2 percent of the population. At only 10 1/2 percent, there was such a significant transformation in the society and culture that Emperor Constantine wrote the edict of Milan in AD 313 and declared that pagan Rome had now become Christian Rome.

Church Impact during the Reformation and Wesleyan Revival

Church history gives testimony to other times of great social impact. Societies were transformed in Switzerland, Germany, and Holland during the Reformation. The same thing happened in England during the Wesleyan Revival. Previous to the Wesleyan Revival, England was one of the most corrupt and immoral societies of the Western world. Children and women were abused in the labor force. Immorality was rampant. Greed ruled the Empire and fueled British slave trade—the largest commercial trading of human life the world has known. When a biblical worldview was brought to England by the Wesleyan Revival, the society experienced a remarkable transformation.

God used a British statesman, William Wilberforce, to advance the abolition of slavery in England. The first year that Wilberforce introduced an abolition law in Parliament, there was only one vote—his. He continued to introduce his anti-slavery legislation year after year, for more than thirty years. Each year, an increasing number of parliamentarians voted for the law. It eventually passed. Why? During those years, revival was spreading throughout England. Although Wilberforce played a necessary role, it was the growing groundswell of the body of Christ that caused the way of thinking—the worldview of the culture—to change. That change allowed Wilberforce's anti-slavery passion to become reality. Wilberforce, by the way, regarded John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, as his spiritual father.

I think, now, that similar large-scale transformation may be happening in Kosovo.

Church Impact in the Third World Today

There are reasons to rejoice about the church's impact on history. However, when I look at the church of Jesus Christ around the world today, I see something disturbing. The church—including the church in the Third World—is not making a large impact on its culture.

For example, 40 percent of the population of Guatemala claim to be evangelical believers. Yet, Guatemala is a society with a great deal of corruption, physical and spiritual impoverishment, and an ethnically divided society. I have a friend, a Guatemalan, who is a Quiche Indian. He is training pastors among his people in Guatemala, trying to build a church that has a full understanding of God's intentions. He told me:

Bob, we don't really need more weak churches among my tribe. There are churches on every street corner in some villages, and many of them are weak. One church preaches against the next church. Another church says, "If you go to that church, you'll become a heretic ... for we are the true church and the only one; that has the power of the Holy Spirit. The other churches are dead and lack the power of God." The problem is not evangelism, but immature believers and weak churches. We have the problem of babies making babies. New churches think that their first responsibility is to plant a new church. But neither the believers nor the churches are spiritually mature and are unable to nurture new believers or new churches to maturity.

It is my observation that these kinds of churches do not have much impact on their society. On the contrary, they may be a major impediment to the advance of the Kingdom.

In Rome, only 10 1/2 percent were believers before Constantine, by edict, declared that the empire had changed from pagan to Christian. When 40 percent of a nation's population are evangelical believers, why hasn't there been dramatic social change within Guatemala? In Rwanda, 80 percent of the people claimed to have been converted before the 1994 genocide. In America, over 80 percent of the population claim to believe in God, yet America is in moral decline. Why does the church of today have less impact than the early church? Could it be that it is not following the manifold game plan of its coach?

Perhaps the church is not impacting its society because it is focused on only one part—rather than the whole—of God's agenda.

Historical Roots of the One-Dimensional Game Plan

As we examine the past 150 years of church history, we understand some of the reasons for the conservative church's lessened impact on its culture or society. The church has seen dramatic numerical growth in this period, and I celebrate that. Yet, I am concerned about the lack of ministry balance that I have encountered in the rapidly growing evangelical church around the world. Why is there an imbalance? Here are some historical insights:

Reason 1—Conservative Reaction to the Social Gospel

In the 1850s, a theological movement called higher criticism came out of the seminaries of Europe. Higher criticism produced something known as the social gospel. There were two basic tenets of the social gospel. One tenet is that the Kingdom of God will come to earth as the church engages in good works. It focused on one side of God's agenda, the social/physical agenda. Another tenet was a belief known as universalism, a belief that all people will be saved, regardless of their personal response to Christ. In summary, the social gospel said that the Kingdom of God would come to earth as a result of good works, without the necessity of a personal conversion to Christ. Believing this, the liberal church began to focus on the horizontal—not the vertical—aspect of the Gospel.

These tenets were heresy to the conservative church, which firmly believes that each individual must be born again. The conservative church reacted, training its missionaries primarily in evangelism and spiritual conversion, rather than the whole of God's concern. As these missionaries served in foreign lands, they evangelized and disciplined a new generation with the same focus. The new believers, though, did not know the historical roots of the spiritual-only focus.

Reason #2—The World Will Only Get Worse

In the 1840s, about the same time as higher criticism, the conservative evangelical church was influenced by James Nelson Darby. Darby developed a way of looking at biblical history known as dispensationalism. Many Christians have found his system helpful as they considered how God works with people in different periods of history. However, two of dispensationalism's tenets have hurt the church's influence on society. It should be noted, too, that other conservative traditions that do not subscribe to dispensational theology have also embraced and taught these tenets.

One such tenet was that the world would inevitably get worse and worse until Jesus returns. This was reflected in "lifeboat mentality," expressed by the famous evangelist of an earlier generation, Dwight L. Moody. I paraphrase one of his well known statements: "The world is like a sinking ship, and God has put me in a lifeboat and given me a life preserver and said, 'Moody, go out and save all you can. Don't worry about the ship. It's sinking anyway.'" Moody was a great evangelist, and we thank God for him. Yet, he reflects a generation of Christians with an unbiblical, evangelism-only focus. Actually, Moody was also involved in the social implications of the Gospel, but this focus was rarely communicated.

Saying that the world will get "worse" acknowledges that it is "bad." Certainly, scripture and daily life confirm that there is evil in the world. Each generation of Christians has struggled to be "in"—but not "of"—the world, devising ways to resist, flee, shun, avoid, self-protect, and separate themselves from the evils of their society. Believers who focus on ways to insulate themselves and the people they love from the evils of the world, however, may not know that they can bring God's hopeful, transforming story to their society.

In every generation since Jesus, Christians have believed that theirs was the generation in which He would return. In one sense, that's a good perspective. We need to live as though Christ is coming back tomorrow, next week, or next year. Yet, no man knows the day or the hour when the Son of Man is going to return—only the Father. Jesus may not come for another 10 years, 100 years, or 1000 years. When He returns, what does He expect us to be doing? He expects us—the church—to be in the process of occupying until He returns! (Luke 19:13)

Reason #3—The Kingdom of God is Future

The dispensational perspective often misunderstood the timing of the Kingdom of God. Dispensationalism taught that the Kingdom of God was not for the present but for the future, after Christ's return. Yet, Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) It is both present and future. Jesus taught His followers to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9-10) The prayer was not for God's will to be done on earth after Jesus' return, but now as it is in heaven. As God's will is done on earth now, the Kingdom comes.

The belief in a future Kingdom of God inhibited emerging churches from carrying a concern for God's agenda for the restoration of "all things." (Colossians 1:20) Christians who think the Kingdom of God is in the future are not going to work to see it expressed in the present dimension.

Unit 5 – How Well Have We Followed in the Footsteps of Jesus?

The dispensational view of scripture was reflected in the *Scofield Bible*, a King James study Bible with Mr. Scofield's commentary as notes. This version was used in almost all conservative, evangelical Bible schools and seminaries during the first half of the twentieth century. My parents used it as they trained for the ministry. Many people treated the Scofield notes as almost as authoritative as the Bible itself. As a consequence, an entire generation of conservative, evangelical missionaries who studied the Scofield Bible and planted churches throughout the world passed along the two dispensational tenets we have discussed: (1) the world will inevitably get worse until the Second Coming of Christ; (2) the Kingdom of God is in the future, after Christ returns.

I praise God for this generation's sacrifice and the churches they planted. Yet, I have seen hundreds of churches throughout the world with a limited perspective of God's big agenda. Instead of seeing the church's instrumental role in God's grand intention to restore "all things," these churches promote only the spiritual side of God's concern. Of course, they would have little reason to be involved in healing their society if society was destined to decline and could never represent God's Kingdom.

Reason #4—Physical Ministry as a Means for Evangelism

In spite of the above perspectives, many conservative missionaries did engage in ministry to physical and social needs. However, because of their focus on the spiritual agenda, the physical projects were often done as a means for evangelism. How do people feel when somebody manipulates them in order to get something? Personally, I don't like it. Imagine how you would feel if, as a Muslim or Hindu, you learned that the hospital in your village was built to get you to convert to Christianity? Because of your need, you would probably take what was given, but you would be sensitive to being manipulated.

An example from Jesus' ministry is instructive. Ten lepers came to Him for healing. (Luke 17:11-19) I believe He knew that only one would return to thank Him. Yet, He healed all ten. If He were healing them as a means of evangelism, He would have healed only the one who would respond. But He didn't—He healed all ten. Jesus reflected the heart of God for the brokenness of all ten lepers, regardless of their response to Him. Since we are created to know God and be like Him, we need to express His love and His compassion to all men and women, regardless of their response.

Reason #5—Paternalism

Paternalism also discouraged the emerging church of the developing world from wholistic vision and ministry. Most missionaries came from the materialistically richer West, as did most Christian and secular development agencies. Many of the social/physical development efforts carried out by these agencies were built on a belief that the local people were unable to help themselves without money and technology from the outside. Outside resources were used not only to build projects, but also to maintain them. As a consequence, many well-intended development efforts created a great dependency on the West, consequently reinforcing a mentality of poverty and fatalism. Unintentionally, local people were discouraged from working to change their circumstances. Looking back, we can see now that the means and methods used by well intended, compassionate people were often counterproductive to sustainable development.

People of developing nations need to know that God has placed in them the same intelligence, abilities, creativity, and reflection of His image as He has given to people of materially developed nations. The people of a nation ravaged by internal strife—like Rwanda—have been given the same potential as the people who live in a center of technology and financial success—like the Silicon Valley in the U.S. Both peoples were created in the image of God. Both have His potential. God works through all people, with all of their resources, to build all their nations.

Do those with material resources have the responsibility to help those who have less? Yes! But, Westerners have a tendency to want to fix things—quickly. They need the vision to encourage local people to discover their God-given potential and resources. By providing outside resources, Westerners often abort or delay God's desire to work in and through people, to heal their land.

Summary—Incomplete View of Scripture and Church History

In summary, I believe that conservative, evangelical Bible schools of the first part of the twentieth century did not understand or communicate the biblical role of the church in the social/physical transformation of society. Because of their strong focus on the spiritual aspects of God's concern, they did not convey the church's wholistic role in society throughout church history. Many of Christ's ambassadors who had been trained in these schools went all over the world in the last century. They did a marvelous work, which God honored. Yet, their understanding of scripture often did not include a vision of God's big agenda. Many of these dedicated saints had not learned of God's intention to use His church to demonstrate His grand agenda to the world—and to transform society.

Development and Social Change

Unit 6

Emerging Faithfulness

The Global Church's Response to Human Need



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 6 - Emerging Faithfulness: The global Church’s response to human need

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “Integral Mission and its Historical Development” by C. René Padilla, writing for the Micah Network
- 2) “Integral Mission, Relief and Development” by Dave Andrews, writing for the Micah Network
- 3) “Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need” – 1983 Statement, Wheaton College

Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe what is meant by “Integral Mission” and how it has evolved out of the Great Reversal;
2. Describe various structures through which Integral Mission can be effectively carried out and enhanced, and also what challenges are faced when doing so.

Introduction

The Church in response to human need

Some of us have worked on Wall Street, and some of us have slept on Wall Street. We are a community of struggle. Some of us are rich people trying to escape our loneliness. Some of us are poor people trying to escape the cold. Some of us are addicted to drugs and others are addicted to money. We are a broken people who need each other and God, for we have come to recognize the mess that we have created of our world and how deeply we suffer from the mess. Now we are working to give birth to a new society within the shell of the old. Another world is possible. Another world is necessary. Another world is already here. (Shane Claiborne, *Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*)

In the quote above, Shane Claiborne uses these words which represent a growing cry among a growing segment of Christians around the world: “we have come to recognize the mess that we have created of our world and how deeply we suffer from the mess.” Many young people are disillusioned with the apathy and resistance that still plagues much of the global Church in regards to engaging the needs of a hurting world around us in more than “eternal life in the sky after you die” promises. But Claiborne speaks of hope and possibility. “Now we are working to give birth to a new society within the shell of the old. Another world is possible. Another world is necessary. Another world is already here.” The Kingdom is among us, and there is a growing movement of people that recognize it and its significance as regards the mission of the Church. This movement has been building for some years, albeit much of it has been under the surface, establishing a foundation for the change that is now swelling up and out into the open light. It is a new return to an ancient path – the Way of Jesus: “Let your light shine in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

I feel I need to make a clarification that perhaps should have been stated in Unit 5. Much of what I have been presenting in the latter part of that unit and in the first part of this unit is focused primarily on the history and experience of what is referred to as the “Evangelical” stream within Christianity. I do so not only because that is the tradition with which I am most familiar, but also because that tradition has been the fastest growing segment of Christianity in the twentieth century, and yet the one most flagrantly associated with the Great Reversal and a truncated understanding of the Gospel. To those of you who come from other Christian traditions that have been more faithful to the integral (whole) mission Jesus passed on to his followers, please excuse me.

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

Turn to the Readings attached to this unit and read “Integral Mission and its Historical Development,” which is a history written by René Padilla of the milestone events and statements which occurred along the path of the Great Reversal. Given that history, what would you say is the significance of the Wheaton 1983 “Transformation – The Church in Response to Human Need” statement with which he concludes his article?

Much has been achieved over the past 30 years to return the evangelical tradition to its roots, to the time when the mission of the Church was assumed to include both social action and the proclamation of the Gospel. And yet the unfortunate debate still continues in many places, and the progress we see documented above is not necessarily being followed by especially those churches around the world which were started through the West’s modern mission movement. To me it is a sad, and perhaps even shameful fact that to a large extent western evangelical missionaries started churches, denominations and schools of theology around the world in our own theological and cultural images, rather than in the image of Christ and the practices of the early Christians. We often passed on to others only part of the truth about Christ’s mission - the proclamation and personal salvation part. But what we did was worse than that really, because we went further by giving them the impression and even instruction that development and social change was theologically irrelevant to the purpose of the Church in the world.

However, we are seeing hopeful signs of change even in those quarters which have traditionally misrepresented Christ’s mission. Leaders around the world, especially younger leaders, are becoming aware that the church needs to engage all aspects of people’s lives, giving witness to the love of God for their total being and welfare—body, soul and spirit. We are also seeing a growing emphasis, although still in its infancy, that as God’s children we have been given the opportunity and responsibility to be caretakers of creation as well. Some are beginning to realize the truth of that old hymn, “This is my Father’s world.” And if it truly is our Father’s world, then we his children should be leading the world in environmental advocacy and activism rather than sitting on the sidelines while creation suffers and dies

around us. Thank God. The seeds of ecological concern may yet be small, especially among evangelicals, but God is nurturing their growth.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

- 1) What is the current stand your church and/or denomination takes on the debate regarding the mission of the church? Is it primarily proclamation-focused? Or, is it primarily focused on responding to human development issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, conflict? Or, is it something else? (If it is something else, how do you describe it?)
- 2) Is this the historical position your church or denomination has taken on this topic? If not, what has led to the change of thinking?
- 3) Are there current stirrings in your church/denomination that you can foresee will cause a shift of thinking on the current position taken on this topic? If so, what might that shift look like and who is encouraging it?

The Micah Network and integral mission

One of most recent declarations of the call to embrace the whole mission of Christ, what is often now referred to as “integral mission,” has come from a truly international body called the Micah Network. Established in late 1999, by late 2011 it had 506 members from 81 different countries. As stated on their website, “The aim of the Micah Network is to create a dynamic process that facilitates collaborative action in:

- Strengthening the capacity of participating agencies to make a biblically-shaped response to the needs of the poor and oppressed.
- Speaking strongly and effectively regarding the nature of the mission of the Church to proclaim and demonstrate the love of Christ to a world in need.
- Prophetically calling upon and influencing the leaders and decision-makers of societies to maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed and rescue the weak and needy.” (<http://www.micahnetwork.org>)

The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission was developed by participants in their consultation on integral mission held at Oxford, England in September 2001. It is the work of 140 theologians, church leaders and relief and development workers from around the world:

Micah Declaration on Integral Mission (20 September, 2001)

Integral Mission

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.

We call one another back to the centrality of Jesus Christ. His life of sacrificial service is the pattern for Christian discipleship. In his life and through his death Jesus modeled identification with the poor and inclusion of the other. On the cross God shows us how seriously he takes justice, reconciling both rich and poor to himself as he meets the demands of his justice. We serve by the power of the risen Lord through the Spirit as we journey with the poor, finding our hope in the subjection of all things under Christ and the final defeat of evil. We confess that all too often we have failed to live a life worthy of this gospel.

The grace of God is the heartbeat of integral mission. As recipients of undeserved love we are to show grace, generosity and inclusiveness. Grace redefines justice as not merely honouring a contract, but helping the disadvantaged.

Integral Mission with the Poor and Marginalized

The poor like everyone else bear the image of the Creator. They have knowledge, abilities and resources. Treating the poor with respect means enabling the poor to be the architects of change in their communities rather than imposing solutions upon them. Working with the poor involves building relationships that lead to mutual change.

We welcome welfare activities as important in serving with the poor. Welfare activities, however, must be extended to include movement towards values transformation, the empowerment of communities and co-operation in wider issues of justice. Because of its presence among the poor, the church is in a unique position to restore their God-given dignity by enabling them to produce their own resources and to create solidarity networks.

We object to any use of the word 'development' that implies some countries are civilised and developed while others are uncivilised and underdeveloped. This imposes a narrow and linear economic model of development and fails to recognise the need for transformation in so-called 'developed' countries. While we recognise the value of planning, organization, evaluation and other such tools, we believe they must be subservient to the process of building relationships, changing values and empowering the poor.

Work with the poor involves setbacks, opposition and suffering. But we have also been inspired and encouraged by stories of change. In the midst of hopelessness we have hope.

Integral Mission and the Church

God by his grace has given local churches the task of integral mission. The future of integral mission is in planting and enabling local churches to transform the communities of which they are part. Churches as caring and inclusive communities are at the heart of what it means to do integral mission. People are often attracted to the Christian community before they are attracted to the Christian message.

Our experience of walking with poor communities challenges our concept of what it means to be church. The church is not merely an institution or organisation, but communities of Jesus that embody the values of the kingdom. The involvement of the poor in the life of the church is forcing us to find new ways of being church within the context of our cultures instead of being mere reflections of the values of one dominant culture or sub-culture. Our message has credibility to the extent that we adopt an incarnational approach. We confess that too often the church has pursued wealth, success, status and influence. But the kingdom of God has been given to the community that Jesus Christ called his little flock.

We do not want our church traditions to hinder working together for the sake of the kingdom. We need one another. The church can best address poverty by working with the poor and other stakeholders like civil society, government and the private sector with mutual respect and a recognition of the distinctive role of each partner. We offer the Micah Network as one opportunity for collaboration for the sake of the poor and the gospel.

Integral Mission and Advocacy

We confess that in a world of conflict and ethnic tension we have often failed to build bridges. We are called to work for reconciliation between ethnically divided communities, between rich and poor, between the oppressors and the oppressed.

We acknowledge the command to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute in a world that has given 'money rights' greater priority than human rights. We recognise the need for advocacy both to address structural injustice and to rescue needy neighbours.

Globalisation is often in reality the dominance of cultures that have the power to project their goods, technologies and images far beyond their borders. In the face of this, the church in its rich diversity has a unique role as a truly global community. We exhort Christians to network and co-operate to face together the challenges of globalisation. The church needs a unified global voice to respond to the damage caused by it to both human beings and the environment. Our hope for the Micah Network is that it will foster a movement of resistance to a global system of exploitation.

We affirm that the struggle against injustice is spiritual. We commit ourselves to prayer, advocating on behalf of the poor not only before the rulers of this world, but also before the Judge of all nations.

Integral Mission and Lifestyle

Integral mission is the concern of every Christian. We want to see the poor through the eyes of Jesus who, as he looked on the crowds, had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

There is a need for integral discipleship involving the responsible and sustainable use of the resources of God’s creation and the transformation of the moral, intellectual, economic, cultural and political dimensions of our lives. For many of us this includes recovering a biblical sense of stewardship. The concept of Sabbath reminds us that there should be limits to our consumption. Wealthy Christians – both in the West and in the Two-Thirds World – must use their wealth in the service of others. We are committed to the liberation of the rich from slavery to money and power. The hope of treasure in heaven releases us from the tyranny of mammon.

Our prayer is that in our day and in our different contexts we may be able to do what the Lord requires of us: to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

In the Reading Section, read “Integral Mission, Relief and Development” by Dave Andrews.

- 1) Andrews considers to what extent evangelism can be carried out together with relief and development work. Explain why you personally agree or disagree with his position.
- 2) What do you see as some of the key problems associated with having evangelism activities operating together with relief and development activities in your context?
- 3) Do you feel these problems can be minimized or avoided, and if so - how?

Structures for engaging integral mission

Christians in the caring professions

About 25 years ago while serving as the Director of Rural Development in a large international development organization in Nepal, I came to know from my colleague who was the education programs director, that the government was desperately trying to recruit teachers for rural schools throughout the country. We perceived this as a very strategic opportunity for local Christians. We discussed organizing a meeting of leaders of various influential churches, presenting them with the opportunity and discussing how we might support them in recruiting teachers from among their young people to take advantage of this opportunity. I could just imagine it—hundreds, maybe thousands of young Christians going to all corners of the country bearing witness to Christ’s kingdom, contributing to national and local development, and having an opportunity to touch the lives so many children and youth. And on top of that, the government would pay them to do it!

I was very excited at the prospect and so was my colleague . . . for a short time. The feedback he started to receive about the idea was that church leaders were reluctant to encourage their young people who had any kind of initiative and zeal for the kingdom to do anything but go to Bible school and become a full-time Christian Worker, a “true minister” of the gospel. Their argument was that pastors were needed. More Sunday school teachers were needed. Evangelistic ministries were eager to snatch up any committed young person to do outreach and literature distribution. It was felt that in light of such needs and opportunities within the churches, young people should not be encouraged to take up “secular” professions.

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

- 1) What are your thoughts regarding the reaction of those church leaders to the idea of recruiting young Christians into the teaching profession—do you agree with their response? Do you disagree? Give reasons why you take either position.
- 2) What do you think would be the reaction of Church leaders in your own context to such an idea? Why do you feel they would react in that way?

When I heard the response to our offer to help place Christian teachers, I felt both a great sadness and a growing frustration. My frustration was as much with some of the Western Church’s influence as it was with the Nepali church leaders. I felt we Western evangelicals had put “ministry” into a very small box and were handing the same small box to local believers as gospel truth.

But in spite of my general frustration with the response we were receiving, at the same time I also became aware of a small group of Nepali church lay leaders who had deliberately sought out careers in the caring professions as a commitment to kingdom ministry. They could have been paid church workers, chose to take a different path. These full-time disciples had decided to become Christian professionals, not professional Christians. Within this group was a person who chose to be a teacher and eventually rose to a very high position within the government education system. Another chose to be a nurse and ended up being the head of the first institute of nursing in the country. Another chose to be an engineer and later became director of the national university’s department of engineering. These were dynamic disciples of Jesus, lay leaders within the churches, and even church planters, but they were not full-time Christian workers, and therefore not seen to be truly in the “ministry.”

I think the term “full-time service” should be discarded from the Church’s language. It is not only unhelpful; it is misleading. In its place we need a term like “full-time disciples of Jesus.” What is the distinction I am making between those terms? “Full-time service” communicates that the person is doing “spiritual work” in a church-related position and gets paid by the local church or Christian donors from other parts of the world to do it. In this sense, of course, even the Apostle Paul was not in full-time Christian service, because much of his time was spent making tents to earn his own money!

And so I feel we need to drop the term “full-time service.” I also feel we need to reexamine the large number of clergy factories we know as Bible schools and seminaries. In a number of countries with which I am familiar, there is this strong emphasis upon encouraging Christian young to go to a theological school, get a degree, and then become a professional Christian.

I remember when the government of Nepal focused on giving many young people formal education in agriculture. The problem was that farming in Nepal does not require any form of degree and it is very hard work. Once the young people became intellectual farmers, they did not want to work the land. They wanted a job with the government. Well, that worked for some years, but before long the government and also the NGOs had enough professional agriculturalists, and yet the colleges and technical schools continued to graduate them in increasing numbers. You can imagine the societal problems waiting to happen once large numbers of young educated people are unable to find employment and do not want to return to rural areas. Some years later the same mistake was made in the area of forestry.

Sounds like poor planning and lack of wisdom, doesn’t it? And yet in some places with which I am familiar, the same phenomenon is occurring among young people who have graduated from Bible school or seminary and are now looking to find a “ministry” (paying position), especially in the more attractive urban centers. One major problem they are facing is that there are not enough paid positions available any longer! And because a good number of them get training in wealthier countries where they become accustomed to a much higher standard of living, to go to a poor rural area when they return is not something most “feel called” to do. Some who are more entrepreneurial than others find funds to start their own church, children’s home, mission or something of that nature which might attract foreign funding.

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were not written by a professional Christian, but rather by a Christian professional. Luke was not an Apostle, an evangelist or even a pastor as far as we can tell. He seems to have been a companion of Paul, the apostolic tentmaker. What we do know from scripture is that he was a doctor, not the PhD of theology kind of doctor, but the medical kind. He was involved in what we call one of the “Caring Professions.”

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

- 1) It is said of the early church that they “turned the world upside down,” and yet according to the writings of Christian leaders of that time, there were extremely few people who received payment to be in full-time ministry. They also did not have any Bible schools and seminaries. How do you think they managed to affect society as they did?
- 2) What kind of solution do you think Dr. Luke would suggest for the problem I described above where there are not enough paid church positions to employ young people being trained for pastoral ministry?

Teachers, nurses, doctors, mental health workers, community development technicians, etc. are all examples of wonderful opportunities for full-time disciples of Jesus to not only earn their own income, but to do it while extending the kingdom of God’s love and concern to the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of people anywhere and everywhere in the world. One does not need to have a theological degree and be called reverend in order to extend the Kingdom of Christ and impart the life of God to others in ways which can have extensive long term impact.

Christian NGOs

A 1995 UN report on global governance estimated that there are nearly 29,000 international NGOs. National numbers are even higher: The United States has an estimated 2 million NGOs, most of them formed in the past 30 years. Russia has 65,000 NGOs. India has 2 million NGOs. Dozens are created daily. In Kenya alone, some 240 NGOs come into existence every year.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organization)

What is an NGO? The acronym stands for Non-Governmental Organization. In some countries they are referred to as Not-for-Profit Organizations, Charities, Voluntary organizations, Civil Society Associations or Societies, and so on. There are so many kinds of them performing such a vast array of activities that it is hard to come up with a satisfying definition. That is one reason for the commonly understood, but not very enlightening title given to this sector: NGOs - organizations that are not governmental. It is generally accepted that it means organizations that are in some shape or form serving the public but are not part of formal government structures, although many receive government funding.

By this definition, churches themselves are NGOs, but within the Christian community we do not refer to them that way. We consider Christian NGOs to be “para-church” organizations. That means they have a Christian identity, a purpose and program associated with some aspect of Christian endeavor, and usually, but not always, made up of people who identify themselves as Christians. However, they are not recognized as an ecclesiastical body in the traditional sense that churches are. They do not have Pastors, Bishops, Elders, etc, and they do not by and large administer any of the sacraments.

There must be tens of thousands Christian NGOs around the world. If we were to add mission agencies to that group, the number would swell even further. And, as with NGOs in general, they represent many different causes and address many different issues. Usually their funding comes from individual donors and churches, but many, especially international agencies, receive financial grants from private and public foundations, some from corporations and even from government funding mechanisms.

The rise of Christian NGOs often comes about because of the vision of an individual or small group of people to do something that local churches either have not considered their priority and responsibility, or are structurally and logistically unable to do. As an example, to respond to a crisis such as the Asian Tsunami disaster, a small church in Korea or Brazil may want to do something, but chances are they would not have the experience or structure to enable them to do so. International agencies like Tear Fund or World Vision are specifically set up to help individuals and churches to become involved in crisis situations through financial donations or as short-term volunteers. Another example would be to become involved in starting small hospitals to help respond to the AIDS crisis. There are few individual Christians and churches who could manage such a program, let alone provide sufficient staffing, equipment, etc. And yet there are millions of Christians throughout the world who want to help. NGOs provide a mechanism for doing so.

Among some Christians there is concern about the legitimacy of Christian NGOs. Some feel the Church is the only legitimate formal structure for carrying out any kind of ministry which calls itself Christian. Others consider NGOs a threat to the Church, drawing away or competing for resources - financial and human. Still others would suggest that NGOs marginalize the churches by professionalizing and dividing out ministry activities which should be carried out by the local church itself. And there are those who are concerned that these NGOs do not operate under any spiritual authority and accountability body and thereby are prone to theological error, misrepresentation of Christian faith, misappropriation of resources and so on.

I personally am convinced that Christian NGOs have as much legitimacy to be active in carrying out the mission of Jesus as do local churches and church associations/denominations. That is not because for most of my adult life I have been serving within them and have been a consultant to them; rather, I simply do not see any fundamental Biblical difference between the two, although I do see a general functional difference.

What do I mean by that? Just as I feel the term “full-time Christian worker” is not helpful because of the misconceptions it creates, I have the same concerns about the term “church.” For most people, the use of that word brings an image to their minds of a building and a Sunday morning service where a small group of people are mostly active while a large group of people are mostly passively observing the small group being active. That image does not fit the New Testament language or practice as regards the

people of God. Jesus said that wherever two or more gather in his name, he is among them. That is “church” in its most basic and most fundamental form.

The New Testament writings and the early Christians referred to themselves as the “Fellowship of the Spirit.” That meant two things: they were a group of people who followed Jesus and in whom the Holy Spirit was present. It also meant they had the practice of gathering together regularly in their various communities to practice their common faith in activities such as prayer, encouragement and exhortation, singing and worship, assisting the poor and engaging in other good deeds. Where they met was of little importance; in fact they mostly met in homes. What they did when they met together was really quite simple and so it didn’t require professional skills or oversight. That was “church” back then. Taking that concept of church, one could apply it to many Christian NGOs and mission agencies and the fit would be easy. In fact, it perhaps would be far easier than fitting it to many of the structures we recognize or consider “church” to mean in our time and context!

The functional difference I see is that NGOs tend to be made up of technical specialists, whereas the church is made up of generalists. NGOs often carry out activities away from where their staff/members actually live, but most people attend a church within their own locality and community. But perhaps the greatest difference I see is that Christian NGOs tend to be a concentration of people who are keenly committed to carrying out the development and social change aspect of Jesus’ mission in the world around them, whereas that seems to be a minority group within many churches, and a non-existent group within more than a few.

My career as an international Christian service worker began with a mission organization committed to mass evangelism. Where we found local Christians who shared that compulsion, we worked with their churches. Where we didn’t find such people, we worked in spite of any churches located in those communities. We were convinced that the gospel needed to be preached and if local Christians and their churches were not doing that, we had no qualms about going around them and evangelizing in their neighborhoods anyway.

A few years later I helped start an international Christian relief and development agency assisting refugees. There were some local churches in the area where we worked, but generally speaking they had little interest to get involved because the refugees were not Christian and many of them were ethnically different as well. We figured we had little time trying to convince those churches that they should do something. We were facing an emergency situation for which any amount of delay in our response could be tragic for the people we were helping. We were already convinced helping refugees was a part of the mission of Jesus, even if the local “churches” did not.

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

- 1) Given what we have learned is the whole mission of Jesus, explain why you think Christian NGOs are an appropriate structure for carrying that out or why you might hold a different viewpoint.
- 2) What do you feel the relationship of such NGOs should be to the local church?

The latent potential of the local Church

After about twenty-five years of serving within the Christian NGO sector, I was working as a consultant for a national micro-finance program in Tanzania. It was a United Nations funded program carried out in partnership with a government department. This assignment was typical for me. Most of my involvement in development and social change over the years had been related to various forms of engagement at a local community level—what we generally refer to as community development. While in Tanzania I reflected over the many years I had been engaged in such activism and the kinds of organizations with which I had worked. I realized I had never been directly involved with any local churches around the world who were engaged in or trying to engage in integral mission at the community level—Christian NGOs, yes, but not churches.

At the same time I was also reflecting on social change organizations throughout history who had successfully achieved their agendas, whether good or bad. I realized that most of them were in fact movements held together by a common mission, enthused with a common passion, but their basic structure was a decentralized activist presence in numerous communities—the traditional cell group type of structure. What such movements were able to achieve on a massive scale in a relatively short period of time is amazing, even if not always positive.

The more I thought about the overwhelming challenge of bringing sustainable development, even just at the basic needs level such as increases in household income to millions of desperately poor people

around the world, the more I realized that NGOs simply were not getting the job done on their own. Governments were by and large not getting the job done either, for numerous reasons, some of which were beyond their control and many of which were a result of them being in control!

Where would those kinds of grass roots cell groups come from to bring about this desperately needed mass movement of household and community transformation which could then “trickle up” to effect national changes? That was when I began to think about the latent potential of local churches. If one looks at the broadly based universal Church, just think of the number of communities around the world within its sphere of influence. It must be a staggering number. Now imagine if from within all those churches, at least some people could be mobilized as cells in a global integral ministry movement to see the whole mission of Jesus being carried out in their locations. Now that was an exciting thought! And yet we already know by history and our own personal experience that it is unrealistic to imagine all churches everywhere to be even willing to consider themselves as such a movement, let alone act like it. But perhaps there is a more realistic viewpoint which we can adopt.

A couple of other senior managers and I once attended a workshop in which a group of executives from different organizations had gathered to look at how to bring about change within our organizations. Of all the workshops I have been in over the years, including those I have personally led or taught, this is one I can point to and say it truly altered my way of thinking as a manager. One of the valuable “knowledge gems” I collected there was looking at the way which most of us view problems. The trainer led us through an exercise in which each of us identified a current “problem” in our organization which we were frustrated about. In our case it was our expensive fax machine we relied upon for international communications. It seemed to be out of working order more than it was in working order!

The trainer then had us write down any solutions we had been thinking about. For our problem it seemed obvious, we would just have to reallocate budget to purchase a new machine because local parts and technicians had been unable to help us much.

At this point I was thinking that this was just another typical problem solving process and probably also thinking we should have used the money we spent on the workshop to help buy that new fax machine rather than spending it learning something we already knew! But then the trainer sent us down a whole different path. He asked us why the issue we had identified was so frustrating to us...what was the underlying value or desire we had that made us feel our “problem” was such a problem? As we thought about it we identified our value/desire was to have a reliable 24 hour a day “open channel” of communication with our international partners and stakeholders.

He then asked us to focus on that desire and think of ways to satisfy it which were different from what we had focused upon as being our problem. Well, in our case that process soon led to discovering e-mail, which we did not even know existed in Nepal at that time. In the end, we didn’t have to solve our fax machine problem after all – we simply stepped around it by switching to internet use.

How do we get a movement of integral mission going around the world if churches and church leaders are not interested or unwilling to join in it? That certainly seems to be a frustrating “problem.”

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

Using the above “problem solving” insights I learned in my workshop, apply them to how you could address the “problem” of getting an integral mission movement going in your context if church leaders may not be interested, or may even resist. What might be done to “step around” that challenge?

I don’t think our problem is truly a problem after all if we “step around” believing we have to change reluctant institutional church structures and those who manage them in order to get the movement started in our locality. Rather, we can identify a few other disciples who share the vision and start a cell group. Doing this doesn’t even restrict us in feeling we have to form a group within our own church; it could just as well be likeminded people who are members of different local churches. What you learned in the Partnerships Module would even help you develop such a group!

Please note: I am not talking about starting new churches here, not even what are referred to as cell churches in some places. I am talking about an informal movement of people who commit themselves to integral mission. Why is a group even needed? Well, there are many advantages to working in teams which I will not go in to here. Let it suffice to restate the words of Jesus: “Wherever two or more are gathered in my name, I am in their midst.” Two people, plus Jesus, makes for a minimum size Kingdom of God cell group which adds up to three - a trinity. Jesus sent out the seventy disciples in pairs, but in the verse above he said “two or more,” and so it need not be limited to that number.

I also believe such a movement could usher in a new era for Christian NGOs—to become enablers of such cell groups and not competitors. The NGO sector has accumulated a vast wealth of knowledge, experience and other resources. But often it is retained within their own ranks and not shared with others, or at least not with others outside the NGO world. Development is supposed to be all about capacity development. What amazing impact NGOs could have in enabling pockets of local believers around the world to engage in integral mission within their own communities. There are some already doing this and they should be applauded, encouraged, and assisted to do more of it.

Readings

***Integral Mission and its Historical Development*¹**

Writing for the Micah Network, C. René Padilla gives us an account of historical events which have occurred along the path of the “Great Reversal.”

To what extent should the church be concerned for justice in society? Should Christians regard human rights as necessarily included within the sphere of their responsibility? If justice is a Christian concern, how can the church promote it in society? What are the biblical and theological criteria to evaluate the present-day global economic system? How can evangelical agencies best respond to the needs of the poor and oppressed in a globalized world? What are the priorities of international advocacy work from a biblically-shaped perspective? How does action for justice relate to evangelism?

That we can raise these questions today throws into relief the changes that have taken place in the last few decades among a significant number of evangelicals around the world with regard to their understanding of the mission of the Church. To be sure, the importance of integral mission is not unanimously accepted by evangelicals. Yet today many people who in the past dismissed such questions as irrelevant to mission are now open to a more holistic approach to mission.

The itinerary of the concept of integral mission can be traced by surveying the international evangelical conferences of the last few decades. A complete survey is not possible within this paper, but the attempt will be made to describe the process by which integral mission became a part of the evangelical agenda beginning with the 1966 Wheaton Congress on the World Mission of the Church and concluding with the 1983 Wheaton Conference on the Church in Response to Human Need.

From Wheaton 1966 to Lausanne 1974

With almost a 1,000 participants coming from 71 countries, the Congress on the World Mission of the Church (Wheaton 1966) was an important effort to re-think the mission of the Church globally. The *Wheaton Declaration* was regarded by some as ‘a thoroughly conservative statement from a conservative source’.² The *Wheaton Declaration* had, however, the virtue of recognizing that ‘we are guilty of an unscriptural isolation from the world that too often keeps us from honestly facing and coping with its concerns’. It confessed the ‘failure to apply scriptural principles to such problems as racism, war, population explosion, poverty, family disintegration, social revolution, and communism’. It urged ‘all evangelicals to stand openly and firmly for racial equality, human freedom, and all forms of social justice throughout the world’.³

Clearly, a new attitude with regard to the Church’s responsibility to the world was finding its way into evangelicalism. This new concern was related to the contribution of a number of participants from the Two-Thirds World. According to a conservative observer, ‘their recommendations weighed heavily in determining the final shape of the Declaration’.⁴ This helps to explain how such a document could come out of a mission conference held in the United States at a time when evangelicalism in that country was simply not interested in social change or social activism.⁵

The next important international meeting, the World Congress on Evangelism (Berlin 1966) met under the motto, ‘One Race, One Gospel, One Task’.⁶ Despite participants from 100 countries, the Congress was ‘predominantly Western in organization and expression’.⁷ In his opening address Billy Graham reaffirmed his conviction that ‘if the church went back to its main task of proclaiming the Gospel and people converted to Christ, it would have a far greater impact on the social, moral, and psychological

¹ This paper also appears in *Justice, Mercy and Humility*, ed. Tim Chester, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003)

² Donald Gill, ‘They Played It Safe in Wheaton,’ *World Vision Magazine* 10 (June 1966), 31.

³ ‘The Wheaton Declaration’, *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* 2 (Summer 1966), 231-244.

⁴ Harold Lindsell, *Christianity Today*, 10 (April 29, 1966), 795.

⁵ Robert Fowler, *Christianity Today*, 10 (January 7, 1966), 338.

⁶ The proceedings were published in C.F.H. Henry and W.S. Mooneyham (eds.), *One Race, One Gospel, One Task* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967).

⁷ Arthur P. Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1978), 158.

needs of men than it could achieve through any other thing it could possibly do'.⁸ He thus voiced a basic premise of the Congress organizers and no advance was made towards a more comprehensive concept of mission. More significant were the follow-up regional congresses sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. At all of them, with surprising regularity, speakers brought up the question of Christian social involvement as an issue intimately related to evangelism.⁹

A sensitive social conscience is an essential ingredient of integral mission and a milestone in the awakening of the evangelical social conscience in the United States was the Thanksgiving Workshop on Evangelicals and Social Concern held in Chicago, 1973. The *Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern* was enthusiastically received by many people who saw in it evidence that evangelicals were transcending the traditional dichotomy between evangelism and social responsibility.

From Lausanne 1974 to Pattaya 1980

With all these antecedents, no one should have been surprised that the International Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne 1974) would turn out to be a definitive step in affirming integral mission as *the* mission of the church. In view of the deep mark that it left in the life and mission of the evangelical movement around the world, the Lausanne Congress may be regarded as the most important worldwide evangelical gathering of the twentieth century. It became a catalyst for evangelism and a matrix for theological reflection on issues that were placed on the evangelical missionary agenda by the *Lausanne Covenant*. On the relationship between the evangelistic and the societal dimensions of the Christian mission paragraph 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant* stated:

We affirm that God is both the Creator and 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, colour, 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 expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour 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.¹⁰

This is not merely an affirmation of the Christian duty towards social sin in terms of injustice, alienation, oppression and discrimination. It is also a rationale for Christian involvement in these social evils, beginning with the recognition of God as 'both the Creator and Judge of all men'. Christian social action is thus regarded as having a theological basis, as an expression of definite convictions with regard to God and humankind, salvation and the kingdom.

The importance of this statement coming out of a conference in which a high number of participants had all too often regarded evangelism and social concern as 'mutually exclusive' can hardly be exaggerated. The *Lausanne Covenant* not only expressed penitence for the neglect of social action, but it also acknowledged that socio-political involvement was, together with evangelism, an essential aspect of the Christian mission. In so doing it gave a death blow on attempts to reduce mission to the multiplication of Christians and churches through evangelism.

The following years, however, showed that, far from settling the matter, the Lausanne Congress had done little more than point to the need to deal with the role of social involvement for the sake of the integrity of the church and its mission. Already during the Congress a large group had issued a document called *A Response to Lausanne* that aimed at highlighting issues of justice which had not been properly emphasized in the *Lausanne Covenant*. Its definition of the gospel of Jesus Christ as 'good news of liberation, of restoration, of wholeness and of salvation that is personal, social, global and cosmic' provided the strongest statement on integral mission formulated by evangelicals up to that date.

⁸ Billy Graham, 'Why the Berlin Congress', *Christianity Today*, 11 (November 11, 1966), 133.

⁹ See C. René Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed Social Responsibility* (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove, 1985).

¹⁰ See John Stott, *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1986), 24.

From Lausanne 1974 to Pattaya 1980

The *Lausanne Covenant* was received all over the world with great interest and even exhilaration by Christians of different theological persuasions. By contrast, others interpreted Lausanne as a dangerous departure from biblical truth and a tragic compromise with so-called 'ecumenical theology'. John Stott in particular came under fire for defining social action as a 'partner of evangelism', thus dethroning evangelism as 'the only historic aim of mission'.¹¹

In spite of its opponents, most of them identified with the North American missionary establishment, integral mission continued to find support among evangelicals, especially in the Two-Thirds World. The issues it raised became the motivating force for several world-wide consultations that took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which explicitly dealt with, or at least touched on, the question of justice. At the International Consultation on 'Gospel and Culture' (Willowbank, 1978), for instance, it was recognized that 'too often we have ignored peoples' fears and frustrations, their pains and preoccupations, and their hunger, poverty, deprivation or oppression, in fact their "felt needs", and have been too slow to rejoice or to weep with them'.¹² The conference underlined the need to take the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ as a model for Christian witness. Even more significant is a paragraph on 'power structures and mission'. After referring to the poverty of the masses in the Two-Thirds World, it says 'their plight is due in part to an economic system which is controlled mostly by North Atlantic countries'.¹³ In the face of this situation, the prophetic document calls for solidarity with the poor and the denunciation of injustice 'in the name of the Lord who is the God of justice as well as of justification'. It expressed concern about 'western-style syncretism' – 'perhaps the most insidious form of syncretism in the world today' – which is 'the attempt to mix a privatized gospel of personal forgiveness with a worldly (and even demonic) attitude to wealth and power'.¹⁴

The same concern for integral mission is reflected in other statements emerging from various conferences held in this period. The *Madras Declaration on Evangelical Social Action*, drafted at the All India Conference on Evangelical Social Action (1979), laid down the basis for responsible Christian action in the face of 'the increasing oppression of the underprivileged classes, the continuing entrenchment of casteism and the rising rate of communal violence'.¹⁵ The *Pastoral Letter* issued by the Second Latin American Congress on Evangelism (Lima, Peru, 1979) echoed a deep concern for 'those who are hungry and thirsty for justice, those who are deprived of what they need in order to survive, marginalized ethnic groups, destroyed families, women who have no rights, young people dedicated to vice or pushed to violence, children suffering because of hunger, abandonment, ignorance, or exploitation'.¹⁶

Of particular importance for the consideration of integral mission was the International Consultation on 'Simple Lifestyle' (Hoddesdon, England, 1980).¹⁷ Despite its conciseness, the document issued at the end of the meeting, *An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle*, turned out to be a significant statement of evangelical concern for justice.¹⁸ The conference participants, 'disturbed by the injustices of the world, concerned for its victims, and moved to repentance' for their complicity in it, denounced environmental destruction, wastefulness and hoarding, and recognized their own involvement in them. They affirmed that involuntary poverty is 'an offence against the goodness of God', that 'God's call to rulers is to use power to defend the poor, not to exploit them', and that 'the church must stand with God and the poor against injustice, suffer with them, and call on rulers to fulfill their God-appointed role'. They committed themselves to re-examine their income and expenditure 'in order to manage on less and give away more' and 'to contribute more generously to human development projects'. Acknowledging, however, that changes in lifestyle without changes in the systems of injustice lack effectiveness, they claimed that 'servants of Christ must express his lordship in their political, social and economic commitments and their love for their neighbors by taking part in the political process'. Accordingly, they expressed their purpose to 'pray for peace and justice, as God commands' and to 'educate Christian people in the moral and political issues involved'. They said that 'all Christians must participate in the active struggle to create a just and responsible society', including 'resistance to an unjust established order' and to be ready to suffer, for 'service always involves suffering'. Scherer is right in commenting that

¹¹ Arthur P. Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelization*, 292.

¹² John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 90. The proceedings were published in John Stott and Robert T. Coote (eds.), *Gospel and Culture* (Pasadena, CA: Carey, 1979) and *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981).

¹³ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 101.

¹⁴ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 102.

¹⁵ The document is included in Chris Sugden, *Radical Discipleship* (London: MMS, 1981), 184-9.

¹⁶ The letter was published with all the proceedings of the conference in *América Latina y La Evangelización en Los Años 80* (México: FTL, 1980).

¹⁷ The proceedings and final document were published in Ronald Sider (ed.) *Lifestyle in the Eighties: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

¹⁸ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 139-152.

his conference touched on a number of 'themes seldom articulated with such passion in evangelical mission circles'.¹⁹

Clearly, as reflected in these documents, evangelicals had turned a corner at Lausanne with regard to their understanding of the social implications of the gospel and the mission of the Church. It would not be difficult to prove, however, that the organizers of the next major international conference sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE, Pattaya, Thailand, 1980), made a special effort to ensure that the task of world evangelism was regarded as *the* mission of the Church.²⁰ Under the motto 'How Shall They Hear', Pattaya was to be 'a working consultation with the main objective of developing realistic evangelistic strategies to reach for Christ hitherto unreached peoples of the world'. That the organizers were almost exclusively concerned with the *how* of the (verbal) communication of the gospel was evident from the materials circulated in advance which focused on 'people-groups' and 'homogeneous unit principle'. This pre-occupation explains the tight control exercised by the leadership during the conference – there was the fear that discussion of the social aspect of mission would divert attention from evangelism. In the words of one participant, 'Pattaya was somehow pre-packaged'.²¹

Much creative thinking, however, was done in the mini-consultations of the conference that met to consider the strategy to reach non-Christians in people-groups. As a result, the attempt to keep the Conference within the straitjacket of a narrow definition of mission was counterbalanced at the grassroots level. Some of the Lausanne Occasional Papers published after the Thailand Consultation²² demonstrate that several of the mini-consultations left aside the 'official' concern for strategy and 'went ahead on the gains of Lausanne'.²³ Some of the issues discussed in these groups became the basis for a *Statement of Concern on the Future of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization* which without the help of official publicity was signed by 185 people within 24 hours.²⁴ This Statement chided the Lausanne Committee for not being 'seriously concerned with the social, political and economic issues in many parts of the world that are a stumbling block to the proclamation of the gospel'. It called the Lausanne Movement to help Christians 'to identify not only people-groups, but also the social, economic and political institutions that determine their lives and the structures behind them that hinder evangelism' and to give guidance on how evangelicals lending support to repressive regimes or to unjust economic policies 'can be reached with the whole biblical gospel and be challenged to repent and work for justice'. This Statement was presented to the LCWE as a 'genuine attempt to build bridges between evangelical Christians who at present are not yet agreed about the relationship between evangelization and socio-political involvement'. The Conference leadership ignored it and no plenary discussion of it was allowed.

The *Thailand Statement*, adopted at the end of COWE, ratified Christian commitment to both evangelism and social action.²⁵ At the same time, however, it made clear that at least for the organizers of the consultation the time had come to reaffirm 'the primacy of evangelism'. Thus, under the influence of the American evangelical establishment, the statement made in the *Lausanne Covenant* that 'in the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary' was endorsed, even though it was also said that 'nothing contained in the Lausanne Covenant is beyond our concern, *so long as it is clearly related to world evangelization*'.²⁶ As Bosch rightly comments, 'the significance of this sentence lies in what it does not say – that nothing in Lausanne Covenant is beyond our concern, *so long as it clearly fosters Christian involvement in society*'.²⁷

From Pattaya 1980 to Wheaton 1983

In June 1982 the question of integral mission was taken up again at the International Consultation on the Relationship of Evangelism and Social Responsibility (CRESR) in Grand Rapids, Michigan.²⁸ The consultation defined the relationship between evangelism and social action in three ways. First, Christian social action is a *consequence* of evangelism since those involved in it are Christians. In fact, they must be involved because they are saved 'for good works' and that means that social action is also one of the purposes of evangelism. Second, social action is a *bridge* to evangelism since it expresses God's love

¹⁹ Cited in David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigms Shifts on Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 407.

²⁰ For a critique of COWE see Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982:135-161).

²¹ David J. Bosch, 'In Search of Mission: Reflections on 'Melbourne' and 'Pattaya'', *Missionalia*, 9 (April 1981), 17.

²² See Christian Witness to Marxists, Christian Witness to Large Cities and Christian Witness to the Urban Poor, *Lausanne Occasional Papers* (Wheaton, IL: LCWE, 1980).

²³ Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, 'Let the Word Become Flesh', *Third Way* (September, 1980).

²⁴ This document was included in Andrew Kirk, *A New World Coming: A Fresh Look at the Gospel for Today* (Basingstoke, UK: Morgan and Scott, 1983), 148-151.

²⁵ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 155-164.

²⁶ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 159, emphasis added.

²⁷ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 406.

²⁸ The proceedings were published in Bruce Nichols, *In Word and Deed* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).

and through that it eliminates prejudices and opens the way for the proclamation of the Gospel. Third, social action is a *partner* of evangelism and is related to it in the Christian mission like two blades in a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird.²⁹

Of the primacy of evangelism the Grand Rapids document said that such primacy can only be affirmed in a limited, not in an absolute, sense. It considers that the primacy of evangelism is, in the first place, *logical* since 'the very fact of Christian social responsibility presupposes socially responsible Christians, and it can only be by evangelism and discipling that they have become such'. Second, the primacy is *theological* since 'evangelism relates to people's eternal destiny, and in bringing them good news of salvation, Christians are doing what nobody else can do'. But the Grand Rapids report also admits that the choice between evangelism and social action is 'largely conceptual' and that in practice 'the two are inseparable' and 'they mutually support and strengthen each other in an upward spiral of increased concern for both'. If both evangelism and social action are so intimately related that their partnership is 'in reality, a marriage', it is obvious that the primacy of evangelism does not mean that evangelism should always and everywhere be considered more important than its partner. If that were the case, something would be wrong with the marriage!

Some critics feel that this Consultation did not entirely succeed in avoiding a dualism between evangelism and social involvement.³⁰ According to them, by taking for granted that evangelism may be reduced to the *verbal proclamation* of the gospel, the Grand Rapids document laid the basis for a concept of mission as a marriage in which the two partners – word and action – are 'equal but separable'. A more biblical concept of mission suggests that there is no evangelism without a social dimension and there is no Christian social action without an evangelistic dimension. It must be noted, however, that the Grand Rapids document itself states 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'.³¹ Such a statement can hardly be improved.

The strongest evangelical affirmation of commitment to integral mission in the last quarter of the twentieth century was the Wheaton 1983 Statement, *Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need*, which was drawn up at the end of the Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need (Wheaton, Illinois, 1983).³² It recognizes that 'only by spreading the Gospel can the most basic need of human beings be met: to have fellowship with God'. But it is also critical of Christians who 'have tended to see the task of the church as merely picking up survivors from a shipwreck in a hostile sea'. It makes no allowance for any type of acquiescence in the face of social evil: 'either we challenge the evil structures of society or we support them'. It objects to 'many churches, mission societies, and Christian relief and development agencies [that] support the socio-economic status quo, and by silence give their tacit support'. It asserts that 'evil is not only in the human heart but also in social structures' and points to Jesus' example, who 'through his acts of mercy, teaching and lifestyle ... exposed the injustices in society and condemned the self-righteousness of its leaders'.

In the section dedicated to the local church the Wheaton 1983 Statement holds that congregations must not limit themselves to traditional ministries, but 'must also address issues of evil and social injustice in the local community and the wider society'. It calls upon aid agencies 'to see their role as one of facilitating the churches in the fulfillment of their mission' and warns them against the danger of exploiting the plight of the poor 'in order to meet donor needs and expectations'.

The final section is a strong affirmation of the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ as the basis for integral mission. 'We affirm,' it states, 'that the Kingdom of God is both present and future, both societal and individual, both physical and spiritual ... It grows like a mustard seed, both judging and transforming the present age.' From this perspective, eschatology is not an encouragement to escape into the distant future, but an incentive 'to infuse the world with hope, for both this age and the next'. 'As the community of the end time anticipating the End, we prepare for the ultimate by getting involved in the penultimate', and this means that we must 'evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation'.

The Wheaton 1983 Statement is quite an accomplishment as a synthesis of the theological basis for integral mission and a summary of the most significant questions that may be raised with regard to the Church as God's agent for holistic transformation. It would be difficult to find in evangelical circles around the world any document drawn up after 1983 that would go further than the Wheaton 1983 Statement in recovering an integral view of the Church and its mission. The Manila Manifesto, issued by the Second International Congress on World Evangelism (Lausanne II), which took place in Manila in July 1989, did ratify in general terms the Lausanne Covenant, including the Covenant's support of socio-political

²⁹ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 182.

³⁰ See Andrew Kirk, *A New World Coming*, 90-2 and David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 406.

³¹ John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 182.

³² The proceedings of this consultation were published in Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, *The Church in Response to Human Need* (Oxford: Regnum, 1987).

involvement.³³ But the lack of adequate attention to the question of justice during the Congress was clearly articulated by Valdir Steuernagel from Brazil in a ten minute speech that he was allowed to give to the plenary at the very end of the Congress. In no way did the Manila Manifesto reach the level of the Wheaton 1983 Statement in its affirmation of integral mission. In unequivocal terms the Wheaton Statement affirmed social and political involvement as an essential aspect of the Christian mission. As Bosch has pointed out, 'For the first time in an official statement emanating from an international evangelical conference the perennial dichotomy [between evangelism and social involvement] was overcome'.³⁴

Integral Mission, Relief And Development

By Dave Andrews – a Micah Network Paper

(Editor's note: some diagrams have been removed from the original article for formatting reasons)

"Our Father who is in heaven, May your name be honoured.
May your Kingdom come, May your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."
(Matthew 6 v 7-13.)

1. Integral Mission

One of the difficulties that many of us have with the notion of '*integral mission*', is that we're not sure what it really means. The word '*integral*' means '*whole*' or '*made up of different parts which constitute a single undivided whole*'. So '*integral mission*' means '*mission that is made up of different parts which constitute a single undivided whole*'. Sometimes when people talk about '*integral mission*' with its emphasis on '*mission that is a single undivided whole*' they used the term '*wholism*', usually spelt '*holism*'.

'*Integral mission*' (or '*holistic mission*') is not a biblical term; but I would argue that it is a biblical notion. '*Integral mission*' (or '*holistic mission*') is consistent with the scripture, and not only reflects but also reinforces a comprehensive scriptural perspective over and against the '*dualism*' that has been so dominant up until now - in religious circles - as well as in secular society. Indeed, to appreciate the true significance of '*holism*', we need to see it in the light of the fierce '*dualistic*' debates that have given rise to its current usage.

2. Dualism/Dualism.

The modern world - which developed out of the so-called 'enlightenment' - was based on a *dichotomous perspective of reality*. On the one hand - there was a *spiritual reality* - which could be best understood in terms of *religion*. And on the other hand - there was a *physical reality* - which could be best understood in terms of *science*. Though Christians argued that these two apparently separate *realities* were in theory actually related to one another, most Christians tended in practice to act as if these two apparently separate realities were in fact separate.

Not surprisingly Christians tended to divide into two camps. One camp seeing people *spiritually*, as '*sinners*', in need of '*salvation*'. The other camp seeing people *physically*, as '*victims*', in need of '*liberation*'. Evangelicals, who tended to see people *spiritually*, said people needed '*personal evangelism*'. Liberals, who tended to see people *physically*, said people needed '*social justice*'. Both camps tended to make their claims for '*personal evangelism*' or for '*social justice*' to the exclusion of the other. Evangelicals rallied round the cry for '*evangelism*' - not justice. Liberals rallied round the cry for '*justice*' - not evangelism.

In 1974 Christians at the International Congress on World Evangelization tried to resolve this obviously unbiblical dualism by enthusiastically embracing some sort of holism. The catch cry of these Christians from then on was - "*the whole gospel to the whole world*".³⁵ However, the sort of holism these Christians embraced still assumed the very dualism that they reckon they had renounced.

Sure they repented of 'having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive',³⁶ but at the same time they proclaimed that '*evangelism*' and '*social concern*' are 'both part of our Christian duty' but 'in the church's mission ... *evangelism is primary*'.³⁷

³³ See Affirmations Nos. 9 and 16 and Section Four of the Manila Manifesto in John Stott, *Making Christ Known*, 227-249.

³⁴ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 407.

³⁵ *Let the Earth Hear His Voice - International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1975*, World Wide Publications, 3-9.

³⁶ *ibid* 'Lausanne Covenant' 3-9, para 5.

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Ostensibly, everything had changed at Lausanne. Actually, nothing had changed at Lausanne. This became abundantly clear at Grand Rapids in 1982. In Grand Rapids a Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility affirmed that 'a person's eternal, *spiritual* salvation is of greater importance than his or her temporal or *material* well-being'.³⁸

For many evangelical mission agencies 'nothing had really changed'. Since reality was 'still divided into *spiritual* and *material* and, not surprisingly, 'evangelism was still the ultimate goal of mission' for evangelical agencies. All other activities were expected to play a subordinate role to *evangelism*.³⁹

Since then evangelical scholars of note, like Ron Sider, have continued to struggle with the dilemmas surrounding the still, as yet, unresolved relationship between *evangelism* and *justice*. In the process of charting the terrain Sider has developed a map of four different, conflicting models of resolving the dilemmas - the 'Evangelical', 'Radical', 'Ecumenical', and 'Social' Models.

| Model | Evangelical | Radical | Ecumenical | Social |
|-------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Sin | emphasis on personal sin | personal and social sin, but emphasis mainly on personal | personal and social sin, but emphasis is mainly on social | emphasis on social sin |
| Gospel | salvation of the individual | good news of the kingdom | good news of the kingdom | possibility of real progress |
| Salvation | justification and regeneration of individuals | both justification and regeneration of individuals and the redeemed community of the church | 1) justification and regeneration of individuals, 2) church, 3) peace and justice in society outside the church also | justice and peace in society |
| Evangelism | only of persons | only of persons | persons and structures | only of structures |
| Mission | mainly the word | both word and deed | both word and deed | mainly the deed |
| Change | Converted people become salt and light | converted people individually and collectively model the alternative | converted people change themselves and their society | converting the structures of society |
| Locus | mainly the church | mainly the church | in the church, but also in the world | only the world |

Sider, finds each of these divided - and divisive - models inadequate, and proposes instead a unified model, he calls, 'Incarnational Kingdom Christianity'.⁴⁰ And I agree with Sider when he says we need to reconsider the holistic concept of the 'Kingdom of God' if we are ever going to resolve the dilemmas of dualism. The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission reflects a commitment to integral nature of incarnational mission that embodies the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth:

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.

3. The Kingdom Of God.

Of course the phrase the 'Kingdom of God' does not occur in the Old Testament. But the concept nevertheless implicitly and explicitly under girds and energizes the entire narrative of salvation history that is recorded. God is frequently referred to as the 'King of Israel' (Exod.15v18, Num.23v21, Deut.33v5, Is. 43v15) and, indeed, the 'King of the Whole World' (II Kgs.19v15, Is.6v5, Jer.46v18, Ps.29v10; 47v2; 93; 96v10; 97; 99v1-4; 145)

At the centre of the Kingdom of God, manifested in the Old Testament, is God himself. For the most significant characteristic of the Kingdom of God is that it is God's. The Kingdom of God is special, because God - whose Kingdom it is - is special. Two words used in the Old Testament suggest the

³⁷ Ibid 'Lausanne Covenant', 3-9, para 5 & para 6.

³⁸ *The Grand Rapids Report on Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Comment*, 1982, 183.

³⁹ Mathison, S. *Unpublished Thesis*, BCQ, Brisbane, 2000, 3

⁴⁰ *ibid* 45

special distinctives of God's world order. One word is '*hesed*'; and the other word is '*malkuth*'.

'Hesed' could be defined as 'constant loving kindness' or 'steadfastness'. It is said to be the salient characteristic of God's relation to humanity. God is 'ever faithful', 'never fickle', 'continually righteous and gracious'. So that the psalmist could say: 'Thy loving kindness is better than life'. (Ps.63v3) Thus the Kingdom of God is characterized by a quality of love which obviates all need for fear.

'Malkuth' could be defined as 'rule' rather than 'realm'; it is dynamic rather than static; it is animated and alive. It is this active direction - with its corollary of coming intervention - that is the essential characteristic of God's involvement with humanity. God's rule is not mechanistic, unmoved and unchanging. The Kingdom of God is personal and responsive: it 'comes'; it 'sustains'; it 'changes'; it 'saves'.

God's vision for his kingdom was a vision of complete reconciliation between him and his people (Num.14v19) and between each person and his or her neighbour (Mal.4 v6). It was a vision of a world where there was an intimate knowledge of God (Is.11v9, Ps.72v18-19), personal salvation (Ps.145v1-4), political liberation (Ps.132v13-18) and the ideal of justice being established as a genuine socio-economic reality. (Ps.96v11-13).

The word most used in the Old Testament to represent this integrated vision of God for his kingdom was the word '*shalom*'. 'Shalom' indicated not merely the absence of strife or conflict; (though it was used in that sense in 1Chron.22v 9 and Prov.17v 1). 'Shalom' usually indicated the presence of an especially pervading, profoundly saving well-being that brought life to people (Ps.4v8), groups (1Sam 20v42), and nations (Ex. 18v23). It was *physical* (Lev. 26v6ff) and *spiritual* (Is.26v3) simultaneously.

However, the Old Testament records, the people of Israel deliberately distorted the *shape* and the *scope* of 'shalom' for their own vested interests. From time to time they emphasized political liberation, at the expense of the knowledge of God or the necessity for justice. And it was left to the prophets to restore integrity to the *shape* of the vision; Hosea, with his emphasis on the knowledge of God; and Amos, with his emphasis on the necessity for justice.

The vision was always universal. It was the vision of a creator God who sought to restore the *whole* of his creation, inclusive of all peoples. While certain people were selected for service (Gen.2), it was only for the purpose of making the dream come true for all peoples (Ge.12v3). Those in the service of 'shalom' often tried to limit it. To keep it to themselves. But such an inexcusable lack of concern for others was constantly denounced by God to the likes of Jonah and company. And any remnants of ethnocentric myopia were blown away by the breath-takingly beautiful universal vision brought to the people by the prophet Isaiah (Is. 49v1-7;v22-26;60v4-9;66v18-21). According to Isaiah the *scope* of the vision was not only to include the *whole* of humanity, but also the *whole* of the universe as well. 'New men' and 'new women' were to be created within the context of a 'new heaven and a new earth' (Is.65v17). The parched flatlands were going to be irrigated with fresh springs; the burning sands were going to be cooled with pools of water (Is.35v7). The desert was going to bloom (Is.35v2); and the wilderness was to going to become fruitful (Is.32v15). Peace would come to the *whole* world (Is.11v9), and the great sorrow of the world would be over - forever. (Is.35v10).

At the start of the earliest gospel, the cry goes out; 'The Kingdom of God is at hand' (Mk.1v14). What has been there in the Old Testament, at last comes into its own in the New Testament. It is as if a fix on the future had been taken by a zoom lens and, with a quick flick of the wrist, a sudden twist, that future had come into clear focus in the present. What has been a partial picture is complete. The vision of the Kingdom of God is here, glorious in its fulfillment (Lk.17v20-21).

Standing there in the middle of the Kingdom of God, infusing it with the glory of its fulfillment is Jesus of Nazareth (Lk.11v20). In the Old Testament record the nature of the Kingdom of God is defined by prophecy and refined in history. In the New Testament the same process continues; but the accent is on the presence of the future now. The Kingdom of Heaven is at work on earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who renounces his right to be king, assumes the role of a servant, and sacrifices his life to save the world.

Jesus does not take the focus away from God. To the contrary, Jesus constantly focuses on God himself. Jesus demonstrates that God is his central concern in both word (Jn.4v23-24) and deed (Lk.2v49;Jn.4v34,5v30,6v38,17v 41). At the very heart of the way of life Jesus advocates is an immediate (Mk.1v 14), intimate (Jn.17v3), total (Mth.6v33), and continual (Mth.10v22) orientation towards the Kingdom of God. According to Jesus, 'eternal life' - that is 'life of perfect quality, of infinite quantity, and of ultimate significance' - could only be discovered on earth in the context of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mth.19v16-23), and the Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of God (Mth.19v23-24). Thus, for Jesus, meaningful life could only be lived out in a relationship with God, in pursuit of God's order for the world.

A relationship with God was not presented as an almost impossible attempt to apprehend the unknown, or, worse yet, to associate with an unavailing deity uninterested in the affairs of ordinary life. Rather, Jesus presented a relationship with God as akin to the spontaneous response of children (Math.10v14-15), living, without fear, in the light of the love reflected in the face of the Father, who not only cares for them (Mth.6v25-32), but also takes care of them (Mth.10v29-31).

With the cry of 'Abba' or 'Dadda', on his lips when talking of God, Jesus takes the quality of 'malkuth' - creative leadership - combines it with 'hesed' - or loving kindness - and creates a remarkable image of God. A God who is better than the very best Parent we could hope to have to help us grow up as people. (Lk.11v13).

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray he said, 'And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray: "Our Father who is in heaven, may your name be honored. May your Kingdom come, may your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." (Mth.6v7-13.)

In this prayer the vision of God's will for the world is forcefully reaffirmed in its integrity and universality against the various attempts of groups to co-opt it and exploit it for purposes of their own making. As in the Old Testament record, so in the New Testament records, it's a vision of complete reconciliation between the people and their God, between each person and his or her neighbour. It is a vision of a world where there is intimate knowledge of God, personal salvation, political liberation, and the ideal of justice being established as a socio-economic reality. It is a vision of 'shalom' - peace.

In clarifying this vision Jesus asserted that love was the highest priority: primarily to God; and secondarily to neighbours. (Lk.12v23-31). The two imperatives to love were not the same; the love of God was not the love of neighbour (Mth.22v34-40, 1Jn.4v21). But the two imperatives were not separate; one could not truly be reconciled to one without being truly reconciled to the other (Mth.4 v23-24, 1Jn.3v17,4v20). The two imperatives were distinct but interdependent; the love of God overflowing into love of neighbour, and vice versa. (1Jn.3v16, 4v9-11, v21). A love so great, that it could reconcile a divided world, was by far the most significant dynamic Jesus advocated, to bring peace to our troubled world.

Jesus insisted that love should be universal. He took a loving person, considered a heretic by most pious people, and made him an example, in stark contrast with most pious people. (Lk.10v25-37). He told the respectable people that social patterns ought to be turned upside down to make real love more possible. He said that the first should be last, the last should be first, (Mk.9v35) and that a leader should be a servant of the community (Mth.20v26,27). He told the powerful people of the day that the economic trends ought to be reversed for the sake of love. He said that the rich should give to the poor, (Mth.19v21) and that they should give to them gladly, expecting nothing for themselves in return (Lk.16v30,35). He summed up his mission, saying - 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release of the captives, recovery of sight to those who cannot see, and liberty to all those who are oppressed'. (Lk.4v 1-19). With his passionate love for God, and his compassionate love for neighbours, it is clear that Jesus was determined to do all he could, in the power of the Spirit, to change his world.

4. Integral Mission in Relief and Development.

From this quick overview of the Kingdom of God it is easy to see that the Hebrew view of the world - both in the Old Testament and the New Testament - is of a single 'seamless reality' which is 'subject to the rule of God'.⁴¹ It is integral.

In the light of this view 'spirituality' is not the opposite of 'physicality'; instead it is an integral approach to the practice of 'physicality' that reflects the 'rule of God'. In other words, 'spirituality' simply means - 'seeking to live our lives in response to, and cooperation with, the radically passionate and compassionate Spirit of God'.

Jesus the Christ, the One who came in the power of the Spirit of God, is, of course, our example in seeking to live our lives in a relationship with God and in pursuit of God's order for the world. We live in the time between his first and second coming, and in this time it is up to us to incarnate Christ's life ourselves.

Like him, we need to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God in any way, and, in every way, that we can - through word and deed and signs and wonders. Like him, all of us need to renounce any right we have, in our own mind, to be a king, or a queen, assume the role of a servant, and sacrifice our lives for others. Like him, all of us need to strive for a world where there is an intimate knowledge of God, in spirit and in truth; where there is personal salvation, political liberation, and the ideal of justice being established as a genuine socio-economic reality; a world where the dream of peace - the longed for 'shalom' - comes true, at last!

Our hope, in this process, is not in our programs or our projects. These witness to our hope, but they are not our hope. Our hope is in the intervention of the Spirit of God who - to a greater or lesser degree - inspires our best practice.

The advent of the Kingdom of God 'is an on-going, dynamic process whereby the Holy Spirit manifests the reign of God in people's lives and in the world at large'.⁴² Our role - in partnership with the

⁴¹ Bradshaw, B. *Bridging the Gap - Evangelism, Development and Shalom*, Marc, 1993, 21-46.

⁴² Mathison, S. *Unpublished Thesis*, BCQ, Brisbane, 2000, 9

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Holy Spirit - is to seek to apply the principles of the Kingdom of God to every aspect of our work for community development.⁴³

But the question remains for most evangelical groups and organizations - as to how, in the world, can we combine our commitment to personal evangelism with our commitment to social justice in the context of relief and development? This is a great problem for evangelicals with an integral perspective.

Stuart Mathison, who worked for one of Micah's member agencies, writes, 'It seems to me that the application of wholism is even more difficult than the missiological meaning. In other words, it is possible to see the goal but not know how to get there. It is my opinion, however, that programmed evangelism and community development initiatives are like oil and water, they simply don't mix. To put it more strongly, it is my observation that one distorts the other, and what one ends up with is neither sound development nor effective evangelism but a corruption of both and ultimately a corruption of the gospel'.

'I contend it is virtually impossible to offer development services alongside programmed evangelism without communicating to the community that you are prepared to buy their allegiance to the Christian faith, and that your services are provided on the condition they eventually pay homage to your religious agenda. The transaction is not one-sided either. Some members of the community will happily "play the game" so long as there is the continuing likelihood of personal economic benefit. The poor often see the missionary enterprise as a soft touch and the missionaries as gullible people with money to burn. I am not necessarily saying that the motivations of any particular missionaries are deliberately corrupt, or that they have been blatantly unethical by exploiting the desperation of the poor in order to elicit a desired response, or that they are any more gullible than anybody else. At the end of the day, the motivations of the missionary are not as relevant as the way in which the target group perceives the missionary's actions'.

So it is not surprising that many evangelical groups and organizations give up hope of ever being able to combine our commitment to personal evangelism with our commitment to social justice in the context of community development.

Stuart Mathison says that many evangelical agencies simply 'divide their ministry into church planting and development departments'. This division, he says 'poses difficulties for the practice of mission among the poor. Rather than have a quasi-wholism that lends itself to manipulation, we communicate a (very) disjointed gospel. On the one hand, to be involved in church planting among people who are desperately poor while at the same time showing little concern for their daily struggle for survival inevitably communicates that the Christian faith is only concerned with things pertaining to another world. On the other hand, secular community development strategies leave many missionaries feeling that something fundamentally important is missing and they are right, for Christian mission and community development are not synonymous, even if they are closely related. Ultimately, for Christian mission to be whole there must be an on-going call to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ'.

'The tendency, then, for evangelicals, 'is to revert to trying to present a wholistic front, and at this point, we have returned to the basic problem of the incompatibility of community development and programmed evangelism.'⁴⁴

Even people like Sider seem to be caught in this cycle. When it comes to theory, he affirms holism; but when it comes to practice, he advocates dualism. One moment Sider is proposing a unified model of holistic mission that he calls, 'Incarnational Kingdom Christianity.'⁴⁵ The next moment Sider is suggesting we need to distinguish between personal evangelism and social justice in order 'to protect the integrity' of the one against the other. As if, the integrity of personal evangelism is actually threatened by a concern for social justice, and the integrity of social justice is actually threatened by a concern for personal evangelism!⁴⁶

I think that this problem can only be solved by redefining our understanding of personal evangelism and social justice and reframing our understanding of the relationship between personal evangelism and social justice in the process of relief and development.

Sider defines personal evangelism as an activity, 'the central intention' of which is 'to lead non-Christians to become disciples of Jesus Christ'; and he de-fines social justice as an activity, the 'central intention' of which is 'to improve the psychological or socioeconomic well-being of people for their life on earth.'⁴⁷ By Sider's definition we cannot possibly practice personal evangelism and social justice with integrity at the same time. As the 'intentions' are mutually exclusive. However, I would like to suggest that Sider's definitions are not gospel.

John Perkins, in The Call To Christian Community Development, says, 'Evangelism is not fast talk aimed at gaining converts; it is a ministry in word and deed that leads people to the place where they can activate *their* faith in the per-son of Jesus' for themselves. He goes on to say pointedly that 'Jesus never

⁴³ ibid 14

⁴⁴ ibid 14 (abridged)

⁴⁵ ibid 45

⁴⁶ ibid 161

⁴⁷ ibid 161

put evangelism and social action at odds with one another, so neither should we!⁴⁸

To me, evangelism is 'presenting the good news in word and deed; and so as long our good works convey the good news, then our struggle for justice may indeed be evangelistic. Actually, my intention in doing personal evangelism is no different from my intention in doing social justice. In fact, it is exactly the same - to witness to Jesus; to do justice to the gospel; and to share the good news with all the people that I come in contact with through good works that have integrity.

Now my friend Stuart Mathison would say - that might be all very well in theory, Dave, but you know as well as I do, it is nigh on impossible to combine personal evangelism and social justice in practice. And I would say - it is only nigh on impossible because most people think of practice in program terms. In program terms there will always be a conflict in relief and development between projects competing for time, attention, resources and personnel. And town planning and church planting are no exception. However, I would like to say that programs are not all that there is to relief and development. To me, personal evangelism and social justice can always be combined in community development processes, if not community development programs.

I agree with Perkins, when he says, 'Development cannot happen without evangelism. Evangelism brings us to Christ, who understands the way in which the poor suffer abuse, and encourages us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit heals the gashes of our heart, comforts us in (our) loss, and affirms our dignity in the face of dehumanization. Conversion ... brings about development.'⁴⁹

For me, the love of Christ is at the heart of every situation that we encounter in a community. And, the effective resolution of the problems inherent in each situation, depends on people being able to feel something of the love of Christ for themselves and for others; being able to be free to transcend their anger and guilt and inadequacy; and being able to act in a beautiful, radical, sacrificial, com-passionate, Christ-like manner.

Most of the people I work with are not Christians. So the challenge for me is to try to introduce them to the Christ in the context of my community work. I do this through a simple centered problem solving process.

I agree to work with people, struggling with the issues that are important to them, on the basis of *common sense* and *consensus*. Because I believe Christ is the source of all truth, and the truth is written, as the scripture says, on the hearts of all people, we believe that Christ's truth is often expressed in the *common sense* that people speak without their even knowing it.

I dialogue with people about their problems and about possible solutions to their problems, and try to decide on a particular course of action that we can take together. Quite often, to the embarrassment of Christians, who claim to have an exclusive rights to the truth, it is those who do not make any claims to have a corner on the market of truth, that seem to be more intuitively in touch with the reality of their problems, and the reality of possible solutions to their problems.

I will only decide on taking a particular course of action if I am personally convinced that it will move us in a *direction* that is true to the *compassion* of Christ, and demonstrates his *acceptance* and his *redemption*, in relation to the resolution of the problem. However, I can usually - if not invariably - come to *consensus* with the way sensible people want to go about solving their problems. Because - whether they know it or not - there is no fundamental conflict between the way sensible people want to go about solving their problems, and the way Christ wants us to go about solving our problems. Neither want unethical shortcuts. Both want *genuine, loving, just, long-term, sustainable solutions*.

Sometimes the *implicit* connection - between the way that we have chosen to go, and *the way of Christ* - remains *implicit*. But oftentimes *the implicit* connection - between the way that I have chosen to go, and *the way of Christ* - becomes *explicit*. I love to tell people who are celebrating a successful resolution of a problem, that, believe it or not, their success is a result of their having taken the *way of Christ*, without knowing it. Regardless of their attitude to Christ, they cannot deny the successful resolution of the problem, or disregard the value of *the way of Christ* they have taken thus far.

As a result, *the way of Christ* becomes a significant *point of view*. Some see it as one *point of view* among many. But some start to see it as the one *point of view* by which the many may be judged. Thus the *way of Christ* becomes a significant *point of reference*. If people adopt the *way of Christ* as the *point of reference* for decision making in their ordinary everyday lives, then the process of conversion to Christ as a person, if not Christianity as a religion, has begun. And our dream of personal growth and social change in the light of the love of Christ has begun to come true.

And that is one way that I try to practice personal evangelism and social justice through a simple non-dualistic holistic community development process.

5. The Gospel and The Squatters.

Let me tell you a story of how such a process took place among a group of people who were not only non-Christians, but decidedly anti-Christian. Together with my friends, we decided to get involved

⁴⁸ Perkins, J. *Beyond Charity: The Call To Christian Community Development*, Baker 1993, 83

⁴⁹ *ibid* 87

with a bunch of squatters. They were totally demoralised. They had no jobs. With no jobs they could not afford to pay rent. Because they had nowhere to live they squatted on land beside the road. Because this was illegal, they were constantly harassed by the police who would either demand a bribe, or break down their hutments and beat them up. As a result they were constantly on the move, trying desperately to stay one step ahead of the police. But there weren't many places they could go, so they always wound up back where they started, ready to go through the cycle again.

We got to know this group. Bonds of friendship formed between individuals and their families. They were demoralised, but what they lacked in dignity, they more than made up for in guts. Their struggle against seemingly overwhelming odds was fought with lots of courage and lots of laughter. We were encouraged and strengthened by their infectious style of heroism and sense of humour. They may have been demoralised, but they taught us valuable lessons about the morality of survival. As our friendships deepened, we not only learned from them the art of survival in an urban slum, we began to feel the anguish they felt in their struggle to survive. As we discussed with them the issues they had to face every day of their lives, we decided to work together with them and see if together we could find some long-term solutions that would not only minimise the anguish associated with their struggle for survival, but also increase their chances of surviving.

One day the group decided something had to be done about the continuing police harassment. Some wanted to attack the police station immediately with bricks. Bricks were a common means of settling disputes in the slum. As a conflict resolution technique, the people considered it a knockout. We encouraged the people to envisage in their minds what the result of throwing bricks through the window of the police station might be. They concluded that it would probably result in an even more violent visit by the police. The people began to have very serious doubts about the effectiveness of bricks as a conflict resolution technique.

So we began to discuss other possibilities for solving the problem. Some-one suggested inviting the police over for a cup of tea and discussing the matter. The squatters treated the idea with scorn, but we supported it. The longer we discussed it, the more support it got. Eventually the police were invited. To start with, you could cut the air with a knife, but the tension was soon dispelled with a couple of jokes. The squatters and the police ended up having an amicable chat and as a result decided to call a truce. The squatters agreed not to cause the police any trouble and the police agreed not to beat up the squatters.

After the police had gone, we had a talk about, how the problem had been resolved. During the discussion one of us mentioned that the problem had been resolved exactly how Christ had suggested such problems be resolved. He said 'bless those who curse you' and, 'if your enemy is thirsty give him a drink', which is exactly what the group had done by inviting the police for a cup of tea. Every-one treated it as a joke. They were embarrassed that they had done anything remotely religious, even if unintentionally. But the squatters remembered the way they had solved the problem with the police and they also remembered that it was the way Christ suggested problems be solved.

Time went by. Week after week, month after month, we worked on a whole range of problems together. Everything from getting a regular water supply to improving nutrition and sanitation. Each time we resolved a problem together it would be on the basis of *common sense* and *consensus*. After the effective resolution of each of these problems, we would discuss how the decision we had taken fitted with the way Christ advocated that problems be dealt with. After each successful resolution of a problem there would be a celebration. It was during this euphoria that we would always explain how the success was contingent upon our having worked in harmony with God's agenda, as personified in Christ; and always there would be the mock groans, that if we carried on the way we were going, that they would all be Christians before too long!

About a year after inviting the police for a cup of tea, the council decided to clean up the city. Cleaning up the city meant getting rid of the squatters. They were notified to leave immediately. But they had nowhere to go. Then they got news that really freaked them out. The bulldozers were on the way. In a panic they considered their options. But there didn't seem to be any. Any promising options had to be discarded because they felt too powerless to make them happen. 'It's typical,' they concluded. 'Those big people can push us little people around as much as they like and there is not a thing we can do about it.' We were tempted to agree. Things looked hopeless. But somehow we knew that we had to believe that the impossible was possible. 'Surely there is *something* we can do!' one person said hopefully. 'Yeah?' asked one of the squatters. 'What? What would Christ do about it?'

Raising Christ, as a possible *point of reference* for solving the problem, had never happened before in our discussions with the squatters. It was a crucial time for this group. A time when Christ might become more than just *one point of view* among *many points of view*; a time when Christ might become *the point of reference for all their problem solving*. The time when the group might be converted to a faith in Christ through which their life might be transformed. It all hinged upon finding a Christ story that the group could use to help them to do *something* about their situation.

I racked my brain, wondering where on earth you could find a story in the gospels that helped a group of squatters deal with the threat of eviction backed by the might of bulldozers. I don't remember who it was, but someone suggested a story they thought may help. It was the story Christ told of a little

old widow who was finding it difficult to get justice from a big crooked judge. She finally got justice by knocking on his door at all hours of the night for week after week. As we discussed the story with them, hope began to rise out of their hopelessness. As hope was born, so was a new sense of power. They started discussing the possible solutions in a whole new light. They decided to take up a petition to present to the city council and to persist until they got a fair hearing. They gathered hundreds of signatures and organised a march to the city council administration centre to present the petitions. Then they followed up on the people who could change the decision. Finally, through perseverance they had learned about in the story of the little old widow and the big crooked judge, they were granted an alternative place to stay where the community would have their own houses on their own land. Not only that, the council would help pay the expenses of their move.

It was more than they had ever dreamed possible. The move also opened up a whole host of new doors. Not only did they now have their own homes on their own land, they could now develop their own education, health and employment programmes. With the decrease in demoralisation came an observable increase in morale - and morality - in the community. There was a marked decrease in domestic violence and child abuse. People engaged in more constructive forms of work, and less destructive forms of recreation. There was a marked increase in happier couples and healthier children. Fewer people went to untimely graves. And those who survived, not only lived longer, they also lived fuller lives.

And at the centre of all this activity was a group in the community who remembered that the personal growth and social change had come about because they had followed the agenda of God personified in Christ. This group weren't content with their growth. They looked into the future, and saw the changes that were possible, if they were to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and, like him, live wholeheartedly for God, and his agenda of love and justice.

Some Practical Issues For Christian Aid Agencies To Consider.

- 1) If evangelism is at the heart of the development process, how can Christian agencies take funds from the government that proscribes evangelism? One possible answer is: that if the government proscribes evangelism then we shouldn't take any money for development programmes at all. (Even though we might still take money for relief and for rehabilitation.)

Another possible answer is: that, though the government proscribes 'evangelism', the government is concerned about 'proselytisation' rather than 'evangelisation'; and, as long as we make sure there is no manipulation or exploitation of people in vulnerable circumstances for religious purposes, there should be no conflict of interest in government funding of Christian agencies doing evangelism in development.

- 2) How can agencies stop 'evangelisation' from becoming 'proselytisation'? Some would say that the only way to stop 'evangelisation' becoming 'proselytisation' is for agencies to avoid evangelism altogether. But I would say it is impossible, by definition, for Christian agencies to avoid evangelism altogether, for we cannot help but witness to Christ. However, if we are going to witness to Christ with any integrity, then we must make sure 'evangelisation' never becomes 'proselytisation'.

Christ publicly criticised religious people who turned 'evangelisation' into 'proselytisation', (Matthew 23:15) 'targeting' people, 'scoring' converts, and destroying any possibility of real acceptance and respect. He condemned those who pretended to be on about the welfare of others when their only concern was for themselves and their cause (Matthew 23:25); and he called for a genuine concern for others, best summed up in the famous story he told about 'The Good Samaritan'.

According to the story, a badly beaten traveller lay bleeding by the side of the road, when a priest passed by. It was the perfect opportunity for him to *practice* what he *preached* about *compassion*. But the priest didn't stop to help. The priest was too preoccupied with his religious activities to spare the time to care for his neighbour. Then, a Samaritan, whom the priest would have considered a 'pagan', passed by. Unlike the priest, the 'pagan' was not so preoccupied with religious duties, that he couldn't spare the time to care for his neighbour. He *practised* what the priest *preached*. He stopped and helped the traveller. In doing so the Samaritan took a grave risk - at great cost. The Samaritan exposed himself to possible danger from the bandits, who had beaten up the traveller, and, who, for all he knew, were still lurking somewhere nearby, waiting to beat up anyone so incautious as to stop and help the traveller laying by the side of the road. As it so turned out the bandits did not rob the Samaritan. But, what the bandits didn't take, the doctors did. The Samaritan went to quite considerable personal expense, to pay the bill the hospital presented him with, to care for the penniless traveller.

When he had finished the story, Christ turned to those who heard him and told them to *stop playing games* like the priest, and *start caring for people more authentically* like 'The Good Samaritan!' (Luke 10: 25-37). To Christ, 'evangelism' consisted of *communicating the 'evangelium' - 'the good news of God's love' - in specific, personal, sacrificial acts of un-conditional, non-controlling care* - like healing *ten* lepers - though only *one* ever expressed any gratitude, and *none* became disciples. (Luke 17:11-19).

Unit 6 – Emerging Faithfulness - the Global Church's Response to Human Need

For Christian agencies to witness to Christ with any integrity, we need to be as un-conditional, and as non-controlling, in our care - as Christ.

- 3) In order to avoid being non-manipulative and non-exploitative, do we need to have separate programs for evangelism and development? While I would assert that personal evangelism and social justice should be combined in community development *processes*, I would agree with Stuart Mathison, that once evangelism has moved from being *implicit* to being *explicit*, it is important to set up separate evangelistic *programs*.

As Stuart Mathison says, 'I contend it is virtually impossible to offer development services alongside programmed evangelism without communicating to the community that you are prepared to buy their allegiance to the Christian faith, and that your services are provided on the condition they eventually pay homage to your religious agenda'.

He reminds us that 'some members of the community will happily "play the game" so long as there is the continuing likelihood of personal economic benefit. The poor often see the missionary enterprise as a soft touch and the missionaries as gullible people with money to burn. I am not necessarily saying that the motivations of any particular missionaries are deliberately corrupt, or that they have been blatantly unethical by exploiting the desperation of the poor in order to elicit a desired response, or that they are any more gullible than anybody else. At the end of the day, the motivations of the missionary are not as relevant as the way in which the target group perceives the missionary's actions.

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Development and Social Change

Unit 7

Transformation - A Kingdom Agenda for Development and Social Change



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 7 - Transformation - A Kingdom Agenda for Development and Social Change

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “As the Father has Sent Me: Integral Mission and the Church” by Bishop Mtetemala,
- 2) “God’s Agency Of Restoration: The Church - The Role of the Church in God’s Redemptive Strategy,” by Dr. Robert Moffitt

Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe what is meant by the “Isaiah Agenda” and how it can be helpful in the way we approach development and social change;
2. Explain the relevance of the parable of the Good Samaritan to the concept of integral mission;
3. Identify which of the fundamental approaches used to address human need is most appropriate for local groups of Christians and why;
4. Explain what “Community Transformation” means and what effect it can have.

Introduction

In Unit Six I made the assertion that I believe local churches around the world have a great potential for being God’s agents of community transformation. We also considered the “problem” of church leaders who do not have such a vision, or who may even resist it. What can be done in such cases by individual believers who catch on to what God wants to do in and through them as citizens of his kingdom here on earth? Are they stuck? Are they powerless because their church leaders do not have such a vision? No, they are not, for as we considered, local cell groups of disciples can engage in community transformation even if their institutional church structures as a whole do not. What does it mean to be the “Church” after all? Jesus provides us the answer: “Whenever two or more gather in my name . . .”

But regardless of what structure we consider, or what name we give to groups of disciples engaged in integral mission at the local community level, such groups have much potential and it is important we both see this and build upon it.

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

There are two readings at the end of this unit that expand upon this theme: an article by Bishop Mtetemah and another by Dr. Robert Moffitt. Stop now and read those articles.

- 1) What rationale do these two articles give for seeing local groups of disciples (i.e. the Church) as the primary agents of community transformation?
- 2) Do you agree with their rationale – why or why not?

The Isaiah Agenda

In the beginning God had a vision. In Unit Two we studied that vision as presented in the first two chapters of Genesis. In the last two chapters of Revelation we see that God’s original vision has never changed, regardless of how it has appeared throughout human history. God will at one point make all things new, just like it was after God completed those first six days of creative work and artistry and described as being “very good.” In Unit 3, we also looked at Isaiah 11 and saw a prophetic picture which shows us just how complete God’s restoration will be. All the effects of the evil that humanity has let loose upon the world will be reversed and all of creation—humans, animals, every aspect of ecology—will be ultimately and fully transformed.

But that is then, and this is now. We know the Kingdom of God is already here and active. It is occupying the hearts of those who have received new life through Christ – his apprentices, and it is being demonstrated through their lives. The Kingdom is here now, in part, but not in full. There are forces at work which seek to hold back Christ’s Kingdom. There are people who refuse to have the nature of their lives changed from being bad trees to becoming good trees. They prefer the bad fruit they produce. They love darkness rather than light because in the darkness deeds of evil can more easily be committed without restraint.

And so what can we reasonably expect from the efforts of integral mission during this interim period between alpha and omega? I think it is safe to say we can expect a great variety of outcomes that reverse the curse upon creation and frees people from the effects of sin. But there is another passage in Isaiah which I believe can help us focus our efforts. The passage is Isaiah 65:17-25. It begins and ends in similar fashion to the new heaven and new earth statements made in the Isaiah 11 passage, but verses 20-24 of this passage present restorative changes which some Old Testament scholars conclude the nation of Israel could reasonably expect during its post-exile history as a result of God being at work among them.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

Read Isaiah 65:20-24. What specific outcomes does this passage list as possible as a result of God’s commitment to restore God’s original vision for the world as we considered in Unit Two?

Unit 7 – Transformation – A Kingdom Agenda for Development and Social Change

This passage (Isaiah 65: 20-24) has come to be regarded as the *Isaiah Agenda*. I see five primary outcomes explicitly mentioned in the text:

1. Children do not die or live in misfortune. (vs. 20, 23)
2. The elderly live out their days in dignity. (vs. 20)
3. People will have a just and adequate means of livelihood. (vs. 21-23)
4. People will experience joy in a productive life. (vs. 22)
5. People will be in a conversational relationship with God. (vs. 24)

In his book “The Isaiah Vision” Raymond Fung writes:

Isaiah 65 is not a description of paradise. There is sweat and toil (except that people enjoy the fruit of their labour). There is death and mourning (except that children don't die). The Isaiah Agenda is not about paradise. It has to do with human history, with the here and the now. . . . God desires that children do not die, that old people live in dignity and that those who work enjoy the fruit of their labour. . . . It does not ask for the sky. It calls for what most people nowadays would regard as basic social conditions. . . . It is a minimum social vision. . . .

Modest as it is, it offers all that is necessary for life, or a new life. The poor understand this. They do not look for a free lunch. They look for the basic conditions to give themselves and their families a real chance in life. The Isaiah Agenda provides them. As for the affluent who already possess all or almost all that the Isaiah Agenda proposes, its modesty provides probably the least modest offer: Give up the petty ambitions and small dreams you have for yourself and your families. Look beyond your petty horizons and dream big. Invest yourself in a cause truly worthy of your calling.

Another aspect in favour of the Isaiah vision is that it is easy to translate it into action. It is so universal and yet so concrete that any person and any congregation can understand and make something meaningful out of it. Even churches with absolutely no power and hardly any resources can implement some of its objectives. . . . The Isaiah Agenda is indeed easy to contextualize. All that is required of us is to observe the reality of our situation, ask why, and follow the logic of how things happen in a certain way in our society. . . . Finally, the beauty of the Isaiah Agenda is that every person can play a part in it and contribute to it. (Excerpts from *The Isaiah Vision*, Raymond Fung, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1992)

It is important to note that what is envisioned in this agenda is not a welfare state. There would certainly be need for charity, especially in times of crisis, but this passage speaks of people being enabled to provide for themselves. In this picture, people are working. They are productive. They are not dependent on continuous hand-outs. One organization I know has as their motto that they offer people in need a “hand-up, not a hand-out.” Enablement, capacity building, just political and economic systems/structures which make it possible for people to meet their own needs—that is the Isaiah Agenda.

And yet within this emphasis on promoting self-reliance, there is also special consideration for those who are not expected to provide fully for themselves, those who cannot independently care for their own needs. These are the children and the elderly. Children are to be protected, nurtured and cared for until such a time as they can produce for themselves. The elderly who have lived productive lives, who looked after the needs of their own children, but whose strength has weakened, are now to be cared for in order that they might live out the twilight of their days in dignity.

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

Return to Unit One and review the list of human basic needs we looked at as defined by the Canadian government. Review also the six categories of poverty presented by Bryant Meyers. Which of those basic needs and which of those categories of poverty are addressed by the Isaiah Agenda? List them below.

Perhaps we can consider that the Isaiah Agenda presents a sample of interim goals for the coming of the Kingdom. They outline the kind of changes we can reasonable expect between now and when the Kingdom is fully restored.

The Isaiah Agenda addresses all the aspects of a person's life:

- the physical being (basic needs, such as adequate health, food, etc);
- the soul (justice, fairness, joy); and
- the spirit (coming to know God and to relate to God on an intimate level).

In a sense, we might view the Agenda as a description of basic needs from God's point of view. It describes a minimal baseline of the restoration we might expect in this interim period between Genesis and Revelation. It is not the fullness of the Kingdom, but it is certainly a foretaste of things to come.

All of us claiming to be followers of Jesus are to be busy bringing the Kingdom to earth. We have no business suggesting that it is only the job of NGOs or mission agencies to engage in responding to human need and environmental destruction. In many cases it is that very attitude—that it's not "my" problem—that creates the need for such para-church organizations to exist. They do the job Jesus mandated that all of us should be doing. This is especially true at the local community level. Disciples placed in neighborhoods and communities around the world represent a potential movement for change which could be phenomenal in its impact. An old saying goes like this: "Where there is a will, there is a way." It means that if we are truly determined to do something, something can be done. There is a great divide between wishful thinking and actual change.

"Faith without works is dead," said the Apostle James. He meant that without works, faith is without effect; it is useless. Aspiration without commitment is likewise useless, although it provides some short-term emotional satisfaction. Jesus reminded us that a light hidden under a basket is not very helpful and salt that has lost its saltiness is only fit for the garbage dump. A mission without a strategy and plan of action is like an automobile without wheels. It may look good, it may sound good, it may be comfortable for us, our family and our friends to sit in, but it won't fulfill its purpose of taking us somewhere. A disciple, a church who is not engaged in integral mission is like an automobile that is sitting still.

Jesus was always on the move, from place to place, from life to life. He was looking, searching, hunting for opportunities to engage his mission. The Holy Spirit is referred to as "*Ruach*" in Hebrew. It means wind or breath. God is breathing into the world; God is here and is active. If we are sensitive enough we can hear the echo of God's heartbeats; God's pulse can be felt. God's Spirit is moving, and we will experience that life and power if we move with the Spirit. Do you want to be filled with the Spirit, truly filled? Then your life must be like a boat with a sail. Sailing to where? In the direction the wind of God is blowing—from place to place, from life to life; looking, searching, hunting for opportunities to engage the mission Jesus passed on to us as illustrated in these verses. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing." (John 20:21; 14:12).

A place to begin

We have a clear mandate, but given the overwhelming vastness of needs and opportunities around the world, where do we even begin? That question has been answered in part by Jesus himself. After he told a group of people that we are to love our neighbor in the same manner as we ourselves, a Jewish religious teacher replied with another question: "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered him with the story of the Good Samaritan.

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. Try to imagine you are reading it for the very first time!

1. Who proved to be the "neighbor" of the traveler?
2. Why was he a good neighbor?
3. Who proved not be "neighbors" of the traveler?
4. Why were they bad "neighbors?"
5. What is surprising to you about this parable?

There are a variety of lessons we can draw from that story, but for me the specific response Jesus seemed to be giving to the man who asked the question “who is my neighbor” was “He whose need you know.” Well, you might say that is not such a helpful response because just by reading the newspaper, watching news programs on television or following the news on the internet, we are now aware of needs all over the world. We might even have a better understanding of the needs in the wider world than what might be going on in our own neighborhood! The point is valid.

But perhaps Jesus has also responded to the concern about who precisely is “my neighbor” when in Acts 1:8 he laid out for his disciples the geographical strategy for carrying on his mission: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

- 1) What comes to your mind as the reasons Jesus might have given his first disciples that geographical strategy?
- 2) Why start with Jerusalem?
- 3) Why start next with Judea rather than Rome or somewhere else?
- 4) Why go from Judea to Samaria as the next place instead of Corinth or Ephesus?

Your response might be different from mine, but the first reason that comes to my mind when I think about why Jesus might have given his first disciples this geographical strategy is the issue of proximity. He starts with Jerusalem - why? Because Jerusalem is where they were living at the time. It was their community, their network of relationships, the places and people with which they were most familiar.

Moving out from Jerusalem, the second geographical location he mentions is Judea. Why Judea and not somewhere else? I would suggest he mentions Judea as the second location where they are to be actively engaged is because Judea was the regional group of communities of which theirs was a part. It too was a familiar place to them, they would know people in the area and it was easily accessible.

Then Jesus moves beyond Judea to Samaria. Why Samaria? Because Samaria was the neighboring region that shared a border with Judea. Again, there is this issue of easy access, of proximity. We might say that was true in their day, but in today’s world of airplanes and high speed ground transport, almost anywhere is easily accessible. But how many people do you know who have the time and finance to go journeying around the world on airplanes?

I think another reason why Jesus gave his disciples this geographical strategy has to do with culture and language. These early disciples were Jews and Jerusalem was the heart of Judaism. Not always, but perhaps most of the time it is easier to start something new in an environment in which at least some things are familiar. Otherwise, getting experience with the actual endeavor you have in mind might be completely overshadowed by just learning how to operate in your new context. This principle is multiplied over and over again every time a missionary goes from their own place, language and culture to somewhere else. It can take several years before that person understands enough about his/her new environment to have much relational impact.

And a further reason why I think Jesus gave his disciples this geographical strategy has to do with the issue of maximum exposure. Jewish people came from all over the known world of that time on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during one of the great feasts. Jesus knew that Pentecost was coming and there would be a mass of people gathered in Jerusalem from many different places, representing many different language groups. In commercial marketing, people often refer to one of the most cost-effective means of advertising as “word of mouth.” It is simply the act of one person telling their friends and family about this great new product or service they have heard about or have used. Many thousands of those people assembled in Jerusalem for Pentecost heard the clear gospel preached by Peter. Thousands responded. Many of them had homes in other places and after some time they went to those homes with that message and experience.

These are all good reasons for the geographical strategy that Jesus gave to his disciples. But to me, Jesus’ primary strategy for how his mission would be carried out was for his first disciples to start with those among whom they were living because they were the most accessible and familiar to them. I think this strategy holds true for most of us as well - start with those among whom we are living. There are exceptions to this of course, but it seems to be the general rule and makes a lot of sense.

We can pray for integral ministry being done by others elsewhere, and we should. We can give financially to the efforts being done by others elsewhere, and we should. But, the majority of us can only be personally engaged in integral mission within our own context. Our “Jerusalem” are those whom we can most easily impact with our lives. In using the word “easily” I do not mean it will be either simple or done without effort and self-sacrifice. What I mean is that we know or can find out about them, and they are close enough that we can interact with them on a regular basis. We are not talking about just sharing resources, but also sharing our lives, and we need to be in reasonable proximity to do that.

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

What potential opportunities exist for you to engage in integral mission:

- 1) Within your Jerusalem?
- 2) And/or perhaps within your Judea?
- 3) And/or perhaps within your Samaria?

An appropriate approach

Given that the world is so full of need, where do we even begin to address it? We saw above that Jesus gives us a geographical strategy for doing that. But how do we go about it? Which needs and at which level? Well, the Isaiah Agenda can help us answer that question. But at what level is it appropriate and feasible for us to have an impact? What approach can we consider?

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

In Unit One we looked at five fundamental approaches used around the world to address human need and bring about development and social change. List them below.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Which approach do you feel is most appropriate for local groups of Christians in your context? What are your reasons for that choice?

I believe most disciples of Jesus and the local churches/groups of which they are a part are best suited to engage in the fifth of these five fundamental approaches, that of sustainable community development. Why do I say that? At the top of my list of reasons is that most of us are living in or near communities where people in need are also living! We can access them without too much difficulty or expense.

Another reason at or near the top of my list is that this approach to development is the most relational. The mission Jesus gave to us is highly relational. Ministering to people’s bodies may be done at a distance with some effectiveness by sending food, medicines or whatever. Ministering to people’s minds can be done from a distance through literature and the media. However, the ministry to soul and spirit flows out of relationship and relationship means personal contact.

A third reason is that this approach focuses on the most basic level of community, individual households, and most of us have a better chance of being able to help at that level with our personal experience, knowledge and other resources. Not many of us have the special skills and other capacities to set up and manage an NGO that can cover a large area with its services. But when we think about households and families, we see something that is more doable.

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A fourth reason is that community development has less to do with mobilizing external resources and applying specialist technical skills. The role of the person offering community development is more one of facilitation, care, encouragement, sharing knowledge and experience. We help connect people to resources already available through government services, NGOs or other service providers.

If children are chronically sick, in most cases it may be the result of causes that can be addressed through low-tech changes in living conditions and lifestyle that do not require professional treatment. And even if they do need professional attention, you and I can help arrange that, we do not need to be doctors ourselves. A small church might not be able to set up and run a large job creation and training program, but they can help a few people find employment or perhaps learn some skill that will help them do that.

Think about the other four approaches:

1. Macro Economic Development
2. National Infrastructure and Human Resource Development
3. Political Development (reformation/replacement of power structures)
4. Rehabilitation and Subsidized Services

It should be noted that generally these approaches take place at the macro level (national or regional) through large scale economic programs such as global trade and industrial growth or building up national infrastructure such as ports, transport systems, telecommunications, etc. The rationale behind such efforts is a theory referred to as “trickle down” development. What that means is that there is an assumption that high level and large scale benefits will ultimately benefit a wide spectrum of people, including the very poor. There is some truth to that, but extensive experience and research has also demonstrated that by the time most of that benefit filters down through the layers of political people and structures, professional people, business leaders, etc., often what is left for the poor and needy is very little indeed. In other words, often what happens in such programs is that the rich get richer and the poor either remain the same or get even poorer.

For example, if a large amount of capital became available to your country or region for economic development to be dispersed through national banks and other financial mechanisms, who do you think would get easiest access to the funds? I don’t think it would be you or me, and I don’t think it would be the poor and needy. Those who would get access to these funds are most likely to be those who have high level contacts, education, collateral, etc. Not many poor people can walk into a bank and get an industrial loan to start a small manufacturing plant. But already well-to-do people walk in, get that loan, and then employ poor people at wages and in conditions considered inhumane and illegal in many countries. All too often that is the result of trickle down development.

But the community development approach does not wait for anything to trickle down from the big programs, nor does it assume much will. This approach works the scale from the other end in what could be considered trickle-up development. It starts with those in need and works from there. And even if little or no benefit trickles upward, well at least the most needy have gotten a piece of the benefit pie by having been invited to the table before the big eaters arrive!

Think About It

Answer Box # 8

- 1) Which of the five approaches to development and social change might best describe the way Jesus went about responding to human need?
- 2) Give some examples from his life and teachings to support your response.

As I read the Gospels, I see Jesus responding to people at the individual need. He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. He healed the women who had been bleeding for twelve years. He healed the paralytic in Capernaum. He restored sight to blind Bartimaeus. He fed the hungry who had come to hear him preach. Jesus met individual needs, and in his meeting of individual needs, his message impacted those who saw or heard about what he had done. Jesus used the “trickle-up approach”.

This trickle-up approach, individual by individual, household by household, community by community seems to some as almost useless. It is slow; it is looking at the small picture; it is but a drop in the ocean in light of the global needs and challenges before us. I believe this thinking is a seed planted by the one whom Jesus refers to as being the *father of lies*. It is a powerful detriment to the kingdom advancing through our lives. It is powerful because it can lead to spiritual paralysis, making the decision

that what we might manage to contribute is too insignificant to make much difference, and so we do nothing or else we give up what we have tried to do.

One morning in the Himalaya foothills, I went out by myself for a time of prayer and reflection. I was in the area on one my regular visits to community development projects for which I was responsible in various parts of rural Nepal. As you might imagine, Nepal, home to most of the world's highest mountains is a country with a landscape that looks a lot like a saw blade—up and down, up and down. When you are “down” in a ravine, gorge or valley, one might think of Nepal as just one long tunnel with the top removed; the only sense of distance is straight up! But if you can climb high enough to the top of a ridge and look down either side, one can see a long way off.

That morning I climbed. I finally came to a spot where I could look down and see the entire area where we had been working as a mission for over twenty years. I could see the small district size hospital we had built and operated. I could see many of the villages we had helped with agriculture, forestry, water systems development, literacy programs, community health clinics and teaching. I thought of the very small fledgling church that had been established against great odds. And I was somewhat shocked to see how small that working area was. I was high enough to see beyond it—ridge after ridge, valley after valley, village after village, as far as my eyes could see. My “shock” turned to deep discouragement.

It was a discouragement that had been building gradually over a number of years. Years of serving among very poor people and seeing very limited change. Years of helping relatively few people compared to the millions who needed our help. And that morning, like a small pebble on an ocean beach I could see the extent of twenty years of work carried out by many dedicated missionaries and local people. Besides some very limited services available through the government, we were the only other service organization established in that area of the country. If it took us so long to only get this far, who will help those over the next ridge, the ridge after that, and the many hundreds of ridges and valleys that stretched as far as I could see and beyond? I was very discouraged. I opened the small book I had brought with me and began to read.

We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But if that drop was not in the ocean, I think the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. I do not agree with the big way of doing things. To us what matters is an individual. To get to love the person we must come in close contact with him. If we wait till we get the numbers, then we will be lost in the numbers. And we will never be able to show that love and respect for the person. I believe in person to person; every person is Christ for me, and since there is only one Jesus, that person is the one person in the world at that moment.

Those are the words of Mother Teresa. That was an important morning for me. I had been driven to discouragement because of the challenge of so many needs of so many people in so many parts of the world. That discouragement had blinded me to the fact that helping even just one person is a complete act in and of itself; it is a breaking through of the love of God into a life that has been affected by the curse. From that moment on the heaviness weighing upon my spirit began to lift. Even though I still knew we could not help everyone, I also knew we could help at least one more, and that was our calling. Some years later I came across a story that has a similar simple, but powerful message.

There was once a little boy who was walking along the beach when all of a sudden he came upon thousands of starfish that had washed up on the beach. The tide was going out, and for some strange reason, the starfish ended up stuck on the beach. They were all doomed to die because they couldn't survive being out of the water in the hot sun until the next high tide. The little boy realized this and frantically started picking up starfish and throwing them, one at a time, back into the water.

A man who was walking along the beach saw the boy and yelled, "Son, what in the world are you doing? Don't you know that there are thousands of starfish on this beach? And don't you know that this beach goes on for miles and miles? There is no way in the world you can save all those starfish!"

The little boy thought about that for a moment, then turned to the man, looked him in the eye, picked up a starfish and said, "Yes, I know. But I can save this one." And he threw it as far as he could into the ocean.

I believe the community development approach carried out at the household level presents a realistic way for most Christians to engage in bringing about significant change. And it is an approach we can manage, something we can do with even basic knowledge and resources. You and I and our churches may not be able to change the world, but we can make a difference in the lives of a few more people in our locality. 30% of the world's population claims to be Christian. If cell groups of disciples all over the world helped even a few people wherever they are located, the impact would be amazing.

Community Transformation

We have been looking at community development, a term and approach commonly used and understood within the development sector all around the world. But in the past ten years or so, a growing number of Christians involved in development work have begun to use a different term that I also prefer. That term is “Community Transformation,” or in broader usage - development as transformation. Writing for the US Center for World Mission’s Perspectives Course, Samuel Voorhies states:

Transformational development addresses poverty with a long view in a local way. In deeply impoverished areas in remote rural areas and, increasingly, in urban slums, the problems are usually quite complex. There may be a lack of infrastructure, such as passable roads or working vehicles, to bring crops to market or supplies to the community. Basic health care is often unavailable. A lack of a steady, clean water supply can devastate entire regions. Fuel is essential, but in very scant supply in some areas. Approaching the complex of difficulties requires long-term local attention at the community level. Local people need to take leadership to bring about sustained changes.

The work of Christian development workers is to facilitate change from within the society for an entire community or area. The core transformational change is at the point of values and vision. Concerning vision, people come to see that their community can be made different, that they are not locked in an unchangeable despair. Concerning values, people come to see afresh that they have personal and collective worth and dignity. Christians who labor at this kind of development have a clear advantage of working toward the values of the kingdom of God. Below is a story from Samuel Voorhies that illustrates what community transformation looks like in practice. As you read through the story underline what you feel are key principles and practices that contribute to the process being a success - that will help you answer the questions in the next “Think About It” box.

We drove for hours across Africa. We had left the capital city four hours earlier, but even so, we would arrive at a small town well after dark. We planned to stay the night since we would have to drive another three hours on un-paved, rough "secondary" roads to reach our destination the next day. In the small town we met who we hoped we would find—the project officer for a development project we had come to observe. A small office for the endeavor was located in this small town because it was the nearest place to the remote development project that had telephones or electricity.

The next morning, we met the staff of the development project. They told us about why the project was launched.

They explained that the area had once been a game preserve. It was considered so remote that it had been neglected by the government. There were no basic human services, such as education, health and water. When people were forced to settle in the area, a previous government administration had made promises, but these had never been fulfilled.

While some mission work had been carried out in the area, few NGOs (non-governmental organizations) or Christian aid agencies had come to bring any help. At last this particular agency explored how it might be able to help carry out transformational development in the area. The first step was to go through a process with community leaders and members to identify their community resources. With resources in view, they looked together as to how these resources could be used to solve the community's problems. It wasn't hard to see the problems:

- They lacked a clean source of water.
- There were no health services.
- There were no school facilities.
- The food production was inadequate to provide enough to supply the people until the next growing season.
- There had been no churches in the area.
- The area had been neglected by government and NGOs.

But we were assured that we would find something different after we endured the rough three-hour ride to reach the community. Before we could step from the truck, women, men and children had gathered, singing a song in the local language, "Up with development—we can do it ourselves with God's help and to His glory we will become all that we can be." I was inspired by the enthusiasm and commitment of these people. They had so little, yet, in very difficult circumstances with little help, they were doing so much. Simple efforts by ordinary people bring about marvelous changes in their own societies.

Sitting with the crowd under a big tree for the next hour, we heard progress reports from community representatives—about what the people had done for themselves and what the agency had helped them to do. Then we were invited to walk around the community and see some of the improvements that they had made.

They showed us their former water supply—a pool of dirty water. "This is where we used to get our drinking water. It is the same place the animals drink from," said one of the ladies. We walked a little further and there was a new well. It was covered with a concrete slab, surrounded by a neat fence with a pump for retrieving clean water from deep underground. With a big smile the lady began to pump the water. "It's clean—would you like a drink?" she asked. I tasted the clean fresh water. "When we drank from the pool, our children were always sick with stomach problems and diarrhea. Now they are much healthier," another lady explained.

A little further on we saw a field where some beautiful corn was growing. "I was given a loan of improved seed and trained in planting methods and using organic fertilizers to double the amount of corn I will harvest," said a farmer. He continued, "The amount of corn I will get from this field will not only be enough to feed my family, but I will have enough left over to sell and help pay my children's school fees. I am planning to save some money each year and in three years, I will be able to buy oxen, cultivate more land and grow more crops."

As we walked on to the primary school, a young boy pointed to a fig tree. "This is where we used to sit for our lessons. There was no chalk board or chairs—just the hard ground," he explained. We went inside to the new classroom where desks had been built and a big chalkboard covered the front wall. "Now we are able to learn our lessons much better!" exclaimed another student.

After finishing our walk, we sat together under the tree again. I asked them what had been the most significant achievement of the project so far.

"We are together now and organized to help ourselves. We can meet and talk about our problems and how we can solve them together. Before we were isolated, living apart and not helping each other. We realize that we can do something to help better our lives. We don't have to wait on the government."

"We realize that as women we were loved and valued by God. We can contribute something to the development of this community. Our husbands now treat us with respect and we have more time to spend with our children. The men have stopped drinking."

"We now have clean water and healthier children. We don't have to walk so far for water and that gives us more time with our families."

The chairman boasted, "It has been a dream come true. We never imagined that we could have our own well and have pure, clean drinking water. We praise God for His faithfulness to our prayers through the work of the Christian aid agency."

The results of this project may seem like simple things. The availability of clean water; mothers with healthier children, who do not have to walk so far to get help when sick; children who have a school where they can sit and learn, and who can now hope and plan for the future. People with more confidence in themselves and their ability to work together and help change their future. Yet these technical and social interventions were much more. They were a powerful witness for the gospel. All things have an origin. With the assistance of dedicated local Christian workers people understand that this assistance comes because God loves them and has demonstrated His care for the community through other believers.

The community had pulled together. With some assistance from the agency, they had organized committees in collaboration with the government's and traditional leadership's infrastructure to take responsibility for and lead the development initiatives in the community.

People in the community were working together to bring about changed lives, to support each other in sustained programs, to meet both the physical and spiritual needs. Churches were launched, playing a vital part to demonstrate kingdom values, to offer instruction, and to foment hope by prayers. People recognized that their help ultimately came from God and they sought to know more about Him, giving Him glory in sincere thanks.

Does it sound too good to be true? Are there problems, failures, conflicts and differences? Of course. More needs to be done at the political level to change policies. Issues of gender and the environment need more careful consideration. More training is needed to equip the local pastors and to provide biblical resources. Yet, the truth is that we are seeing simple efforts by ordinary people bring about marvelous changes in their

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own societies. These people are practicing principles of what we have come to call the process of holistic Christian transformational development.

It is "development" because it refers to the intentional process of facilitating change throughout a community or region. The idea of "transformation" speaks of change in the whole of the person—material, social and spiritual—as well as in the community—economics, social and political. It is "Christian" transformation because there is a vision of people throughout whole communities being changed to be like Christ, "being transformed into His likeness" (2 Cor 3:18). Christian transformation looks toward the hope that Christ's likeness will not only be the goal, but that the living Christ will bring about substantial changes for good through the practice of kingdom values.

Think About It

Answer Box # 9

Review the words and phrases you have underlined in the story above. List below the key principles and practices you feel contributed to the success of the program that was described.

The story we have just read involves the staff of a Christian NGO. However, their input is quite minimal. The primary change in people's lives came about by their own efforts and motivation. A local church in that context could have done what the NGO staff had done. It did not require an NGO, but it did require a cell group of disciples.

Community Transformation means inviting God into the development process, or to be more precise, it is understanding that true development requires a change of being, not only a change in external factors and conditions. I do not mean a change of religion necessarily, but a change of heart which only the Holy Spirit is able to accomplish. Community development is a term used by many people who have no interest in acknowledging God's role in the development process. A humanist feels quite at home with the term. Those of us who are Christians involved in community development gladly accept the approach and the process, but we acknowledge that, first of all, spiritual development is essential and, secondly, prayer should be a common practice in the process because we call on God to bring about inner change as well.

Community transformation incorporates all the thinking expressed in integral mission but takes it further by applying that thinking to a particular approach for bringing about change. In effect, it represents a blending of integral mission as a theology with community development as a process and methodology.

Think About It

Answer Box # 10

From what you have studied in this course so far, write for yourself a working definition of "Community Transformation"

Readings

“As the Father has Sent Me:” Integral Mission and the Church

Bishop Mtetemala, writing for the Micah Network

In my work as the Bishop of a small Diocese in Tanzania I visit each parish at least once a year. This gives me the opportunity to talk about the needs of the community and the response of the church to those needs with members of the church and community leaders. The Diocese has become more active in responding to the physical needs of the poor communities because we saw this as a way of bringing God's love among them. Evangelism has always remained central to our mission, but the more we do evangelism, the more God shows us the broadness of his mission. We are learning that mission must not be narrow because it is God's mission. The Church's mission originates from God's mission and as such it must be broad enough to touch both the soul and the body; the society as well as the individual. It must have an impact on people in their *total* need. It must be integral, total and wholesome.

It is not that this is a new thing to us. We have heard about it and have read statements on the need for the church to see their mission as integral and not fall into the error of presenting mission in a narrow sense, emphasizing either the spiritual or physical alone. The problem, however, has always been 'to make those statements live'; to 'put the statements into action'. In my Diocese we have defined our mission as being 'to empower the marginalized groups to identify and address their physical and spiritual problems.' Our vision is 'to have empowered community living life in its fullness.'

During the last ten years we have seen ourselves compelled to take the whole gospel to the whole person. It has given us much joy to bring God's love to his people by offering water services, community health programmes, food for the hungry, educational services, agricultural education and above all the privilege of bringing good news about the saving work of Jesus Christ for all sinners. We have not just seen people benefit from material blessings, we have seen them receive with joy of the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ.

I have given this background so that you can see where I come from and what my work as a Bishop involves. I wanted you also to know how the non-Christians come to the church doors so that we may share with them God's love. These are the communities that provide the context in which our Christians live.

This paper considers the future of integral mission for the poor and the church. The subject addresses the importance of impact in our mission. We all agree on the importance of putting emphasis on integral mission. The problem is making those words – our statements and resolutions – become flesh. The people we represent here will not benefit from resolutions alone. The poor have heard and read many resolutions which at first sparked hope, but later that hope faded away. It is when we become doers of what we resolve that we shall begin seeing some impact in the life of the people we are called to serve.

The country from which I come contains poor communities characterized by low income, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, insecurity, helplessness and isolation. Development agencies have analyzed the causes of poverty among such individuals and communities in poor countries like mine. The causes include: human exploitation, selfish greed, oppression, lack of justice, disease, illiteracy, lack of technical know-how, national income mismanagement and so on. As a leader of the church I ask myself how we as a church can respond effectively to the needs of such poor people?

I have seen mission agencies and non-mission agencies work to fight poverty. I have seen Christian groups advocating for the poor before various governments. Yet, as I look at my own situation, I sense that we still have a long way to go to have an impact among the poor. It is therefore important to think through our future direction as agencies and churches devoted to doing God's mission.

1. The centrality of God and the gospel

If the church is called by grace to be involved in the mission of God, then she must hold the gospel central in her mission. This will differentiate the mission of God and that of the world. Our mission flows from God's mission. God's mission is manifested to the church through the life, work and death of Jesus Christ. God sends the Son. The Son sends the Holy Spirit. And the Son sends out the church into the world. 'As the Father has sent me so send I you' (Jn. 20:21).

The further we drift away from God, the more we lose sight of God's mission. For we cannot claim to do God's mission if God is not at the centre of the mission we seek to do. Scripture, too, must be central in our understanding of mission. We study scripture to learn what his will is in his mission. Drifting away from the scripture is just as dangerous.

We have therefore to be continuously reminded about the message which we are called to take to the world. The message is Jesus Christ himself. He is the gospel – the good news to the world. As such, he is our *motif* for mission. We are motivated to take God's love to the world because of what God did in Christ on the cross. This makes the cross central to our mission. If we lose sight of him then we lose sight of God's mission because Jesus was doing his Father's business.

Jesus, therefore, must be central to our mission. From him we shall learn what God's will is as we engage in his mission. The future of integral mission depends on how faithful the church as a steward of the gospel of Christ. The gospel is one essential foundation stone in our integral mission because the church has been entrusted with the gospel that brings peace to the whole person. It is a gospel of God's love that permeates every sphere of human need and responds positively to the whole person both in his physical and spiritual hunger.

2. Moving beyond a traditional understanding of mission

Our understanding of mission today has changed a lot from the traditional understanding of mission. Traditionally there were mission fields and non-mission fields. Today we live in a world that cannot be divided into Christian and non-Christian fields. Today we witness religiously pluralistic societies where non-Christian faiths rub shoulders with Christian faiths. All this forces us to think afresh what mission is. It is no longer sending of 'missionaries' across the seas for we are now realizing that the mission field is at our doorstep!

The advancement of modern technology and science has brought with it the winds of secularization. People have become nominal in their faith. The Christian countries from which mission enterprises originated, or from which it was spear-headed, are not immune from this secularization. Mission cannot mean the same thing even for them.

The advancement of modern technology, however, has had positive effects as well. Today we know more of the situation in the world. We analyze better the causes of poverty because the tools for such exercises are more advanced. This helps us to see economic imbalance in the world – how the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. All this broadens our understanding of mission.

We know better today that God is involved in the whole world – not just meeting the spiritual needs of mankind, but responding to the whole person. We are learning that the Christian faith must not be kept within ourselves, but that we must express it in the world where God has placed us. We are learning that mission must be the concern of every individual Christian. Mission is the way the every Christian expresses their faith. This is not just for western countries, but even for those countries which were once termed 'mission fields'. The whole world is to be seen as mission field – not just 'over there'. Whether people are materially rich or poor, they all need to realize who God is in their lives so that they can then see their place in the world and what God's will is for them. We are learning that just as we take the witness of the gospel seriously, so we must take seriously how we are to express the faith we have found in Jesus. We are learning that the good news must impact both the spiritual and the physical 'if it is to bring life abundant in its fullness' (Jn. 10:10).

In short we are learning that mission is not just baptizing people as Christians, but helping the baptized to see how they can serve Christ in the world in which they live.

3. The centrality of the local church

Let us consider the responsibility of the church for reaching out to the world with the gospel of love. The church here is that 'body of the faithful' who have believed in Jesus Christ and acknowledge him as their Lord. These churches are there in our communities. God has by grace chosen to involve these churches in his mission.

We as development and Christian agencies cannot avoid the local church as we seek to bring love to the poor. It will be through this local church that we shall be able to move into the community. It is true that there have been times when the local church has neglected her responsibility to take God's love to the world. This has encouraged the creation of Christian agencies and mission societies to fulfill this neglected mission of the local church. Our role, however, is not to replace local churches, but to build their capacity and remind them of their calling to take God's love to the communities around them.

As members within the local church discover their gifts and apply them in service for Christ, the community will be the place where they will go out to fulfill God's mission. Local churches must understand their place in the community as well as the broadness of God's mission. They must understand how integral God's mission is. Then they will have the privilege of manifesting God's love to their communities in an integrated way rather than just focusing on spiritual needs. This is one way of being salt in the community.

In my Diocese we have a parish called St. Luke's. We challenged them to start a day feeding centre for street children. They did not understand why as a church they had to be involved in this community work. It took a long time for many of them to realize how they can show their love for Christ by reaching out to those in physical need. The feeding centre is still there and stands as a reminder to the Christians that their mission must be integral if it is to bring meaning to the people around them.

The future of integral mission must therefore be in the enabling of local churches so that local churches can serve as instruments to transform the communities around them. This is not to emphasize building up the institutional church, rather it is transforming local churches so they realize their mission into the world.

4. Making integral mission central in our ecumenical dialogues

Three years ago I attended a consultation in South Africa which brought together representatives of the Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church in Africa. We spent time trying to discover our common ground and the concerns we faced as churches. This gave us a good basis to see how we could begin to relate as we do God's mission. We realized that often Christians at grass-root level wrestle together to fight common issues. At the grass-roots they do not work in their denominational groupings – they work together as one church. The representatives decided to highlight those common issues so that we could see how to work out a common strategy to solve those issues. We cited the problems of poverty, HIV/AIDS, suffering from civil wars, political unrest, refugees, fundamentalism, corruption and social injustices. This gave us a reason to continue working together.

This is what I mean when talk about making mission central in our ecumenical dialogues. Sometimes we spend so much time trying to agree on a particular theology. Although this may be important, the danger is that we may forget in our dialogues why God sends us out into the world. Ecumenical dialogues have a key role in enhancing integral mission through our local churches.

5. Focusing on the community rather than on the church

Sometimes we invest money and resources in developing the institutional church. We have laboured to improve the image of the church or even the image of our denominations. This is a temptation all of us face. This has even made us labour hard to fill our church buildings regardless of the depth of faith people they may have. This gives us a narrow concept of mission. Some development agencies have fallen in the same problem. They have laboured to build the image of their organization rather than of the community (see Jn. 12:24).

As a church, if we are to do God's mission, then we must see our role as being *in the world*. What is the place of our local church in the community which surrounds it? To where is Jesus sending us? To where does the word 'Go' lead us?

In Tanzania we have what we call *mission stations* where our mission workers live. They are green islands which every essential need for those who live there. Often, however, the communities which surrounds them are very poor and what goes on at the mission station has no impact on them. The mission station belongs to the church and the church's image is good to the extent that the mission station serves as a demonstration centre. But if it fails to make an impact on the community then it has failed on its mission.

Churches must have the community as a priority for their mission. There in the community they have the opportunity to put into practice God's love. That is where poverty, sickness and ignorance prevail. If integral mission is to have a lasting effect it must be demonstrated in the community. Community with their different faces and different needs must be the focus of our mission. Our efforts must not only be to build the church into a strong institution for her own sake! We need to make the church become a servant in the society in which she bears witness.

6. Focusing on the poor in our communities

Someone once said if you removed all the references to the poor from the pages of the Bible you may end up having no Bible at all. God's concern for the poor is central in scripture.

Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. (Ex. 23:6)

However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you ... (Deut. 15:4)

'They trample on the heads of the poor, as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed.' (Amos 2:7)

'You trample of the poor and force him to give you corn. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine.' (Amos 5:11)

But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? (Jas. 2:6)

The church, therefore, cannot ignore the poor. It must have a concern for the poor and make them central in its mission agenda. 'You will always have the poor among you,' Jesus once remarked (Jn. 12:8). We witness poverty in its lowest. We see people dying because of poverty. The church has a role to play to alleviate this pain caused by poverty and it can only do so if the poor are a target for its mission. After all who is not poor? Are we all spiritually, economically, socially and politically rich? Do we have life abundant in all these areas of life?

To hold the poor central in our mission we need to have God's heart. We must be motivated by him to render service to the poor. God himself must move our hearts (see Jas. 5:11; Lk. 6:36).

7. Working in collaboration with other development agencies

It is important to bear in mind that we as Christians cannot work in isolation. We share some common goals with non-Christian agencies and we need, therefore, to find ways of working together. We need to learn how others involve the poor in bringing change in their lives. Learning from other development agencies will help us to identify pitfalls to avoid as we involve the poor in this long journey of alleviating poverty. It is true that we have the distinctive motive of God's love. But we can collaborate as we work together for the common goal of fighting poverty.

It is most important, however, that as we collaborate with other agencies we do not lose sight of Jesus, the motive of our mission. Since our mission is God's mission, we must always remember that we offer something far above the material well being of a person.

You need to be a prophet to tell you the future of integral mission. I believe, however, that the most important thing for all the stakeholders of mission is to see God as central to their understanding and definition of mission. To lose Christ is to lose the focus of our mission.

'As the Father has sent me so I send you'. (Jn. 20:21)

God's Agency of Restoration: The Church

The Role of the Church in God's Redemptive Strategy, by Dr. Robert Moffitt
(Excerpt from Harvest International's Samaritan Strategy Course, Used with permission)

What is God's redemptive strategy? What is the church's role in this eternal plan?

"He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:15-20). "And God placed *all things* [italics added] under His [Jesus'] feet and appointed Him to be head over *everything for the church* [italics added], which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

These two passages speak of the awesome power, majesty, and preeminence of Christ. They proclaim: "All things were created by Him and for Him" and "God placed all things under His feet." They tell us that Christ is the founder and "head" of the church. They speak of the purpose of His ministry—"to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven." What did Paul mean when he said that Christ was appointed "head over everything for the church" (Ephesians 1:23)? Why was something so grand done "for the church"? The church is Christ's body, and He is the head. He physically departed from the earth when He ascended into heaven. Before He left, though, He established the church to be His physical presence on earth—to continue to carry forward His plan of redemption! When we imagined the championship game—"The Eternal Cup"—we read from Ephesians: "His intent was that now, *through the church*, the *manifold wisdom of God* [italics added] should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 3:10).

In this passage, Paul described God's wisdom as manifold, or multi-faceted. In His multi-faceted wisdom, God will show His plan for the redemption of everything broken in the Fall. He will show it to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. This plan, Paul indicated, is to be carried out through the church. Ultimately, it will be fulfilled only at Christ's future return. Meanwhile, the church is to be actively unfolding it. God's grand purpose of redemption will not be revealed by individual believers alone, but by the global body of Christ. Particularly, it will be revealed through its local expression, the local church. In fact, God's purpose will be expressed in communities and in the world only when local churches obey God's game plan.

Why emphasize the local church? In the New Testament, whenever we see the universal, global church in action, we always see local churches in action. The universal church does not and cannot act as a separate entity. Rather, the universal church is the sum total of its parts—local churches. It is local churches that do—or do not—reflect God's agenda in their communities and beyond. Emphasizing the local church does not diminish the role of Christian organizations in God's redemptive plan. However, it is only the church that we see in the New Testament. This seems to imply its primacy in God's plan to carry out His agenda.

Indeed, local churches are far more strategic to the transformation of a society than the nation's leaders, its president, its legislators, its businessmen, its educators, or its scientists! Why? Local churches have the primary responsibility to disciple their members to be godly citizens and leaders. These people, in turn, influence their families, communities, and nations for the Kingdom of God. In fact, unless local churches disciple their people to be "salt" and "light" within these spheres (Matthew 5:13-16), the nations

will not be disciplined. The Bible informs us that the local church is the primary institutional entity that God chose to accomplish His “big agenda” of redemption. Any ministry effort that ignores this reality—no matter how well intentioned—eventually hinders the process of discipling nations. What is the role of the church? To serve as God’s agent for His grand redemptive plan!

God Intends the Church to Serve

The Apostle Paul wrote that Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). This is affirmed in John 1:14, Colossians 2:9, and Hebrews 1:3. We see God in human form when we look at Christ! Christ is the image of God. God’s fullness dwells in Christ. Thus, Christ’s agenda is the same as God’s agenda—including spiritual regeneration and the restoration of all things. How does this agenda relate to the church? We can refer again to Ephesians: “And God placed *all things* under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for *the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him* [italics added] who fills everything in every way” (Ephesians 1:22-23). We see again in this passage that Christ is head over everything for the church, that the church is Christ’s body, and that the church is the fullness of Christ. Yet, we know that the church does not always express the fullness of Christ. The Apostle Paul must have been saying that the church has the potential to express the fullness of Christ. Because of this, all things have been placed under Christ—for the church.

The Apostle Paul explained more about the fullness of God and the fullness of Christ elsewhere. He defined this fullness as love. It is a love that is high, deep, wide, and long. It is a love that surpasses knowledge and our ability to understand it. It is a huge love. Indeed, it is this love that is behind God’s plan to restore all that He created. Love is the fullness of God, and it is the fullness of Christ. Paul’s prayer is that the church—the body of Christ—would be rooted and established in love, grasp the reality and depth of His love, reach its potential, and express the fullness of Christ: “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

Continuing in his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote more about the purpose of the church: “It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). These are titles for church leaders. Paul stated that their responsibility is “to prepare God’s people for works of service” or “ministry” (Ephesians 4:12). God intends that the church express the fullness of Christ through loving service. It is through this service that God accomplishes His redemptive purpose! The Apostle Paul continued, describing the consequence—as the church fulfills its purpose: “. . . so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13).

What happens when the church carries out loving works of service? The body of Christ is built up, reaches unity, and matures into the fullness of Christ! Unity within the church has proven to be an elusive goal. Indeed, attempts to foster unity between differing denominations have actually resulted in increased disunity. Despite this, Paul indicated that unity in the church is possible when the body of Christ comes together to serve and to demonstrate God’s fullness, which is love. When people of different denominational backgrounds come together and serve, their perspective changes. They no longer see each other as people with conflicting doctrinal positions, but as brothers and sisters in Christ working toward the same purpose—demonstrating God’s love. Their focus is not on themselves, but on giving to God and to others.

In 1999, the government of the nation of Serbia launched a military assault against its predominantly Muslim southern province of Kosovo. Leaders in Kosovo had recently made open threats against Belgrade, warning of a potential secession from the Yugoslavian federation. Hundreds were killed in the assault, and many more Kosovar Muslims fled into neighboring Albania.

Historically, the Muslim population in Kosovo has been one of the most resistant groups in the world to the Gospel. For them, the God of Christianity was the God of their enemies, and they were not open to consider His message. However, something dramatic happened as a result of this crisis.¹ When the conflict suddenly ended, the Kosovar refugees were free to leave Albania and return to their destroyed homes. Through the process, hundreds of them had come to faith in Christ! A local missionary exclaimed: “Nobody really knows how many turned to Christ because it was happening so fast!” What brought about this radical openness to the Gospel? The missionary’s answer was simple: The Albanian church, composed of widely differing denominations—the church in the country of refuge—was demonstrating God’s love to its Muslim refugee neighbors. A United Nations official was overheard saying that, in the beginning days of the Kosovo refugee exodus, up to 85 percent of the 700,000 refugees had been helped in some way by evangelical churches in Albania—with food, clothing, or shelter. The Albanian Christians helped, even though they were a tiny, persecuted minority of 6,000 people.²

¹ Richard Beckham, Interview by Bob Moffitt, 2000.

² Ibid.

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It was this compassionate demonstration of God's love that made the difference for these Muslims, who had never before been open to the Gospel. The missionary continued: "It's amazing to see the spectrum of people who worked together in Kosovo—everybody from radical fundamentalists to absolute liberals came together." Their doctrinal differences did not keep them from serving in unity. When they saw the opportunity to demonstrate God's love, they responded—together. What was the result? Hundreds of the historically most resistant people accepted Christ as Lord and Savior.

The purpose of the church is to serve, but this service must express *all* of God's redemptive purpose. The work begins as people come to the cross, where they find hope and a restored relationship with their Creator. From there, the work must move forward, reflecting Christ's concern for the restoration of *all things* that were broken in the Fall. Finally, Paul gave us a clear reminder in Ephesians. We are not to do this in human strength, but as God works in and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

God does immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine! His agenda is big, but He is equal to the task. God is willing and able to carry out His "big agenda"—uniting His body, bringing us into His fullness, and healing our brokenness. How? In His power! Through the church! Indeed, if we attempt to accomplish God's "big agenda" with our own strength or wisdom, we will surely fail

Development and Social Change

Unit 8

Principles of Community Transformation



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 8 – Principles of Community Transformation

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “Is Dependency Making Missions Go Sideways?” by Dr. J.M.Ngul Khan Pau
- 2) “Dependency in Mission Partnership - Principles for enabling the servants of God in hard places,” by Daniel Rickett, Sisters in Service

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe and assess the application of seven elements for successful change efforts.
2. Understand and recognize the presence or absence of key principles for community transformation.
3. Describe the characteristics of an effective community transformation facilitator.
4. Define “dependency” and describe what specific issues of dependency should be a concern.

Introduction

As we saw in the Unit Seven case story written by Voorhies, community transformation is all about change, but not just external changes in the environment, income, health status, etc.; it is most fundamentally about people internally embracing a need or opportunity to change. It is about people deciding to do things differently. Change works from the inside out. Two groups of people might face the same challenging situation. They might both have access to the same opportunities and resources that can help them address the challenge. One group takes full advantage of what is available and makes a change. The other doesn't. What is the difference?

Understanding community change

Those who have studied how people change and what is required for them to change come up with a variety of elements or conditions involved in that process. The following are common to the lists I have studied and change efforts I have observed. They are not presented in any strict order of priority or sequence, although we could think of the first 3 as needing to take place before number 4 is possible. And we could think of the last three as being needed in order to ensure number 4 actually leads to change that is ongoing.

Element 1: There is a reason to change - an acknowledgement that things are not as they could or should be. Maybe a situation is deteriorating; people become alarmed, and they want change. Or perhaps the situation is status quo, meaning it remains constant, but people become dissatisfied; they want something different, something better—a change. It could be that although things are going generally well, people are exposed to a potential benefit that they perceive would be even better for them and they are open to change. Those involved in the mental health profession state that, generally speaking, people who finally acknowledge that they have a problem and want to change are 75% on their way toward recovery or healing. The more there is a felt sense of urgency or strong desire, the greater the chance will be that change is pursued successfully.

Element 2: There is a clear and compelling vision for what successful change looks like and would mean. People need to have an image in mind that represents for what they are willing to change. This is a primary role for those who help lead a change process. An organization that was a pioneer in the early years of community development would start their work in a community by asking people for what they longed in terms of a better future for them and their children. Those hopes and aspirations were recorded and after subsequent discussions that focused on what they concluded was possible for them to achieve in a certain period of time, a three-dimensional model was constructed that represented their vision for the future. That model was placed at a location in the community where people could view it as the development efforts progressed and the inevitable challenges arose. Clear vision compels people to move forward. It provides energy and hope.

Element 3: There is a belief that change is possible. People generally will not attempt change unless they have some assurance that the effort will have the result for which they hope. They want to know what the change will mean for them and what they will need to leave behind in order to move forward. They will need to know that they “have what it takes” to change, meaning the capacity, knowledge, skills and other resources are available or can be secured. They need someone to show them that others have made the change successfully. Or, they need to become convinced by someone they have come to trust.

This is also referred to as a person's level of tolerance for taking risks. In a group of ten people we will find one or two who need little assurance; they have a high tolerance for taking risks. They look for change, seem to enjoy it. There will most likely be an equal number who have a very low tolerance for risk. They shy away from change (or perhaps run away) and will say they generally don't like any kind of change, and they would need a fair amount of assurance before they will move forward. The rest of the group will fall along different points of the scale, some a two, some a four, etc. The more information we can provide about the feasibility and benefits of change, the more those higher on the scale will be open to it.

Element 4: There is a decision to change. There always comes a time in which a “hinge moment” takes place regarding any process involving change. What I mean by that is, like a door half open, there comes a time to decide to open it all the way or to close it. A door swings on a hinge. This is the time of commitment. This moment is critical, and it needs to be given the necessary time and attention to ensure it happens. A successful change process depends upon it. For a variety of reasons some people might go forward part of the way without making that conscious commitment, but in their case the change will not be complete or long-lasting. These are the ones who will drop away along the path of change, or worse, begin to resist it and even undermine it. Perhaps they felt pressured to start out or there was some short term gain they hoped to get without going through the entire effort.

What happens in a community where there are some mixed feelings among the group, where not all the people are at the same level of commitment? There needs to be at least what we call a “critical mass” of people who make the commitment to go ahead. The size of that group needs to be large enough

that change can take place in spite of the hesitation and resistance of others. Often what happens in this kind of situation is that others will eventually join in once they begin to see progress and some initial benefit coming to those in the critical mass. As the committed group grows, the influence of those who are resistant to change will gradually lessen.

Element 5: There is an agreed upon action plan for change. The process steps we have outlined above have focused upon thinking about change. There needs to be a bridge from thought to action. That bridge is a good action plan. WHO is going to do WHAT by WHEN? The various steps that need to be taken to arrive at the desired change are identified, and a timetable for completing each step is agreed upon. It also needs to be agreed as to who will be involved and who will be responsible for each step in the overall process. An emphasis on clarity and details at this point will give people confidence and help avoid confusion that can cause stress and anxiety, especially among those who have a lower tolerance for risk.

Element 6: There is encouragement and accountability to accomplish the change upon which the group has agreed. Any change process needs a “fan club” and a “monitor”, be it at an individual or group level. People need to set interim goals for the change process to help them along and to keep them on track. It is very important that these goals be set at a level and pace that can be reasonably met. If not, people will become discouraged and perhaps eventually give up. Good goals cause us to stretch forward, but they also need to be within reach. For example, whenever I finally make that decision to once again lose some of my body fat, I monitor my progress according to certain indicators. Once each week I stand upon a scale which measures my weight. I keep an eye on how my clothes are fitting—are they becoming less tight? Am I able to once again get into that pair of lower size trousers I have not been able to wear for awhile?

People in a change process also need to have someone who has agreed to hold them accountable and encourage them to keep moving forward. This too is a primary role for group leaders. In my personal weight loss attempts, that role falls to my wife! Accountability is not about blame or judgment. It is about being reminded of the commitment to change which has been made and of the reasons why change was considered necessary/desirable in the first place. And we all need a “fan club” to encourage us, especially when challenges are making any progress difficult to attain.

Element 7: There is a conscious effort to maintain change. Once the desired change is accomplished or becomes an ongoing state of being, in many cases there will then be the need for a maintenance plan to ensure the change will be sustained into the future. Safeguards will need to be put in place so that people do not slip back into the previous state in which they found themselves.

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

In addition to the seven elements of change presented above, would you add any that you consider to be essential if a change process is to be effective and long-lasting?

Not mentioned in the elements above are intentional prayer and conscious dependence upon God. Community transformation is a partnership between people and God. In I Corinthians 3, Paul said that he planted, Apollos watered but only God could make anything grow that would have eternal value. As disciples of the kingdom, we know that unless the Spirit of God is also involved, the kind of change of which Jesus spoke in John 15—“fruit that remains”—will certainly not occur.

The seven elements are about planting and watering change on the human side. These steps are common to people’s experience regardless of their religion or lack of one. In a sense they are like the laws of gravity. Whether you are a Christian, a Hindu, Buddhist or Atheist, if you jump off a building, your personal experience will be common to all those other people; you will go in a downward direction. Most community change efforts use a methodology that involves these seven elements in one form or another.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

Part one:

Think through (or perhaps reread) the Biblical story about the Children of Israel being delivered from slavery in Egypt and after forty years in the wilderness entering God's promised land. That was a very significant change process! Which of the seven elements of change do you see occurring that story? Give evidence from the story for your answer.

Part two:

Describe a deliberate change process that you have undertaken or have been a part of. Review the elements for effective change as listed above. Did you experience each of the seven elements? If so, how crucial do you think they were to your progress? If not, which were left out and what impact do you think that had?

Principles of community transformation

The elements of change we discussed in the above paragraphs are not presented as a recipe that we might use for making a favorite meal. With a recipe you have detailed instructions that you repeat each time. You know that if you use the same ingredients and set the heat at the same temperature for the same amount of time, you can reasonably predict the result. Neither are the steps of change like a mathematic equation where one can be pretty much assured that $1 + 1$ will bring you to the number 2 every time you carry out that exercise. Change is dynamic, and it is complex, because we are dealing with people and with forces which are often not ours to control or manipulate. The elements of change are presented as the sharing of wisdom that has been drawn from much experience. They are very valuable, but they are not an absolute guarantee of success.

There are other principles or grains of wisdom regarding community transformation that have also been harvested from much reflection and experience. I will list twelve of them, and you will notice that a few of them will resemble the elements of change we already considered above.

The elements for successful change we looked at above are not presented as a recipe like we might use for making a favorite meal. With a recipe you have detailed instructions that you repeat each time. You know if you use the same ingredients and set the heat at the same temperature for the same amount of time, you can reasonably predict the result. Change is dynamic and it is complex, because we are dealing with people and with forces which are often not ours to control or manipulate

There are certain principles - grains of wisdom regarding community transformation that have been harvested from much reflection and experience. I will list twelve of them, and you will notice that a few of them will resemble the elements of change we already considered above.

1. Local people are the primary human agents of change in the community transformation process. The more the development effort is understood, owned/controlled, planned, resourced, implemented and evaluated by those who have the greatest stake in its long-term success, the better the chance it will be sustained.
2. Community transformation begins with listening, not speaking; questions, not answers; local intentions, not outside solutions. The process helps people become aware of the underlying reasons (root causes) for the issues they face and then explores appropriate responses together with them.
3. Development efforts should start with understanding and influencing people's values and aspirations. Because what people truly value and aspire to will generate emotion and commitment; and because emotion and commitment lead to sustained initiative and action; people will take responsibility for what they have freely chosen to initiate and act upon.
4. Hope is crucial to success. Hope is generated when people believe success is within their reach. Initial development efforts should be simple and short-range enough to ensure early success and to feed ongoing enthusiasm. Development efforts should build on incremental successes; they should be dictated by the community's capacity and pace.
5. Immediate and critical issues must be stabilized first. Only then will people have the focus, time and energy which further change requires. But to move beyond a recurring and chronic cycle of "crisis," people's capacity to bring about long term development must be developed.
6. The very poor, marginalized and oppressed are usually left out of the main stream of development, either by circumstance or by design. Unless they are deliberately brought into the stream, they will not benefit from it. To ensure equity, and to minimize potential conflict, all members of the community should in some manner be integrated into the development process and helped to see how they benefit directly or indirectly from it.

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7. Community transformation is context specific. Therefore, “blueprints” of what has worked elsewhere cannot be assumed to be applicable everywhere. However, although specific models may not be transferable, the underlying principles which enabled their success may be.
8. Development efforts should not duplicate or replace local government services or other non-governmental initiatives; rather, they should help people become aware of what services and initiatives already exist, and learn to access and partner with them.
9. Big projects are not always necessary to achieve large results. Small efforts multiplied in many places can have great effect, at much less cost and requiring much less outside expertise.
10. Assistance from the outside should be viewed as helping to remove obstacles which local people are facing in their development efforts, or adding to what they are already doing themselves. Those who are not from the community itself should view themselves primarily as facilitators and resource people, not development leaders and managers who control the process of change. We must not do anything the people can do for themselves - we should help them obtain the tools or knowledge with which they can work; we must not give the people anything they can acquire for themselves - we should point them to where resources exist and help them learn to access them. We must help people retain or rebuild their dignity, not rob them of it by “doing development” to or for them.
11. Transformation efforts which require external resources should have realistic, but specific life spans. Activities which cannot be sustained beyond that life span should not be started in the first place. We should only encourage development efforts that can be maintained at the local level. Local resources, human and other, should be utilized fully and responsibly before outside resources are introduced.
12. If the responsibility of development is truly with the people themselves, they must be allowed to fail, and to learn from their own mistakes. People should be taught how to critically reflect upon their efforts - what factors contribute to success and failure, in order to learn lessons to apply to future development efforts.

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

A young man began to preach on the street corners and bus stops of South Africa; he was completely alone. He had no church or mission to support him, and he was constantly limited by apartheid government policies. To support his ministry he kept a small shop where he sold food and household items. His wife worked as a nurse in a local hospital. Although the man was barely able to read, he began winning many people to Christ. When the crowds got too large for street corners, he borrowed an old tent and continued preaching. When the tent wore out, an international partner agency purchased two large preaching tents. Since the young man preached mostly to very poor people, he and his wife taught a variety of self-help skills. Although they worked to pay their own expenses, the international partner gave them funds for their community feeding programs, health clinics, literacy programs and water development projects in remote villages. Through the ministry, more than 10,000 people have become believers and 16 churches have been started.

Question:

Which of the 12 community transformation principles apply to this story and in what way?

Answer Box # 4

Back in the 1980s the then personal secretary to the King of Nepal made the following comment on the national radio station regarding a major initiative by the international aid agencies of a number of governments operating in Nepal, each designed to address the critical deforestation problem in Nepal by planting tree seedlings in large sectors of the country: “We should not first plant trees on the hills of Nepal; we should plant the idea of trees in the minds of the Nepali people. If the idea takes root there, the people will themselves plant trees on the hills.”

Question:

Which of the 12 community transformation principles apply to this story and in what way?

Answer Box # 5

"One of the greatest teachers of India was the Buddha, who included in his teaching the obligation of every good Buddhist that he should plant and see to the establishment of one tree at least every five years. As long as this was observed the whole large area of India was covered with trees, free of dust, with plenty of water, plenty of shade, plenty of food, and materials. Just imagine if you could establish an ideology which would make it obligatory for every able-bodied person in India; man, woman, and child to do that little thing—to plant and see to the establishment of one tree a year, five years running. . . . Anyone can work it out on the back of an envelope that the economic value of such an enterprise intelligently conducted would be greater than anything that has been promised by any of India's five year plans." (E.F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful*)

Question:

Which of the 12 community transformation principles apply to this story and in what way?

Answer Box # 6

A friend of mine was asked by his community of origin if he could find the resources to help them build and staff a local health clinic. He said that on his next visit he would sit with the leaders to discuss the issue. When he arrived, he asked them why they felt they needed a clinic. They explained that over the past several years more and more of their children were getting sick and several had died just recently. They also explained that the government clinic was too far away to be of much help.

My friend asked them why they thought a clinic would solve their problem. They looked at him, probably wondering what all his education was good for if he could not understand what they had just told him. Children were sick and dying. A clinic was needed to treat them. This seemed obviously clear to them. My friend then asked them why the children were getting sick. They then said that was a problem that medical people in a clinic could understand, not them. He went on to ask what their symptoms were. They said they had chronic diarrhea. My friend then asked them to show him where they got their drinking water.

What he discovered was that they got their water from a pond from which animals also drank and bathed, and in which people bathed and washed their clothes and dishes. He also noticed that on the hillsides surrounding the pond people were doing their morning and evening toilet. When the rains came, much of that pollution was obviously washed down into the pond.

My friend spent some time explaining to the community leaders the cause and effect of their dirty drinking water. Because he was well educated and his family had a history in the community, they trusted him. In the end, they found the water source for the pond and constructed a water tap system. Within a year the problem went away.

Question:

Which of the 12 community transformation principles I apply to this story and in what way?

Answer Box # 7

The ancient philosopher Lao Tsu of China said in 700 B.C.: "Go to the people, Live with them, Learn from them, Love them. Start with what they know; build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, when the task is accomplished, the people will say: 'We have done this Ourselves.'"

Question:

Which of the 12 community transformation principles apply to this story and in what way?

Answer Box # 8

An idea for a drinking water system was being discussed in a mixed caste Hindu village. The Christian NGO staff stated their organization’s policy that they would only help communities where every family was able to benefit. The high caste leaders of the village declared that policy was impossible in their case. They explained that there was a low caste widow and her children living in the community who, if they had access to the common drinking water system, would thereby defile it for everyone else. They declared that there needed to be two separate water systems, one for the low caste family and one for the rest of the people. The NGO staff refused, but told the community leaders that they were still prepared to help build the system if the leaders were able to come up with a solution which would mean the one system could be accessed by all. There was a lot of excitement and anger expressed by the community leaders, but the NGO stood its ground. They said they would come back in a short time to see if the people themselves could come up with some solution.

Upon their return, the NGO staff was quite pleased to hear that an agreement had been reached. The community leaders said the low caste family could access water as long as they did not touch the pipe from which the water would run out. The NGO staff checked with the family to ensure they thought this was fair. They did, and so the project proceeded.

Question:

Which of the 12 community transformation principles apply to this story and in what way?

Profile of an effective community transformation facilitator

In light of what we have studied so far about community transformation, especially the twelve guiding principles, there are some general characteristics of people who are effective facilitators of community transformation upon which we would be wise to reflect and develop in our own lives. Read through the following list and consider to what extent these characteristics are true of you. In the far right column, write a number from 1 to 5 that you feel honestly describes how often the statement might be said of you.

1 = Almost never 2 = Infrequently 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Quite Often 5 = Almost Always

| Characteristic | Rating |
|---|--------|
| 1. I am spiritually reflective and prayerful. I go through my day having an inner conversation with God. | |
| 2. I demonstrate a level of maturity and judgment that wins the respect of others. | |
| 3. I am slow to speak and quick to listen. I ask a lot of questions and am eager to learn. | |
| 4. I help people find their own solutions to problems, rather than providing them with the solutions. | |
| 5. I am patient, letting people proceed at their own pace. I value the process of change, not only the result. | |
| 6. I have a good sense of humor and easily laugh at myself. | |
| 7. I can relate to a wide variety of people: the rich and the poor; the weak and the strong; the well educated and those with little education. | |
| 8. I am kind and generous with people but also firm on principles. | |
| 9. I am uncompromising when it comes to my personal honesty and integrity. I can be trusted. | |
| 10. I am fair and just. I do not show favoritism and am not manipulated by people with power and prestige. | |
| 11. I have a general understanding of individual and group behavior. I am a keen observer of people. | |
| 12. I am able to love and respect people who are different from me, even if they do not agree with my views. | |

Answer Box # 9

Review your scores in the list and circle the two scores that are the highest, and the two that are the lowest. (If you scored each statement as a 5, go through the list again and be a bit more critical of your behaviours!)

Are you surprised at all by how you scored? If so, in what way?

You will note that a number of these characteristics resemble the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians 5:22-23, and the attributes of love he lists in I Corinthians 13:4-7. None of us can produce the fruit of the Spirit or the attributes of love by ourselves. These are produced in us by the Holy Spirit as we yield our hearts to his molding and shaping. But on the other hand, Paul also instructs us to “now walk in the Spirit.” He means that we need to practice outwardly what God does inwardly, living life from the inside out. Jesus would have made a good community transformation facilitator, wouldn't he—or perhaps we should say—didn't he?

Think About It

Answer Box # 10

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and I Corinthians 13:4-7. Compare the fruit of the Spirit and the attributes of love mentioned by Paul to the characteristics of effective community transformation facilitators at which we have looked above. What similarities do you see?

The dark side of benevolence

Jesus said, “Give to any who asks from you.” Paul wrote, “He who does not work should not be allowed to eat.” Is there a contradiction between what Jesus said and what Paul wrote? Some might suggest that, but I do not think so. The 5000 men, women and children who had all day long gathered in the countryside listening to Jesus teach were becoming hungry toward day's end. We all know the story—Jesus miraculously fed them. But we should note that he did not do that every day. This was an occasion where the people had few options open to them. There was no food or little of it. There were no roadside carts and stalls to buy food. There were no fruit trees present or fish lying on the beach to run around and collect. They were not hungry because they did not want to take responsibility or feeding themselves or that they were lazy. There simply was no food available, so Jesus fed them on that occasion. It was a relief effort.

Paul has something different in mind though. He was speaking about people in the church who had options to provide for themselves but decided it was much more convenient to beg or borrow from someone else. Perhaps they knew their neighbors ate better than what was available at home, so they invited themselves to sit at the more lucrative table. Paul's concern was that some believers were taking advantage of the generosity of others and opting out of trying to help themselves.

Even though Paul was writing about a local church context, the issue is much broader than that. His concern can be extended to mission agencies and denominations as they interact with local churches in other parts of the world. It can be extended to international donor groups and NGOs involved in some aspect of development and social change and how they interact with local NGOs and churches. It can be extended to how NGOs and local churches interact with communities and households as they engage in community transformation. Regardless of the level at which it exists, the issue is basically the same and the concern about the matter is equally valid at any of them.

The tendency for financial assistance, development and aid efforts to encourage unhealthy dependency has been realized for many years. It is an old issue which does not go away – it is still a major topic being discussed. In the list of community transformation principles with which we have already worked, this issue is addressed. But I want to single out this issue of unhealthy dependency for more attention, as Paul himself does.

First of all, none of us are truly independent, so the term “dependency” itself perhaps does not serve this discussion well. Ultimately we all depend on God's grace and the gifts God has bestowed on us. God encourages that dependence. In John 15, Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” We live in a world where interdependence becomes increasingly a global reality.

Unit 8 – Principles for Community Transformation

In many countries, much of the food people eat is not grown locally; in fact much of it comes from other countries. It is not given away; a price is paid for it, but if the farmers in that other place decided to quit producing food, that would have an impact much wider than what happens in their own communities.

I might have plenty of money to buy the food I need, but if it is not available, my money is not very helpful. Much of what I purchase in America, where I actually live, is not actually manufactured here; it is brought in from other countries and sold here. As with food, we are dependent on someone else making those goods available to us.

As I write, there is great concern in the USA over Iran's decision to continue developing their nuclear capability. And yet, political analysts are saying there needs to be a very careful response to those concerns lest Iran decides to cut off its oil exports. Why the worry? Because much of our economy, transportation, industry, household heat and cooking depends upon oil, including Iran's. How is America financing its war in Iraq and Afghanistan? It is borrowing billions and billions of dollars from other countries. One of those countries is Communist China. Isn't it ironic that "independent" Americans are so dependent on others, even two of our historic "enemies?"

Turning from the world stage, what is the function of local banks and other financial institutions (and here we could even include local money lenders and perhaps at times even our own family members)? They provide loans so that people can start businesses, farmers can buy seed and fertilizer to plant their fields, so that daughters and sons can have wedding ceremonies. Most people who consider themselves independent are in fact living an illusion.

Think About It

Answer Box # 11

Think about your own life, a life you might consider to be quite independent. Identify the different relationships you in fact depend on in order to be so "independent."

I wonder how many different relationships you identified! From the number of different relationships you identified, we can easily see that it is foolish to say we need to be against creating dependency; all of us are dependent on many other entities and forces already.

So, if the issue is not really "dependency," what is it? The issue, when it is used in discussions within the development and social change sector refers to several different but related concerns:

- 1) Dignity, meaning each of us should experience the satisfaction that comes from doing our fair share, carrying our part of the load. It is the opportunity to take on responsibility.
- 2) Empowerment, meaning each of us should be active in our own development rather than a passive recipient of assistance. It is having the capacity to create our personal dignity.
- 3) Control, meaning the freedom to make choices which determine our own direction and course of action and not to be held ransom by the plans and dictates of others.
- 4) Integrity, meaning that each of us demonstrates we can be trusted, that we do not mislead or take advantage of others for our own personal gain.

Think About It

Answer Box # 12

In what ways can the un-wise provision and acceptance of external resources contribute to each of the following conditions? Where you can, give a real example for each one from what you have personally observed or experienced.

Lack of Dignity:

Lack of Empowerment:

Lack of Control:

Lack of Integrity:

Over a six year period I observed the disheartening spectacle of what was once one of the most vibrant churches in Nepal become fractured from within. A primary reason for that cancerous situation was the inappropriate presence of foreign funds. The eagerness of a particular western church organization to "enable" this congregation to grow and carry out "indigenous" mission caused them to either overlook or dismiss the potential dark side of aid. Some people might question by grave concern about this. "After all, aren't these people so very poor?" Yes they are. "Don't the affluent churches in the West have a responsibility to share with such less fortunate brothers and sisters?" Yes they do. "Then why not pay the Pastor and other leaders' salaries? Why not supply the needed funds to construct their buildings, underwrite their conferences, support their various ministries?" Because it is simply not wise.

"I know of several development projects that have continual leadership problems, salary disagreements, strikes, embezzlement and pilfering. They are a long way from being a good Christian witness. These are all projects with adequate resources from overseas. When, in these cases, there is the need for money, the approach is to man; to the director, to the funding agency representative.

Other projects present a much happier picture. When funds, which always seem to be on the short side, dry up, the approach is not to man but to God. Those involved meet to seek God's face together. There is healthy spirit of cooperation....

Up to the 1940's, a group of African churches were self-supporting and spiritually alive. The missionary society with which they were associated was an inter-denominational one with few material resources. In the mid-forties the work was taken over by a well-meaning denominational mission. 'We have relatively much,' they said, 'and you have so little. Let us help you pay the salaries of your pastors and evangelists and to put up new church buildings.' The Church received - and still receives - money from overseas. The spirit of self-help and evangelism has gone."¹

Think About It

Answer Box # 13

List some reasons you might consider it unwise for Western (or "foreign") church organizations to "pay the pastor and other leaders' salaries, to build their church building, underwrite their conferences and support the various ministries" of poorer churches in other parts of the world.

I think that one of the reasons it is not a good idea to simply supply the funds is that such benevolence can create a welfare mentality where recipients learn the ways of trading away their dignity for "easy" money. It can also lead donors into the temptation to control what becomes "their" project, "their" church in Nepal, Nigeria, Brazil or wherever. But perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is that it robs national churches of their freedom and responsibility, of their identity and reliance on God providing through their own members. The local believers and especially the leadership might figuratively "sell themselves," making decisions to please the donor rather than decisions that are right and best for themselves and the mission of God in their context.

The church to which I refer in Nepal is just one example out of thousands, perhaps many thousands around the world. With such an obvious historical record as to the way aid can be wrongly appropriated, why don't we learn our lesson? I think there is a powerful dynamic involved in such giving which is often overlooked: the need of the giver. I am referring to that hidden agenda called "fulfilling our responsibility" or "legitimizing our ministry." It is responding to the needs of others as a means to satisfy our own need to be needed. In other words we may get involved for our own sakes. Missions need to show results on the foreign field to satisfy their donors and church network. Christian relief and development organizations need a fresh crisis or project to keep their constituency's interest alive and their checkbooks open. After all, that money not only feeds the hungry in Africa, it also puts bread on the tables of the Christian professionals, including missionaries. I don't mean to sound cynical or pretend I can discern the motives of those I don't even know, but one fact is hard to deny: we all like to feel good about ourselves.

"The idea of collecting surplus shoes and sending them to Tunisia seems manageable and concrete. Also, there's a nice feeling in giving presents and it's so easy to give of

¹ Batchelor, Peter. *People in Rural Development*, Australia. The Paternoster Press. 1981. Pages 22 - 23.

what you have in plenty. What is hard for many people to understand is that aid is not about giving so much as helping, and doing so in appropriate ways." ²

"One problem is that there is money in the industrial countries that is 'looking for projects'. In the Sahel, during the drought, I found myself traveling with a North American who literally had an open cheque book. 'I've got to get rid of \$50,000 today,' he sighed. A result was that no church leaders were interested in discussing long-term development plans. The prospect of immediate money was more exciting. I often reflect on what might have happened, in many parts of the world, if money had not been so quickly and easily available from overseas. Is there the danger that, knowing funds are available, church leaders will plan projects that they believe will be acceptable to the funding agencies? If this takes place then local initiative and effort will be minimal." ³

Think About It

Answer Box # 14

Read the first two extracts in the Reading Section of this unit, "Is Dependency Making Missions Go Sideways?" by Dr. J. M. Ngul Khan Pau and "Dependency in Mission Partnership - Principles for enabling the servants of God in hard places" by Daniel Rickett.

- 1) In what ways do Dr. J. M. Ngul Khan Pau and Daniel Rickett agree about the perils of unhealthy dependency?
- 2) From your reading, list key principles you believe are important to follow to ensure a healthy and productive relationship between partners who are economically unequal.

Years ago in India, fresh from missionary training, energized and longing to make my contribution to the call of God to make disciples of all nations, I ran headlong into a "Yankee Go Home" mentality and growing hostility. However, in this instance it wasn't targeting America's political profile in the world; it was directed toward western missionaries by members of the Indian church. I can recall the disillusionment I felt at this rebuff of my presence. I remember singling out one young but upcoming Indian Christian leader and expressing my sense of frustration and confusion. After all, I was there as a servant of God. What I came to know from this friend was very disturbing but extremely helpful, and I am in debt to his honesty. In effect he told me that the missionaries had come as servants of God, but they remained as masters of the Indian church. He asked why we remained, why we were still coming, why we could not trust the mission of God in India to the Indian church which numbered in the millions and had existed for hundreds of years? Implied but not spoken was the wonder at our arrogance to believe India's spiritual destiny rested on our shoulders. He then asked me if I understood servant leadership. He acknowledged the contribution western Christians had made and could make in the life of the Indian Church, but he said we must learn servant leadership; we must stoop to become the rungs in the ladder of their development.

My friend was referring to control, benevolent control, but control all the same. He was asking for liberation from the stifling parenting of the outside "mother" church, its paternalism, its alien culture. This movement of "liberation" is not unique to India; as a matter-of-fact, what I experienced was a mild form of an outrage that is growing in other parts of the world.

"The crusading mind must be placed in the light of the crucified mind in order to be 'crucified and risen'. I understand this to be the reason why Jesus did not say '...let him assert himself and take up his lunch-box and follow me.' Resourcefulness (that over-developed lunch-box) must be theologically judged and contextualized in order to become genuinely resourceful. Resourcefulness must then be crucified. When it is resurrected it will become a 'theologically-baptized resourcefulness'. Asian church history is telling us today that often missionaries' resourcefulness has resulted in the impoverishment of native participation in the mission of God. Resourceful people do not seek help from others. They know exactly what to do. They have 'better ideas'. They have 'better strategies'. 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men who are not resourceful...' In the perspective of mission together in the six continents we urgently need ecumenical meditation on the theology of crucified resourcefulness.

² Millwood, David and Helena Gezelius. *Good Aid*, Sweden. Swedish International Development Authority. 1985. Page 17

³ See Batchelor, Peter. *People in Rural Development*. Page 24

“I wish to say a few words about crucified resourcefulness. Have you heard about the 'moratorium debate' in the Christian mission? It is one of the most critical mission problems facing the churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America today. A moratorium is the cessation of presently existing support in personnel and funds and the delay of any new support 'for a reasonable length of time' to allow review and possible revision of the best use of persons and money in response to God's mission and the churches' search for selfhood in this day and in this world. Behind this objective lay the conviction that past patterns of domination and dependence, both secular and ecclesiastical, inhibited rather than enhanced the response to God's mission in both 'sending' and 'receiving' churches....

“I am convinced of the need of moratorium. I have seen the crippling affects upon the indigenous churches' sense of responsibility in the traditional system of mission. True, the issue is a complicated one. In spite of our sincerity and dedication, the fact is that both the sending and the receiving churches have suffered spiritually and organizationally in tragic proportion. The moratorium proposal is directed at the ills of the present mission system. The churches in Asia have not had their own 'family'. Does not any family need to be left alone at least once a while (once in a hundred years.) to do their own domestic work by their own judgment and resourcefulness, so that they can see clearly where they are and who they are in relation to their own mission? Or must a family be constantly visited and surrounded by the 'love and care' of another family? The Church of Christ in Thailand is one family. It is more than 150 years old in terms of Christian life. Don't they need time to work out their one Christian responsibility on the basis of their own 'five barley loaves and two fishes'? Moratorium expresses a desire on the part of the churches in Asia to be temporarily free from the 'constant love and care' of the Western church. The risen Lord does not say 'Go therefore and stay for ever....' (Matt. 28.19).

Our resourcefulness both in the West and in Asia must receive careful theological examination. It must be crucified in order to be risen. Ogbu U. Kalu writes that planting 'ecclesia anqlicana in Africa is loaded with contradictions. 'It is obvious that there is no way to realize what the Kingdom of God means on Africa soil and to awaken people to abundant life in the incarnation and ministry of Christ with such foreign institutions and others like it. They must be destroyed in order to build the new.' Our mission, vision and system must be crucified in order to be risen.”⁴

“A more dramatic approach to the question of overseas aid is the suggestion from African sources that some hard questions should be asked by donors and receivers. The moratorium argument, first floated in the early 'Seventies, does not mean necessarily an abrupt withdrawal of overseas aid or personnel, but it does imply a fundamental re-appraisal of relationships. The Rev. John Gatu, a leading member of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and a thoughtful supporter of the moratorium argument, explained some of its refinements in conversation after a hard day's work at the church's headquarters in Nairobi.

“Moratorium does not mean cutting ourselves away from other churches. It means a strengthening of our relationship in that we would have a chance to find ourselves, as receivers and donors. Moratorium is not a killing of relationships. It means only the delaying of partial aspects of our relationships when we are trying to seek the new. Eventually this may mean that some things or some patterns have to die in order that the new might emerge. We have to ask 'For what do we want these funds, is it necessary to continue that which we have been doing regardless of whether we are providing a real service, or should we evaluate what we have been doing in terms of today?'

“Moratorium would help the churches to plan together for their future instead of expecting that everything will be as it has always been. It could be that in the case of the so-called sending churches, money will not be the only axiom around which mission revolves. It could challenge the sending churches to the mission of God in their situation. It would also help the so-called receiving churches, to respond to challenges which have hitherto been unattended because it was expected that a missionary from outside would answer that challenge. It would mean that the local churches would look more seriously into their own resources, both in manpower and other respects, to begin to utilize the hidden resources that have not been used. I believe that it could introduce a new kind of missionary who becomes a missionary not because he is backed by finances from a church 'out there' but because he is a Christian living in a new situation and witnessing in that situation.

⁴ Koyama, Kosuke, *No Handle on the Cross*, Great Britain. SCM Press Ltd. 1976. Pages 5-6.
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“Any aid given now or in the near future, talking about the churches, has to be seen in terms of enabling that church to be self-reliant. It is easy to perpetuate the dependent mentality by just giving unplanned aid even though the giver may be pleased that he has played his part. It is important therefore that discussions be entered into between the bodies that have been receiving and those that have been giving, to ask the question: To what end are we sending or receiving this aid?

“And to the person who gives help to overseas agencies, like the lady from Bristol or Belfast or New Brunswick, I am saying, “There are many changes in the world today and they don't affect just one side”. Whatever new things are coming, it does not necessarily mean that these will pull down the Church, it may mean a strengthening of the Church for a new age. The reasons for giving may be different to those of twenty years ago. There were those who gave with an idea of the Livingstone era, consequently they would expect stories of needy people, clothing to children, witchcraft and the like. I know that there are some who still give for these and other sentimental reasons. But I am now saying that people should give in terms of making others self-reliant and better equipped to play their role in the mission of God in the world today. And until the psychological barriers have been done away with we are just deluding ourselves to think that we could enter into effective, meaningful and honest relationships.’

Some of the powerful emotional pride and rejection of sheer charity by the black African is expressed by Canon Burgess Carr, the dynamic General Secretary of the radically-orientated All African Conference of Churches, “If I appear angry for Africa. If I appear bitter I would not dissociate this from the fact that my ancestors were slaves. If you say I should forget, I reply that I bear the stigma of the name of a slave-master. I have no way to find out what my African name would be”.

Our objective is to find help that would assist self-reliance, not help that would perpetuate dependence. We can and we must begin to show greater discrimination in working out who are the friends and who are the enemies. Our friends are those who support our aspirations to be self-reliant and to make our own contribution to the rest of the world. Our enemies are those who continue to try to tell us what to do, who say “You cannot achieve it without our help”. Here is where the tremendous task of education lies. I am talking about the self-perception of the man or woman who is giving the donation - is the money a palliative, or is it the act of solidarity in a human struggle that must be won?

‘....There are people who may be put off because they want the aid business, like the missionary business, described in very simple terms, they do not want to be told that it is not entirely certain whether the presence of that missionary in a certain place is really doing good or harm. They would like to think that this is an entirely worthy thing. I am not saying that it is necessarily a bad thing, but I think that people should be forced to at least consider what are the longer-term effects of all this. It's all part of the business of trying to understand the kind of world we actually do live in.’⁵

Does it sound rather dismal? It is not often one hears such honest truth about the dark side of benevolence. Even though the preceding statements focus primarily upon the rich, powerful and “foreign” countries, the concerns and lessons apply to local mission and community transformation efforts and relationships as well. A well-educated, middle class church located in New Delhi will face many of the same temptations and tendencies if they were to get involved with a group of low caste, landless garbage pickers located on the outskirts of their city. I know that because I once lived with a group of friends who did that very thing.

Think About It

Answer Box # 15

- 1) How do you personally respond to the call for some sort of moratorium on external financial assistance?
- 2) Does the thinking behind that call reflect your own context in any way? What would you see as the pros and cons of such a move if it were taken in your situation?

⁵ McCreary, Alf. *Up-With People - Christian Aid Around the World*. Great Britain. Font Paperbacks. 1979. Pages 66-70.

So, how do we respond? A moratorium is one idea put forward. Would that go far enough? Perhaps those of us already engaged in community transformation efforts should just pack up and head back to wherever it is we came from, even if it is only to the other side of town. And for others who are just now contemplating such involvement, maybe it is far too complex anyway and reverting back to the former ways of just handing out gospel tracts and shouting out of microphones seems more reasonable.

I think either of those responses would be a shameful thing to do. Do we not have ears to hear what these brothers and sisters are saying, especially those speaking out from their context of poverty and limited resources? Are we above receiving correction and wisdom at their hands? Do they really mean "Yankee go home", even if we technically might not be a Yankee at all? Perhaps some do mean it, perhaps more will, unless we open our eyes, hear and change. In the final unit of this course we will look at what I consider a more appropriate response.

Readings

Is Dependency Making Missions Go Sideways?

Dr. J.M.Ngul Khan Pau, India - Used with permission

First of all, I would like to get ourselves familiar with some basic information about North East India. It comprises eight States. It is circled by China in the East, Myanmar in the South East, Bangladesh in the South, Tibet and Bhutan in the North. It is attached to the main body of India only by a narrow corridor of 18 kilometers called the "chicken neck."

Introduction:

A Mizo missionary who worked among the Bru tribe in Mizoram state during the mid-thirties, taught the local people how to construct houses and also shifting cultivation. Since the early converts were dependant on the missionaries, one of them commented, "Even if we have to go to heaven or hell, unless the missionaries guide us, we will not reach our destinations."

Another classic example is among the Garo tribe in Meghalaya State. There was a proposal to extend the mission hospital building, yet they faced a problem. They had to cut a tree planted by an American missionary in order to accommodate the extension. The older folks could never dream of cutting the tree as it is like a memorial symbol to their beloved missionary. After debating for a long time, they finally decided that they needed the hospital building more than the tree.

For about 150 years of being fully funded by an overseas partner, CBCNEI took the painful decision to say "no more funding for salary and local administrative expenses" in 2000. Since then, we have seen by God's grace that we are doing much better in terms of financial strength, becoming self-supporting. We've sliced off the main chunk of what is known as financial paternalism. We partner with them, however, in some programs like theological scholarship for Church leaders and in development projects for our local Associations.

Assamese Churches in Comparison with other Churches in North East India

Even after 169 years of Christianity, the Assamese Churches could not send even a single cross-cultural missionary, whereas the Naga Churches which completed 130 years has sent out more than a 1000 missionaries supported by their own local churches. It does not depend on how many years it takes to sponsor a missionary; it has to do with attitude and obedience to the teachings of the scripture.

The Amri Karbi Christians in Assam will be celebrating their Silver Jubilee next year. Yet till today they cannot even pay the salary of their fulltime workers as they are so dependent on the Naga Churches who brought the gospel to them.

The stagnation in growth of the Churches in Assam is not because they are poor; it may be because of lack of leadership. But I have seen over the years that it has to do more with financial paternalism. There are consultations and workshops we've organized in which we've requested the participants to pay their own travel expenses. It works well, till we have a group coming from overseas paying the Assamese travel expenses and even sitting allowance. While appreciating such good intention and help, we found out that the next time we asked the delegates to pay their own expenses, they would not come.

Instead of happily participating in fulfilling the Great Commission, they would come out with long list of reasons why they could not take up such task. Usually they will ask the same old question, "Who will support or how long will they?" The chronic problem is "dependency" and desire for subsidy from overseas. Such dependent mentality not only stagnated the growth of the Church, but alienated those who received "foreign funds" from those who are paid by the local Churches.

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Some Assamese Churches who have wealthy members still do not support even a local pastor, whereas among the tribal Churches in Manipur state, even a negligible number of 10 families will support a missionary. To my understanding, the main reason is not the wealth and poverty of the church; it has to do with their mentality of dependence. It is not how wealthy the church is but their mental dependence on outside support.

When Church leaders salary are paid in dollars, which often is several times more than their co-workers, jealousy and strife often ensue. It leads to the professionalization of the clergy. This in turn produces a lot of people who want to go for theological studies because this is the best way to go abroad. Instead of studying and equipping themselves for the ministry, their main aim is to stay as long as possible in the States, from theology to motor-logy, building-logy and dollar-logy.

Leaders who have greased their palms with dollars are not only alienated but they maintain a bureaucratic style of leadership. What they say is the final word and has to be obeyed. I have heard of severe financial misappropriation in one of the missions in India, whose malpractices are known even to the higher leadership and yet corrective measures are not being taken - because he raised more funds than others.

Yet, in the midst of all these, it is very encouraging to know that the Baptist Church of Mizoram celebrated their centenary in 1996. From its inception, the local believers never depended on the contribution of their missionaries except in translation of the Bible and education of the pioneering converts. They started missionary work in the year 1939 and today in 2005 they are working among 25 different nationalities and tribes. They have sent out 209 cross-cultural missionaries and 291 are working within their own state.

They have missionaries working among Assamese, Arunachalis, Bengalis, Boro, Maharastrian, Madhya Pradesh, Nepalis, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Thai etc. While they have 911 new Churches planted in their mission fields, their own local Churches are 405, they have 109,988 new believers in the mission areas, their own membership is just 79,109. The mission budget for this year is Rs. 367,00,000/- (US \$ 853,488)

It is no accident that in the Indian sub-continent, we have numerous mission agencies who are directly sustained and funded by generous foreign donors. Such ministries flourish as long as funds are coming. In order to meet the criteria for continuing their funding, some may even go to the extent of buying a congregation by splitting the existing churches. The counting of heads in order to get the continual flow of funds is not the best mission strategy, especially in Third World Countries.

A responsible leader from a large Church in North East India visited me on his way to Kathmandu in 1999. When I inquired what he is planning to do in Nepal, he said, he was sent by the Mission Board to purchase land to start a mission compound there. He felt that they should get a rented building in Kathmandu to carry the ministry but the mission supporters insisted that without a mission compound, they cannot accomplish mission work effectively.

How to go about?

When I was completing my studies at Western Seminary in 1995, I was invited to work here (in the US) as a pastor in one of the Asian churches and draw a salary of \$ 2000 monthly, plus a house and a car. They promised to bring my family from India to US if I agreed to this proposal. After waiting and praying for three days, I was quite clear that the Lord wanted me to serve Him in North East India. Reluctantly and painfully I had to decline the offer. They were not convinced with my response, so they further inquired how much I was expecting. I told them that the amount they offered was more than enough as I was drawing a salary of \$ 70 a month in India those days.

In response to "How do we go about from "Dependency to Interdependency?", I will be sharing some of my personal conviction, practices and also the observations made by some of the leading Indian Church leaders:

1. I am convinced that the most effective way in building relationship and trust is to identify with the people whom we are serving. We are aware that our effectiveness lies in the area of our identification and love.
2. We want to build a team. To maintain a good team, we need to be transparent, no hidden agenda for personal gain. We also should be accountable to one another. Hence, as a team player we want to be careful. (Often foreign returnees are trying to live the Western lifestyle in their own areas) We need to develop accountability, trust, respect and transparency in partnership. After I took over the leadership as General Secretary of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, some overseas Churches are sending funds with a specific note saying, "For Pau's ministry." Those funds had come because of my visits to them. However, I've instructed the finance department to put such amounts in the general funds for the Council and that it is not for my own personal use.
3. We do need financial assistance from overseas but we are requesting you to help us responsibly. Because of your generosity, our confidence and faith in the Lord and in His ministry should be much more firm and strengthened, not retarded or thwarted.

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4. National leaders should be convinced that we need to have a self-support mentality and missionary outreach with the local resources even though it may be very limited. Unless they are persuaded of this truth, it will automatically start the dependency circle.
5. Our needs in Third World countries are very many; it may be wise for overseas partners to first build relationship and trust before you invest your financial resources. Please don't try to put strings along with your donation for this often leads to outside involvement and the project is not owned by the local people. Paternalism in any of its forms creates problems and distrust. Local leadership must be allowed to make major decisions on strategy, personnel, etc.
6. Partnership should be encouraged rather than full funding. The local partners should be encouraged to pay in the initial stage 25%. As the partnership and working relationship increases the percentage can go up to 50% to 75% and finally 100%. Overseas partners also need to plan a time frame of involvement and should stick to it. Further extension should be reviewed by both parties.
7. We need to teach the local churches the joy of giving tithes and offerings. They may think that overseas partners can give tithes because they have money. If they are not giving with their limited income, they will never learn to give even if their income increases. Poor stewardship is one of the main reasons of dependency.
8. One of our leading theologians Atul Agamkar said, "Some of the areas where Westerners can help are in teaching, equipping and training ministry personnel. With the enormous challenge of equipping over twenty million "Christians" in India, we need qualified, committed men and women, who will be willing to work with our leaders and teachers. Frequent training programs for specific areas could be assigned. Careful thinking, planning and goal setting is needed to make such training programs effective and productive. The model of Westerners with big budgets and "prepared material" coming to India to organize a "crusade" or evangelistic campaign, and returning home with glorious reports must be stopped. The Western "crusade" is not relevant in India, with its emphasis upon immediate response and decision, and its total lack of follow up training. The Indian people are not conditioned to make "individual" decisions. Decisions, particularly religious decisions, are made by the elderly and within the context of the group, caste and family".
9. Dr. Joseph De Souza: the President of All India Christian Council and Director of Operation Mobilization of India made the following observations: *"The task of reaching the nation with the gospel is too big for the Indian church to do on its own. There has been robust growth in the Indian Church, but there is still a great need for Westerners to be involved in a nation that is full of opportunity. India is changing rapidly—socially, economically, politically, religiously and in other ways as well. There are a number of ways Westerners can contribute and participate in Indian missions:*
 - a) *They can reach sections of Indian society which are so far largely untouched by indigenous Indian missionaries. Examples are the upper class society, the higher castes and the urban population. These are generally English educated, cosmopolitan, have knowledge of what's going on in the world, and have more contact with foreigners.*
 - b) *Westerners can bring specific skills such as translation, research and computer expertise and can work alongside Indian leadership in a number of supporting roles.*
 - c) *Because of the population explosion in the slums of all the major cities of India, Westerners can make an enormous contribution to Christian mission work in India through community development.*
 - d) *There is always a need for theological educators who are willing to come and train an increasing number of younger Indian leaders. The challenge of the task in India is immense and will require the cooperation of the worldwide church on all fronts."*
10. Dr. Sam Kamaleson, Vice President of World Vision International, Founder of Friends Missionary Prayer Band said: Westerners should not play the role of God. They should not pretend that they can be parents to people or act paternalistically. They should not be inconsistent in their body language. By this I mean, they give the impression they are keenly interested but in their mind and heart they are thinking of other things. They should not think about controlling or managing people because of some commitment in funding. This has been tiresome in times past. They should be friends, as Jesus calls them friends in John 15:15, celebrating mutuality with other friends of Jesus. In direct evangelism they should be careful not to create problems for those who remain permanently in India, or take the initiative away from them.
11. Rev. Dr. John Richard, who was General Secretary of Evangelical Fellowship of India and Asian Evangelical Fellowship pointed out that:
 - a) Money should not be sent to individual Christian workers in India. The workers should be staff members of a body of believers registered by the government of India, and the funds sent to the body towards their support.

Unit 8 – Principles for Community Transformation

- b) Western Christians, even though they may be highly skilled in their areas of expertise, should be willing to work under the direction of nationals who may know nothing about those fields of specialization.
 - c) Often young Western Christians in their zeal for the Lord claim they are going to India to train Church leaders who may be twice their age. This is totally unacceptable to national leaders. Western disciplers and teachers should go with an attitude of teachability.
 - d) Having gone to India for a short period of time, Western Christians should not conceive of themselves as experts on India and pontificate on various matters related to India.
12. Mr. Kingsley Kumar also made these comments: Western agencies should not support individuals who do not have an accountable relationship with any association or umbrella organization in India. A great amount of money is being given which is not being invested in missions. They merely use it in building up themselves and those around them. This is one of the sad states of affairs in India.

Itinerant evangelists and so-called miracle healers are creating havoc rather than doing anything good in India. Tell the Western donors not to support such extravaganzas anymore. Denominational missions have created another big hindrance to India's evangelization. In the last twenty years more than 100 new denominations have come into existence in India. This is caused by splits in existing denominations that create rivalry, enmity, and dissension.

By giving shelter to believers of another denomination, some denominations claim to be the fastest growing church or mission (or both) in India, and as a result they raise a substantial amount of foreign money. Therefore, no mission, church, or development activity should be blindly supported.

Finally, it has been found that spiritual renewal in the national Churches is necessary for successful transitions from dependency to self-reliance. When individual and communities are spiritually alive they will take responsibilities upon themselves trusting in God who always helps those who put their faith in Him.

Dependency in Mission Partnership **Principles for enabling the servants of God in hard places** By Daniel Rickett, Sisters in Service

The loudest objection to partnership with non-Western missions is the fear that it will create dependency. We seem to assume that it is better to leave our brothers and sisters in Christ alone than to run the risk of making them dependent. But as Chuck Bennett points out, to refuse to share our resources with overseas brethren because there have been abuses is "like outlawing marriage because we discover some husbands abuse their wives. The problem is real, but the proposed solution misses the point."⁽¹⁾ The issue of dependency in mission relationships is widely recognized. What is often overlooked is that there are two kinds of dependency: healthy and unhealthy. If there is to be a productive partnership, it is crucial that we understand the difference between the two. Only then can we develop ways to use it constructively.

Dependency Defined

Dependency is the state of relying on someone or something. To be dependent is, first and foremost, to be reliant on another. Reliance can actually be more important than being independent. The fact is that no one can go it alone. In many ways, every one of us depends on a wide variety of people and institutions. Pastors depend on parishioners, missionaries depend on donors, organizations depend on employees, universities depend on students.

Certainly it is possible to rely too heavily on someone or something. When medical patients become habituated to drugs we call it dependency. When people remain on government welfare for a lifetime we call it dependency. When an adult child remains too long with his parents we call it dependency. Yet when a missionary receives all of his or her support from a few churches, we don't call it dependency. When a mission agency relies exclusively on a single association of churches, we don't call that dependency either. Although every church and mission is sustained by multi-lateral dependencies, we don't think of them as being dependent.

So what makes a certain kind of dependency acceptable and another kind unacceptable? Why is it that a dependent child is legitimate but a dependent adult is not? The answer lies in the dependent's willingness and capacity to do his or her part—that is, to take responsibility and give something back. Although we are all dependent in countless ways, dependency goes over the line when people fail to take responsibility where they can.

Dependency in the Body of Christ

Perhaps the first thing to understand is where dependency fits into the Christian context. The biblical view of the Church is that it is one body made up of many parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). In this body, God distributes spiritual gifts for the building up the Church and putting Christ on display. The nature of the Church is such that as each part does its work, the entire body grows in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16). Is it not outrageous for the eyes to tell the hands that they have no need of them? Or the feet to tell the ears they are of no use?

If Christians are to avoid dependency, what are we to do with the command to carry one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2)? What are we to say when we see our brother in need and have the means to help (1 John 3:16-20)? And what are we to make of Paul's collection of funds from the churches of Asia Minor for the suffering church in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-3)?

Rather than steer Christians away from reliance on one another, the Bible seems to celebrate dependency in the body of Christ. Yet this is clearly not the way we normally think of dependency. The dependency implied by the image of the body is complimentary and reciprocal. One part of the body cannot deny another part without in some way denying itself. All the parts of the body are knit together in such a way that every part has something to give and something to receive. Perhaps this is why the New Testament authors so often remind us of our oneness in Christ. Christians are designed for each other as well as for Christ.

It is important to note that, as with all analogies, at some point the comparison of the human body with the spiritual body of Christ breaks down. The parts of the human body are obviously mutually dependent. But mutuality among Christians does not happen so automatically. It requires a conscious effort. Such dependency demands regard for the commands of scripture and cooperation with the Holy Spirit. The declaration of the Bible that the body of Christ is one must be balanced with the demands found in the Bible. All of the instruction about how to do good and relate to one another as members of Christ's body are expected from and commanded of all believers.

For example, believers are declared one in Christ, yet they are commanded to be like-minded, to love one another, and to work together with one heart and purpose (Romans 12: 4-8, Philippians 2: 1-2). In Christ there is no racial or cultural distinction, yet Christians are commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (1 Corinthians 12: 13, Ephesians 2: 14-16, 4:3). The Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts as He sees fit, yet believers are commanded to use their gifts for the common good (1 Corinthians 12: 1-11, 1 Peter 4:10-11). No part of the body of Christ can cease to be part of the whole, yet all believers are admonished to have equal concern for each other, to share in one another's sufferings and rejoice in one another's victories (1 Corinthians 12: 14-26).

Clearly, then, dependency in the body of Christ is not passive but very active. It demands that Christians take up their responsibilities in the body. Such commands as to share with one another (Romans 12:13), care for one another (Galatians 6:2), support one another's interests (Philippians 2:4), and serve one another (1 Peter 4:10) all require responsible action. The command to do good, especially to the family of believers, is given to those who receive as well as those who give (Galatians 6:10). No Christian—whether rich or poor, young or old, weak or strong—is exempt from taking responsibility. That's because responsibility makes reciprocity both possible and dependency beneficial.

Healthy Dependency

Taking our cues from the Bible, the kind of dependency expected from and commanded of Christians is characterized by reciprocity and responsibility. Thus, in a healthy relationship both partners recognize their responsibilities and work to fulfill them. Each enters the relationship with a clear picture of what each has to offer and what each stands to gain. Each maintains its independence and capacity to instruct, correct, and refuse the other. Each honors and upholds the unique and divine calling of the other. Each makes a distinctive and complementary contribution to the partnership. Each conducts itself in a manner that safeguards one another's integrity and honors Christ. Therefore, it is important in a partnership to not only give but to receive, to not only teach but to learn, and to not only lead but to follow. By contrast, the seeds of unhealthy dependency are planted when the only deal struck in a mission relationship is the one-way flow of resources, whether that be money or personnel.

Unhealthy Dependency

Unhealthy dependency occurs when reciprocity and responsibility are ignored, overruled, or undervalued. If the accent is on the exchange of money or personnel and not on the complementary contributions each partner makes, the importance of reciprocity is easily overlooked. If resources are shared more for the benefit of one partner than for the purpose of ministering more effectively to others, the receiving partner's responsibility is effectively sidelined. If one partner maintains control over the decision-making process, the other partner cannot exercise responsibility as a co-laborer. If one partner's contributions are valued more highly than the others', it is impossible to establish true reciprocity. In the end, if a partnership is not joining in a common purpose and sharing complementary resources, it cannot be reciprocal and it will not be responsible.

Five Sure Ways to Create Unhealthy Dependency

Several factors may coalesce into unhealthy dependency, but there are five starting points that almost guarantee it.

1. Make an alliance with a lone ranger.

An independent ministry leader may be the next John Wesley, or he may be a very talented individual with a self-serving agenda. Unless you've known the individual for some time, it's difficult to discern real intentions. Bogus, questionable organizations that compete for mission dollars tend to bypass local churches. If you're not working with a ministry that has a local board of directors or the equivalent, there's a chance you've been found by a fortune hunter.

2. Send money directly to individuals.

Unless individuals are employees or contract laborers with whom you have a performance agreement and means of accountability, sending funds directly can put people in a precarious position. Individuals cannot vouch for themselves; they need others to verify their testimony. Even the Apostle Paul was not willing to convey funds without the involvement of trusted men from the contributing churches (1 Corinthians 16:3, 2 Corinthians 8:16-21). It takes a bona fide organization with a governing structure and accounting system to administer funds in an auditable and defensible manner.

3. Finance pastors and local churches.

History has shown that foreign funding of pastors and churches has proven more often than not to hinder genuine indigenous growth. Foreign funding can easily stifle local initiative by creating the assumption that believers need only rely on distant benefactors rather than learn to give sacrificially. It can cause pastors to become preoccupied with raising foreign funds, and fail to be creative in maximizing local resources. Foreign funding of some pastors and not others creates jealousies, and frees them from accountability to the local Christian community. In the matter of funding pastors, the chances of creating unhealthy dependency are at their highest.

4. Give resources based only on need.

A partnership that sets out to satisfy needs soon finds itself running a race with no end. That's because needs alone are insatiable. Giving based solely on need creates a pipeline of supply that in turn raises the expectation of future need satisfaction. Needs have to be defined and boundaries set so that you can actually see results. At a minimum, giving should be based on what will enhance

- responsibility—each partner's ability to meet their obligations as Christians,
- reciprocity—each partner's ability to make distinctive and complementary contributions, and
- results—the ability to achieve specific ministry outcomes.

5. Underwrite 100% of a ministry's need.

Money is one form of power, and in international partnerships it has proven to be the most problematic. When one ministry relies solely on another for financial support, the balance of power leans heavily toward the funding source. This is a problem because unhealthy dependency thrives on the imbalance of power. The best antidote is to subsidize a strategic initiative or program rather than to fund the entire ministry.

There is a sixth way to create unhealthy dependency. It's not listed above because it teeters on the border between acceptable and unacceptable dependency. It's the hiring of local Christians to run Western programs. Unless you plan to establish a local branch of your church or mission, hiring local people can be the first step to unhealthy dependency.

The reason is simple: hiring local Christians is not partnership; it's employment. There may be very good reasons to hire local people to administer programs of a foreign mission. But employment relationships should never be confused with partnership. When a Western agency hires local people, they assume all the responsibilities of an employer: fair and competitive wages, medical insurance, retirement benefits, direct management of performance, and compliance with local labor laws. Even then, Western employers have to cope with the potential of providing their employees with lifestyles far above their peers, making it possible for them to bypass local Christian authority, and creating jealousies locally and internationally.

Managing Dependency: A Few Don'ts

If a healthy dependency is to be preserved, there are certain things partners in the work of the gospel should never do to each other. Here are seven taboos that must be observed:

They don't define goals and methods unilaterally.

For Western partners especially this means don't assume you know what the task is and what the goals are. Don't first develop a plan, then merely invite non-Western partners to join in at a later stage. If you really want a partnership, ask your partners what God is inviting them to do, then build a plan together to achieve it.

They don't base the relationship on a one-way flow of resources.

Complementarity, not assistance, lies at the heart of effective partnerships. Assistance is focused on meeting the needs and interests of one party. Complementarity concerns the accomplishment of

mutual purposes and a shared vision, and includes each partner's needs and interests. A partnership moves beyond assistance to complementarity when each partner makes different but crucial contributions to a common goal.

They don't allow money to become the most highly valued resource.

In the affluent West, where ministries rely on capital- intensive and technology- intensive strategies, making the claim that money will not be the driving force is fine in principle but difficult in practice. Unfortunately, this difficulty spills over into mission partnerships. We tend to put a premium on our own resources rather than on the resources of our non-Western counterparts. In most cases, non-Western partners may rely on Western partners for financial and technological resources, but Western partners are dependent on the human resources, linguistic skills, cultural insight, and relevant lifestyle of its non-Western partners. Who can estimate the value of such resources? If money becomes the driving force, the golden rule takes hold—the one with the gold rules. When that happens, reciprocity is broken and shared responsibility gives way to unbalanced control.

They don't fund the full cost of a project without clear justification.

In the face of enormous economic inequities, there is inherent pressure on Western partners to be the "sugar daddy" of more "needy" partners. Favorable exchange rates and the relative access to money might make it easy to underwrite projects, but it doesn't make it right. Healthy dependency flourishes on the foundation of shared responsibility. Funding decisions should be based as much on what fosters responsibility and reciprocity as on what might be accomplished. Matching grants, capital funds, one-time projects, and partial support are useful methods of shared responsibility.

They don't interfere in the administration of the partner's organization.

It's one thing to give advise when you're asked for it, or even to admonish a partner in the case of serious misconduct. It's quite another thing to meddle in the internal affairs of the partner ministry. For example, Western agencies that provide support for workers tend to assume responsibility for deciding how much non-Western personnel get paid. But this is an area that should be clearly under the control of the local authority structure.

They don't do for others what they can better do for themselves.

Doing so has two serious negative consequences. One, it retards the chances of growth and development. Organizations, like people, become strong and effective only when they make decisions, initiate action, and solve problems. Two, it lowers the ceiling on what you can accomplish. Mission partners must develop the right mix of contributions, that is, each of the complementary skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to accomplish the shared vision.

They don't rely on "one-size-fits-all" policies.

Policies can make decisions easier, but they can also lead to bad decisions. For example, one mission agency tries to avoid unhealthy dependency by giving only very small amounts, such as 10% of the total need. That may be fine in some situations, but it is harmful in others. A better approach is to find out what is at stake, identify what is missing, and then to determine the best contribution you can make under the circumstances.

For some, dependency in mission relationships is regarded as a condition to be avoided rather than an essential quality. But for today's missions that are assessing the missing links in their ministry capacities and seeking collaboration with non-Western missions as peers, dependency is no longer a one-sided issue. It is the key to interdependence and mutuality.

(1) Chuck Bennett. "Open Letter to Robertson McQuilkin." EMQ, April 2000, 211.

The above article is adapted from *Building Strategic Relationships: A Practical Guide to Partnering with Non-Western Missions* by Daniel Rickett, Partners International, 2000.

Development and Social Change

Unit 9

From Kingdom Theory to Kingdom Practice



Development Associates International

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Version 2.5

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Unit 9 – From Kingdom Theory to Kingdom Practice

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Additional Readings:

- 1) “Kingdom Math Concepts and Principles” by Dr. Robert Moffitt
- 2) “Examples of Kingdom Seed Projects” – Harvest International and Food for the Hungry

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe what might be an appropriate response to the concerns about unwise financial dependency;
2. Explain what we can learn from how Jesus and the early Christians used their financial resources;
3. Describe the principle of kingdom mathematics;
4. Describe ways in which groups of disciples can be best involved in community transformation.

Introduction

In Unit 8 we looked closely at very valid concerns regarding the appropriate and inappropriate use of external resources. That discussion focused a lot upon the use of foreign funds to support local churches and ministries in poorer countries. I do want to emphasize though that the discussion should not be limited to foreign funding. The concerns and experience expressed can just as easily apply to wealthier segments of the Christian population within a national context. I have not addressed that very much, simply because most of the writing and thinking about this issue has been done with foreign funding in mind. I ended the last unit with the thought put forward by some that we should in fact just pack up and leave our poorer brothers and sisters to find a way forward on their own without the potentially corrupting influence of external resources. But isn't that a bit like the proverbial statement about throwing out the baby along with the spoiled bath water?

A better way forward – partners, not patrons

These cautionary tales are not intended to dry up the flow of money from wealthy to poorer countries. External financing is still needed, and will continue to be needed, especially in development projects that call for a lot of traveling and visiting. But I do want to emphasize the damage that money can do to a church and a project.

Yet it need not be so. A Christian leader in Guinea Bissau accepted overseas money for materials to build wells but declined an offer to pay for the labor also. The people do the manual work themselves; they feed and pay for any professional skills needed. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten because this way the wells will be theirs and not just a gift from overseas.

The key then is not necessarily the amount of money that is given, but the way in which it is used. Money shortages are not a guarantee of success and blessing; an abundance will not inevitably lead to failure.¹

Think About It

Answer Box # 1

In what ways would you consider the well building project in Guinea Bissau a wise approach for the use of external resources in a community transformation effort?

Change will not take place unless firstly there is a conviction that it is necessary, and secondly a determination that it must happen. Old, well-established patterns of thinking, behavior and operation need to be evaluated and reevaluated. Those who cling to the status quo only because it is familiar need to loosen their grips. But, perhaps the area of greatest challenge is that of vested interests. The strings of parenthood, paternalism and control need to be broken. More often than not those strings are financial in nature. The poor and their churches need to be liberated from the economic manipulation of outsiders.

Protestant overseas missions in recent times have often demonstrated massive opposition to economic activities, particularly if these were intended to produce income. With uncritical piety, the axiom that the church (and therefore the mission) should have nothing to do with business has been widely accepted as a working presupposition. While mainline missions have often recognized the needs for helping indigenous people achieve a livelihood, more fundamentalist missions have generally been extremely reluctant to divert energy or money from verbal proclamation of the gospel to social action.

Neither group has shown much interest in helping the national church, to say nothing of the mission to achieve an indigenous economic base. There are many so called 'independent' national churches in overseas mission fields, with impressive tables of organization, but to an overwhelming extent they remain financially dependent on western-based, western-funded denominational and ecumenical agencies. Western patterns of church and mission support have in practice become standard for non-western churches, however poorly these may fit the local culture and economic situation.²

¹ See Batchelor, Peter, *People in Rural Development*. Pages 24-25.

² Danker, William J., *Profit For the Lord*, USA. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1971. Page 14. Development and Social Change, Version 2.5

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There is a dark side to benevolence, but thank God for the bright potential of giving hearts! We can learn from our mistakes; we can find a better way ahead by building on past experience. We can hear and deeply reflect on the wisdom of those in the local context whom we have previously considered pupils, but whom we should now regard as teachers and counselors.

How do we respond? The concern I have raised is complex. It has to do with tradition, culture, attitudes, organizational patterns, etc. The solution then will be many-faceted as well. It won't come as a defined recipe for change; neither will it be a quick-fix formula. A key word is "process." Any advancement will come as a process of change, primarily because it involves people.

I want to address two facets of the solution and offer suggestions for positive change. The first regards the role of the "outsider," the one who comes to help. Many years of experience in the realm of community change has taught and verified that if change in people is to be lasting and sustained, it must originate out of their own conviction that change is needed, and they themselves must struggle to bring it to pass. The role of the outsider as the leader, the mover, the teacher, the professional must change to that of enabler, facilitator, partner, the one who empowers others. We looked at such qualities in Unit 8 when we considered the profile of a Community Transformation Facilitator.

"Mission agencies, relief and development agencies, denominational mission boards, etc., often inhibit genuine accountability and meaningful personal relationship between the local church and the mission endeavor. Because they are the experts and offer their services, (and some denominational groups demand that their services be used) the local church sees little need to develop its own expertise and/or global missions strategy." ³

"The primary responsibility for being the 'light of the world,' the 'salt of the earth,' 'the first fruits of the Kingdom' has been delegated to professionals rather than kept where it belongs—in the laity. The solution is not to get rid of the professional. It is to first change the role of the professional from implementer to teacher, to coach, to catalyst, to facilitator, to encourager. Second, it is to insist that the laity, as much as is possible, take responsibility for direct ministry." ⁴

The second facet has to do with financial input, but involves other resources as well, including people's time and effort. This area can best be summarized as the difference between "aid" and "development;" the difference between "service delivery" and "building self-reliance". If we are to release the poor from paternalistic control and economic subjugation we must enable them to use resources from the outside, but to avoid unhealthy dependence on them. This is not easy, especially in those places where a welfare/sponsorship mentality has already taken root.

'Development' should be put into a separate category, but it probably should be bracketed with philanthropic service, even though some community development projects embrace a whole village, town, or district. It is very welcome that many welfare agencies have expanded their emphasis in recent years from aid to development, and many medical missions from curative medicine to community health. To help people learn to help themselves not only makes better sense economically, but it is also more conducive to human dignity. It is important, therefore, to ensure that self-help programs genuinely enable people to stand on their own feet and are not devious paternalistic ploys to reinforce dependence, even subservience. ⁵

I believe one promising way to see people move toward self-reliance is through income generation, micro-finance, and small enterprise activities. And it is here where I believe the resources of wealthier Christians can be utilized by impoverished people without creating ongoing dependence. Valuable help can be given through work skills development and job creation. One can assist by helping a person search for employment, training them how to present themselves, etc.

"Seed-money," or in more business-like terms, "start-up capital" can be provided either through direct grants, or through the development of no-interest or low interest loans. A particularly successful concept is that of the "revolving loan" where a person pays back to a fund which is then used to help finance other people in need. In this way the initial outside investment is used over and over again. There are many such schemes already in existence. In fact, many government banks have such programs available both in urban and rural settings. But poor people often lack the knowledge and confidence to access already existing resources. That is where help from the outside can play a very healthy role—a hand up, not a hand out. There are pitfalls in this way of working too, but few solutions will be completely free from difficulties.

³ Sine, Tom (Editor), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, USA. Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center. 1983. Page 334.

⁴ Ibid. Page 390.

⁵ Ibid. Page 471.

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Income generation activities can also be of particular benefit to churches that are now being funded almost entirely from patrons in other countries or from wealthier churches in their own. Would it not be better to enable individuals within these churches to earn enough income, not only to support their own families, church workers and Pastor, but also to be in a position to release "seed money" for ministry in their village, city and beyond? Idealistic? Yes, in part because all places are different and so are the people in them, but this concept of economic self-reliance has worked and is working in many places around the world. The greatest successes occur primarily in "secular" development work. Is the Christian mission lagging behind?

Jesus taught that we cannot speak of loving God if we have failed to concretely express God's love to our neighbor. This biblical mandate includes working for justice for the poor as well as seeking the salvation of souls...

Christian missionary work has passed through two stages - and is quickly moving to a third. In the first stage missionaries preached and planted churches among people who had not heard the Gospel. As indigenous Christians assumed leadership in their churches, mission organizations concentrated on training professionals in medicine, education, agriculture and other technical fields. Now many developing countries are educating their own professionals. Frequently, however, the local economy cannot support these professionals, and they emigrate to more developed countries.

We now realize that the cause of the poor is best advanced by increasing their household income - for purchasing food, clothes and other necessities - and by providing such key public services as health care, primary education and safe water.

The third stage of mission must be about this task of economic development. We believe that necessary public policy reforms involving governments and international organizations must be complemented by private sector initiatives.

Our programs equip students to help local populations to establish and manage businesses that will help break the cycle of poverty. We are placing the task of development into the hands of the poor - enabling them to support their own churches, educational programs, and medical clinics.⁶

Another use of "seed money" is to apply outside resources to help small initiatives get going long enough to prove their impact potential, discover how to share their story with others, and thereby hopefully to build up local means of ongoing support. I have seen this work quite well especially in situations where the idea is not to start a big "project" or NGO, but where local groups of disciples start integral mission in a low-key way within their own communities. But even at this stage in their development, it is wise to use a 50/50 "matching grant" principle, meaning that local groups should start securing all the resources they can, and only after that would an outside partner provide some additional "encouragement" resources.

Think About It

Answer Box # 2

What is your opinion of this "seed-money" and "50/50 matching grant" concept? Would it be appropriate in your context – why or why not?

I don't even recall who passed on to me the following example of generating income for local Christians. I know it was over twenty five ago, but the principles hold true for current times and the situations many believers still face in different parts of the world. Once again, the story involves expatriate missionary involvement, but it need not - the lessons and principles would just as well apply to a wholly national context as well.

Short-Term, Low-Interest Ox Loans and the Gospel, by Ross Beach

In seeking to present the gospel, there are two potential dangers. One results from focusing exclusively on the physical needs of the people to the neglect of their spiritual well-being. The other arises when Christians minister from a position of spiritual and physical abundance. They may look on a suffering world without compassion, content with evangelistic efforts alone. James referred to this perspective as faith without action, a limitation that could hinder evangelistic progress in areas where people are looking for action that demonstrates true love, instead of just talk.

⁶ Eastern College, Promotional Materials, Pennsylvania USA. 1986.
Development and Social Change, Version 2.5

Few today argue the validity of social ministries such as famine relief or primary health care because human suffering is the obvious alternative. But opinion isn't as clear-cut regarding non-emergency measures. What should the church's response be in areas where the economy is based on subsistent agriculture and people face an ever-present threat of famine?

Subsistent agriculture doesn't always result in human suffering. Yet when 80% of disposable income must be used for food, the crisis zone separating mere want from extreme need is very narrow. Unfavorable changes in weather can result in immediate starvation. In countries where 80 to 90 percent of the work force is agriculturally based, the church would be neglecting its members and would lose opportunities to reach non-Christians unless it considered appropriate agricultural development needs.

Self-help programs adapted to the specific needs of the community are helping the Evangelical Church in Chad minister to spiritual and physical needs. The church, in cooperation with TEAM missionaries, has adopted a program known as Service Chretien en Milieu Rural (SCMR). This Christian cooperative is governed by a policy-setting board of three Chadians and two missionaries. A constitution has been submitted to the Chad Ministry of Agriculture, which has already authorized the program's operation.

SCMR is actively engaged in various development projects. Revolving funds, made possible by gifts from the U.S.A. and Canada, allow for the purchase of grain at harvest time. This purchase satisfies the Christians' immediate need for cash. The grain is then stored for three or four months and resold as prices increase. The resulting 20 to 30 percent profit, minus expenses, is returned to participating farmers, giving them an additional income.

When profits were returned last year, more than 80% of the participants tithed their share, even though they had already tithed the grain before selling it. This money was used by the church district in its various programs. The money remaining was used by the individual farmers to widen the gap between hunger and adequate provision.

When the money from grain sales was returned to the revolving fund, a service project was introduced to repair ox carts, the major implements of Chadian agriculture. Their wooden bodies wear out in five or six years even though their steel wheels remain serviceable for twice as long. Lumber to repair these carts is not available locally; a farmer must walk 65 miles to a major market to purchase it and then must pay to have it trucked to his home. Not knowing how to repair the cart himself, he must hire a carpenter. All of these additions drive up the price of repair so it's comparable to the cost of a new cart.

Because the co-op is able to purchase lumber and other materials in volume, savings result that allow participating farmers to repair their carts for half the price of a new one. One farmer who came to have his cart repaired carried his money wrapped in an old cloth. The coins were so old that they were green with tarnish. He obviously had been waiting a long time to replace his cart. The farmer had never entered a church and knew nothing of what it represented. He only knew that a church-related group could help him achieve something not possible elsewhere. His experience resulted in a decision to visit a local church and learn more about what he had heard and seen at the co-op.

Thirty ox carts were repaired during a two month period, then revolving funds were put to use again. Harvest season was approaching and the local SCMR committee requested that funds be used to purchase hand sickles. Sickles are rarely available locally and then only at inflated prices because the demand outstrips supply. Two-hundred and fifty sickles were purchased at a volume discount and distributed by Christians for resale in local communities. Within two weeks every sickle was sold and co-op members returned the profits to the revolving fund for use in yet another service project.

Some of these funds were available for short-term, low-interest loans to farmers whose work oxen had died because of disease or drought. In one year alone, drought conditions killed 55 % of the livestock in Chad, spelling financial ruin for hundreds of farmers. A loan from the co-op made the difference between ruin and a normal harvest for Christian members who were able to purchase a replacement ox for plowing, cultivating, and harvesting their crops. The loans were repaid at harvest time with grain or cash.

In the future, the co-op hopes to introduce simple agricultural tools for tilling, cultivating, and threshing crops. These tools would be demonstrated on the site by co-op leaders after a village evangelist had shared the message of Jesus Christ with the crowd. At the same time villagers would be learning of ways to overcome the drudgery of a pre-

mechanized society, they would also be learning of the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

The co-op provides Chadian Christians with much needed income while giving local evangelists opportunity to make contacts with non-Christians. It has a third ministry as well as it relates to Christians who have lost some of their original devotion. The local advisory committee prayerfully considers each applicant wishing to participate in the co-op. Last year, two were considered to have definite spiritual needs and were counseled by committee members before their applications were processed. One was restored to full fellowship with the Lord and with his local church and now participates in the co-op.

Crisis is imminent in a country where half the children die before the age of six and where life expectancy is only 38 years. We North American missionaries cannot ignore these facts; to do so would be to neglect the needs of 80 to 90 per cent of the population. We cannot allow ourselves to forget that the Christian workers in the Evangelical Church of Chad support themselves and their church programs by farming. Our response, according to New Testament standards and with the primary aim of reaching souls for Jesus Christ, can show by example that Christians care for the needs of the total man.

Think About It

Answer Box # 3

In what ways would you consider the project in Chad a wise approach regarding the concerns we have discussed in Unit 8 and in this unit so far?

As Christians we are meant to have the mind and the heart of Christ. What is in his mind and heart? Love—love for all men. Suffering—suffering with all those who suffer. Anger—anger at the injustice that fills the lives of so many.

Today the whole relation of the Christian Church to the secular realm stands front and center on the stage of world mission. As never before, the call goes out to the church to help men of all sorts and conditions to lead a more truly human life as the sons of God.

The disciple is challenged to help and befriend his neighbor in every bodily need, and to do this in the name of Christ. That function can scarcely be served without in some way helping him to improve and protect his livelihood.⁷

But how will we try to help? Will we come to people as patrons or partners? Do we come as leaders and managers or as enablers? Do we mobilize and unleash our abundant knowledge and resources to take control of and “fix” desperate circumstances, or do we hold back and empower the poor to help themselves as much as they are able?

It must be admitted that there are individuals, groups, governments, churches and voluntary agencies with the support of well-meaning and good intentioned people who have genuinely tried to do their best for the poor and the oppressed. But often they tend to look on the poor as objects of their charity and good efforts, the passive recipients of their good will. Their efforts have mainly been for the poor and seldom with the poor and have proved inadequate as they fail to involve the poor as agents of their own situation. They fail to realize the fact that what the poor are striving for is to be treated as subjects rather than mere objects. What the poor are fighting for is recognition of themselves as people having the potential to change their own situation and society as a whole. The last two decades of intensive development in the Third World constitute enough proof that conditions of the poor cannot and will not be solved by doing things for them or by giving handouts. The very character of structural poverty demands that its root causes be tackled by appropriate methods at the level of their causes rather than at the level of their effects.⁸

I feel we have entered a refreshing era regarding the taking up the integral mission that Christ passed on to us— and era of pursuing community transformation. Yes, there are challenges and much

⁷ See Danker, William J., *Profit For the Lord*. Page 9.

⁸ See Sine, Tom (Editor), *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Page 388.

wisdom with which we need to concern ourselves if we truly intend to "follow in his footsteps," but we are not alone. The path may not be familiar to us, but it is an old path well known to the One we follow.

The early Church's practice of giving

The 50/50 matching grant concept of resource partnership mentioned above is not without its critics. One primary complaint is that the 50% provided by wealthy Christians is going to be a lot easier to come up with than the 50% expected from those who are poor. My immediate response to that statement is that such thinking limits the consideration of resources to only that of finance. Time, energy, local materials, etc are just as valuable as the cash money! But I will also argue that for long-term sustainability and in order to break away from the vicious cycle of a demeaning sort of dependency, Christians in the local context need to find ways of coming up with finance as well. "From where, how?" it might be asked. As already mentioned, for some situations that may come through income generation and small business development. But that will not work in most cases simply because many of us are not entrepreneurs by nature, and most impoverished entrepreneurs only earn enough to support their own household. Then how do we answer that question for the majority of people? Well, I feel the first step in doing so is to go back and look at what scripture itself teaches regarding financial resources.

We need to confront and challenge three misconceptions. The first one is the claim that Jesus himself accepted the fact that there would always be poor people among us, and therefore to use our financial resources to try to eliminate that condition is really not the priority on which we should be focusing. Rather, we should give priority to "spiritual" matters. That argument is primarily based upon a single passage of scripture: Matthew 26:11. The context is that a woman comes to Jesus and anoints him with a special perfume. It is said in another gospel reading that the perfume was worth a full year's wages. Some people were upset about such extravagance, and Jesus replied (and here I will paraphrase it in a way that many people assume he means), "The poor will always be around; it is better to use your finance to honor me with acts of worship and true spiritual significance, even in extravagant ways."

Think About It

Answer Box # 4

Is that what Jesus actually meant? In fact, he was quoting from Deuteronomy 15:11. Look up that text. What do you think Jesus might have really meant when he said those words to his disciples?

The fact is, what the woman was doing for Jesus was something very special, in fact so special, that it never needed to be done before that moment in history and would never need to be done after—the Son of God was being ceremoniously prepared for his death. I believe we dare not draw any other conclusion from her act and his statement than that. In fact, it seems that Jesus makes that point very clear when he used the Deuteronomy passage. In effect, I believe he is saying the normal use of finance is being suspended for this moment in history, but once this act is completed, go back to business as usual.

And what was "business as usual" regarding the use of finance among the disciples? Now it is time to clear up the second misconception—that Jesus and his followers were so poor that they had no money.

Think About It

Answer Box # 5

Read Luke 8:1-3. We know that Jesus and his disciples had money being given to them by some of their followers, especially women. We also know that on at least one occasion Jesus sent his disciples to go fishing for money. From the following passages, for what purposes can we assume they used their money? (Matthew 17:24-27; 22:19-21; 26:6-9; John 13:26-30)

I want to emphasize one very important point from two of the portions of scripture you just read. The first is Matthew 26:8-9: "When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. 'Why this waste?' they asked. 'This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.'" The second

is John 13:29: “Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor.” Look closely; what assumption is being demonstrated by Jesus’ disciples that indicates how their money was normally being used?

In the Mathew passage it says they were indignant. That is a strong word. It means anger but more than that. It means to also be deeply offended, shamed. And with whom were they angry? The woman to be sure, but who else? I think they were also angry with Jesus. Why? I believe it is because he had taught them so strenuously and consistently about their obligation to the poor and he had so often demonstrated it himself. But in this instance it appeared to them that he was going completely against all such principles!

And what do we see in the John 13 passage? Jesus whispers something to Judas, and then Judas leaves. What is the immediate assumption that comes to the minds of the other disciples? Was it that this appeared to be very odd and unusual? Not at all. They had probably seen that same scenario many times before—Jesus instructing the team treasurer to give their money away to poor people.

Another use of finance we see in those passages is that they were used to meet the daily needs of Jesus and his group of followers. This becomes clear at the occasion where over 5000 people needed to be fed. Jesus instructed his disciples to feed them. They responded that they did not have enough money to do that. Yes, Jesus then went on and performed the miracle of using a few fish and loaves of bread, but the disciples first thought of what they would normally do when followers of Jesus got hungry—they would use money from their money bag and buy something to eat. This is also made plain in the John 13 passage. When Judas left the room, the disciples had two assumptions in mind as to the reason. We looked at one of them above—that he was going to go give some of their money to the poor. The other assumption was that perhaps he was going to buy some more food for their meal.

Here is the third misconception I want to address: the misconception that God promises to provide us with more than our basic needs. Jesus made sure that he and his followers had what they needed to live. They used their money to secure sufficient food, shelter, clothing, etc. They also paid their taxes! But it appears they gave the rest of it away to the poor. We see this practice continued in Acts chapter two; those Christians who had surplus often used it to ensure that all the believers at least had their basic needs met. What is the misconception exactly? That development and social change, that transformation, that God’s blessing should result in a prosperous lifestyle. Jesus simply does not teach that and he certainly did not model it. But there are many Christians who do.

. . . one influential wing of global Christianity continues to promise its adherents unlimited levels of material prosperity, if only they have enough faith and are prepared to “name it and claim it” in prayer. But such “theology” can be developed only by ripping text after text from its context and by making applications that would seem ludicrous in most Two-Thirds World settings, in which it is clear that all the faith one can muster gives few people a chance of significantly bettering their material lot in life. Unfortunately, such theologies at times actually garner significant followings and offer great hope in contexts of impoverishment, precisely because people’s circumstances are so drastic. But ultimately their failures either create great guilt complexes in the followers of such movements or engender great disillusionment with Christianity in general. John Stott has not overstated himself when he declares, “We have to have the courage to reject the health-and-wealth gospel absolutely. It’s a false gospel.” (Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches - A biblical theology of possessions*, page 25)

Our aim should be that all those who are poor have access to sufficient resources to provide for their basic needs. It does not take a lot of finance to help a few families to achieve that, and most churches, regardless of how they might compare themselves to others in terms of their giving capacity, can manage to assist a few families in that way.

Jesus and his Apostles demonstrated that a primary use of corporate (dare I say “Church Budget”) funds are to be used to address the issues facing poor and suffering people. Scripture indicates the first church fellowships continued that practice at least until late in the 1st century. In the book of Acts and elsewhere we find that the only fundraising efforts among the early Christians that are ever mentioned in the New Testament have to do with Paul raising money to provide for the hungry and poor in Jerusalem. But what happened after that? We have the writings of early church leaders and other historians of the era as reference.

One important point to make right away is that because the early Christians had no church structures to build or support, or costly programs to operate. They had no practice of salaried church workers. The exception to that rule was that the daily food and lodging needs of itinerant Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists were provided for, but even then under careful scrutiny to ensure such needs were genuine. As a result, almost all the financial and material gifts collected went directly to assist people in need.

The practice of giving (alms) within the churches by and large took place in their love feast gatherings, at which time the Lord’s Supper was celebrated. People brought whatever food and other

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provisions they wished to donate. From what was brought, a meal was shared. The excess was immediately gathered up and overseers/deacons took it out into the community to distribute to the poor, widows and orphans, the shut-ins (e.g. the elderly and disabled), and to prisoners. This giving provided for all within the Christian community, but was not restricted to them.

In about A.D. 138 Justin Martyr wrote about this practice: “Those who are well-off and free-willingly wish to do so, contribute as much as each one wants to. What is collected is deposited with the overseer. He uses it for the care of orphans and widows, for those who are suffering want arising from illness or any other cause, for prisoners, and for travelers staying with us for a short time. Briefly, he provides for all who are in need in the town.”

In AD 150 Hermas writes: “Give to all the needy in simplicity, not hesitating as to whom you are to give or not to give. Give to all, for God wishes His gifts to be shared among all.”

In AD 198 Tertullian writes: “Even though we have a kind of cash box, the money does not come from admission fees, as when one buys membership or position in a society. That would be like “buying religion.” Rather, every man contributes something once a month, or whenever he wishes to, and only if he wishes to, and if he can; for no one is forced, but everyone gives his share free-willingly. These contributions might be called the deposit funds of fellowship with God as they are not spent on banquets or drinking parties or on gluttony. Rather they are used to feed and to bury the poor; for boys and girls without means and without parents to help them . . . for shipwrecked sailors; and for those doing forced labor in the mines, or banished on islands, or in prison, provided they suffer for the sake of God’s fellowship.”

But what about tithing? I think there are very few of us who have not heard multiple messages from Pastors and other church leaders about how important, necessary, God-fearing, God-honoring, etc. tithing is to demonstrate that a person is a truly committed and faithful Christian. Actually, the practice of tithing is not taught in the New Testament at all. It is mentioned by Jesus twice (Matthew 23:23; Luke 18:12), but in both cases he uses it to give a lesson about self-righteousness. Giving “a tenth” is only mentioned in Hebrews 7—Abraham gave a tenth of his wealth to Melchizedek, king of Salem, but that occurred well before tithing became a religious ordinance at all within Israel.

Think About It

Answer Box # 6

The instruction regarding tithing is covered in eight Old Testament passages: (Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:25-32; Deuteronomy 12:17-19, 14:22-29; 26:12-14; II Chronicles 31:4-6; Nehemiah 10:37; Malachi 3:8-10). What do these scriptures actually teach us about the purpose of the tithe?

I want to re-emphasize that tithing is not taught in the New Testament. It is a part of the Jewish old covenant system. It was very much associated with the institution of animal sacrifices because the main duty of the Levites was to administer the sacrificial system and a part of the tithe was used to enable them to do that. The tithe was also used to maintain the institutions of the tabernacle and temple. It was also used to provide for the Jewish feasts such as Passover where the people themselves consumed the tithe in feasting and celebration.

But with the coming of the new covenant, the sacrificial and temple structure systems were done away with by Christ. He was the final sacrifice. We are told that God no longer dwells in temples made with human hands, but in our hearts. And regarding Jewish feasts, Jesus is referred to as the Passover lamb; no need to butcher and eat little sheep any longer as a remembrance!

Therefore, the early Christians were left without a multiple-layer priesthood to support, without buildings to construct and maintain, and without large religious events to attend and support. Did they quit giving? Hardly, and in fact the testimony seems to be that they gave much more than a tenth. But it does appear that they continued to practice one other primary use of the Jewish tithe - supporting the poor, the “refugees,” widows, orphans and the like.

Think About It

Answer Box # 7

- 1) Given the actual purpose of the tithing practice in the Old Testament, the use of money by Jesus and his disciples and use of offerings within the early church as indicated in the above writings, how would you compare that with the use of finance within most churches today, including yours?
- 2) What do you think the response of most of today's pastors and other church leaders would be if they were taught what we have just studied?

Christianity Today, one of the most widely distributed Christian magazines in the world did a survey of American churches back in 2000 to find out how they were spending the tithes and offerings given to them. This is what they found out:

- 43 percent of the budget went for staff compensation
 - 20 percent for facilities (rent, mortgage, utilities, upkeep)
 - 16 percent for missions
 - 9 percent for church programs
 - 6 percent for administration and supplies
 - 3 percent for denominational fees
 - 3 percent other
- (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/2000/001/10.70.html>)

Some clarification is needed regarding several of these categories. Because of the kinds of churches surveyed, I am assuming that the 16% given for missions was used primarily for evangelism and church planting efforts, and perhaps to cover the cost of short-term missions teams comprised of church members. I am also assuming the 9% for church programs means activities that directly benefited church members such as Sunday school, Easter and Christmas events, etc. That last line item, the 3% labeled "other?" It is from that category that I assume some "benevolent" funds are made available to help poor people in the community, although my experience is that such funds are primarily used to help church members when they have a need.

Back in 2006, I did a similar "survey" with a group of church leaders in India where we developed a roughly typical budget that more or less represented the ones from which their churches operated. The details were somewhat different from the statistics listed above, but the general picture was much the same. The significant difference was that the "other" category was typically 1% or less. It has been a long journey since the days when disciples grew indignant because they felt available resources should be given to the poor rather than being spent for religious and ceremonial purposes.

Why did we just spend all of that time on this subject? It was a response to the question we considered regarding where churches in poorer situations might come up with a significant contribution to carrying out transformational development among the poor within their own communities. Is the only path open to them the one so many seem to be seeking—linking up with a foreign donor, or at least a wealthy donor within their own context? Perhaps what is needed is a challenge to how the tithes and offerings of most Christians are currently being used. Is the issue truly that Christians in poorer nations do not have money to give to others in desperate need? Or is it that the money they are already giving is consumed by the religious infrastructure of Christianity?

I mentioned earlier that Jesus only spoke about tithing twice in the gospels, both times in a negative sense, but he spoke about giving to others who are in need over twenty times. I doubt many, if any of you will cease talking about tithing as a result of this short study; it is simply so well planted in our minds and language and so heavily emphasized by church leaders. But changing terms is not my point at all. If you are convinced that tithing is still a Biblical imperative under the new covenant, then at least be true to the original intent and use of the tithe—use a substantial part of it in taking care of the poor, the widows, the orphans and the refugees.

Kingdom mathematics

A joint effort by Food for the Hungry and Harvest International has resulted in what are called "Vision Conferences" being conducted around the world. It is a three-day workshop focusing upon mobilizing local churches to engage in community transformation. In that course they speak about "Kingdom Mathematics." What do they mean by that? Here is an example. Isaiah 40:29 reads, "He gives

strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.” If one were to turn that passage into a mathematic equation, this is what it might look like: [weary and weak people X God = strength and power].

Think About It

Answer Box # 8

- 1) Read John 6:1-13. What might be a mathematical equation to express the outcome of that story?
- 2) Read I Kings 17:7-16; 18:1. What might be a mathematical equation to express the outcome of that story?
- 3) Read Mark 12:41-44. What might be a mathematical equation to express the outcome of that story? For this equation, the total is not so obvious and so I will give it to you: [..... = over 2000 years of inspiration]. What is the rest of the equation?

In each of these stories we have just read, the subjects are poor people with very few resources.

- 4) What resources do the poor actually need to obey Jesus' command to love their neighbor? Is it limited to finance?
- 5) Are there any circumstances in which the poor have "too little" or something "too insignificant" to give to others in need?

Kingdom mathematics, according to the Vision Conference, teach us the following lessons:

- The obligation to invest what we have for Kingdom purposes is for all believers. That includes the poor. To obey Jesus' command to love our neighbor, we need only what we already have. [1 small boy + 2 fish and 5 loaves X Jesus = food for 5000 men, an additional number of women and children and 12 baskets of surplus].
- An attitude of love for God and others causes us to respond to God in loving obedience and faith.
- There are no circumstances in which what the poor have is "too little" or "too insignificant" to be used by God. The two widows gave all they had. Even if we have nothing material to give, we have our time, prayer, love, etc. These also can be used and multiplied by God as we give them in obedience to Him. [1 widow + 1 bread cake X God = food for her family for 3 years].
- God blesses by multiplication. The sacrifices of the poor in the above examples were multiplied many times. It also seems that God does more when He has less with which to work.
- We can be sure that God multiplies gifts sown in loving obedience, even if we do not see the multiplication personally. This is the law of the harvest. God has literally multiplied the gift of the widow's last coins through the centuries through the giving of many other people who, through the centuries, have been inspired by her example. As far as we know, she did not see how God used her gift during her lifetime. [1 widow + 2 coins X Jesus = over 2000 years of inspiration]
- Giving should be motivated by loving obedience, not by the expectation of personal blessings. (Acts 20:35 says, "It is more blessed to give than receive." There is actually more blessing in the act of giving itself than there is in receiving any of the benefits.)

Think About It

Answer Box # 9

At the end of this unit is a reading by Dr. Robert Moffitt, co-founder of the Vision Conferences. He writes about the “Upside” and “Downside” of modern relief and development efforts. How do his thoughts relate to our topic of the poor being engaged in helping others, not just receiving help from others?

Being intentional about the mission of Jesus

Carter is about seventy-five years old, African-American, and a taxi driver in Washington, D.C., where I live. He's been driving a taxi for years. A few weeks ago, he picked up my friend Don, and they became friends. Don and I were working on a project to draw attention to the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, and Don invited Carter to come to one of our events. Don introduced us there, and Carter told me his story.

Back in 1994, Carter served as taxi driver for a man from Malawi, Africa. Because Carter wasn't "just a taxi driver" but instead was "a taxi driver in the kingdom of God," he treated his guest with special respect as only a taxi driver in the kingdom of God can. The guest introduced Carter to some other Malawian friends, and soon Carter the taxi driver was invited to visit Malawi, which he did, in 1998.

There, Carter saw poverty he had never before imagined. He prayed, "Lord, help me bring some joy to this village." And God answered his prayer. First, Carter realized that there was no road in the village - just a narrow path, rutted and muddy. (This is the kind of thing a taxi driver would notice. If I had been there, I would have noticed they needed a library.) With a proper road, people could get around better, and elderly and sick people could be transported to the hospital. He had brought some money, so he offered to pay for gas and oil and drivers if the people of the village would do the work. Soon Carter's generous spirit - the spirit of the kingdom of God - became contagious, and someone provided a grader and then more and more people volunteered to help. Three days later, they had built a proper road a mile and a quarter long.

A year or so later, he returned to the village. A young man had been falsely accused of stealing and was stuck in jail. Since Carter seeks the kingdom and justice of God wherever he goes, he got involved, and soon the young man was set free. On this same visit, Carter met a boy who needed medical care that was available only in a distant city. Carter made it possible for the boy to get treatment on a regular basis by finding and convincing - who else? - a driver to take him.

The next year, he went back again and this time helped some young men improve their farming. (Carter is not an agriculturalist, but he used money he had saved from his job as a taxi driver for the kingdom of God to buy them some additional seeds.) He made connections and got twenty-six soccer balls donated to the children of the village, because in the kingdom of God, fun and play are important things. Carter knew this. He even helped them get uniforms, because in the kingdom of God, dignity and pride are also important things.

On another trip, Carter the taxi driver's generosity inspired a shopkeeper in the village to donate money to help some sick children get treatment for ringworm. Soon a Bible school was launched, and it grew from seventeen to eighty-five students quickly. No wonder - when you see signs of the kingdom of God coming to your village, you would want to learn all you can about it!

Roads, rides, seeds, ringworm medicine, soccer balls and uniforms, a Bible school—these are all signs of the kingdom of God in that little village. Carter told me, "I don't do any of this myself. God is doing it through me."

Carter is a taxi driver in Washington, D.C. He's also a secret agent in the kingdom of God. There are thousands of Carters out there, millions. They aren't on TV. They aren't on the radio. Nobody has ever heard of them. They don't write books. They don't need to, because their days are pages in the most important book of all. (Brain D. McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus*, W Publishing Group, a Division of Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 2006. Pgs.87-89)

Think About It

Answer Box # 10

- 1) In what way does the story about Carter illustrate what Jesus meant by the verse "Now that you know these things, you are blessed if you do them"?
- 2) What did Carter need to do and have before he could start having an impact in Malawi?
- 3) In what ways can you compare Carter's ministry to being like a seed for God's Kingdom?

In this course I have been arguing the point that cell groups of disciples in communities around the world are strategically placed to engage in community transformation. It does not require an NGO; it does not require a degree from some institution of higher learning. Of course there are different levels and kinds of engagement, some of which would require certain technical skills to be learned, such as the idea of starting a small business development fund. That takes some knowledge which most of us do not have if we have never been involved in that type of activity.

Carter demonstrates to us that seemingly “small beginnings,” with seemingly “few resources,” if based upon the principles we have studied, if clothed in prayer and God’s love can have a very significant impact for the Kingdom. Remember the story of the little boy and the starfish. He realized that not all of them could be saved from perishing, but a good number would be if he kept working at it. By the end of the day, starfish by starfish, he had made a big difference.

Much can be done to pursue community transformation in very basic ways with resources at hand. If we focus on individual households, the task before us seems more doable. Of course there will be people like the man who questioned what the little boy was doing—such a “small response” to so many problems seems very limited in terms of impact. But that is not true. What is done for one household can be repeated many times over for other households.

Mountainous countries are especially prone to massive land erosion. An example that is often mentioned in the international press these days are the massive mudslides that take place in various countries during the rainy season. Hillsides become heavy with water and finally they begin to slide downwards, covering entire villages. Geologists in South Asia point to soil erosion in the Himalaya region countries as a significant cause of destructive flooding in the delta areas of Bangladesh. All that top soil washed down from bare mountainsides fills the rivers with silt, and during the monsoon season they regularly overflow their banks. Why does this vast erosion occur? A major reason is that people have cut down the forests that for centuries held that mountain soil in place.

In one such setting we had a small community development program operating in some villages on the side of a mountain. In this case the farmers were concerned that their terraced farm land was eroding very quickly. We worked with them house by house and helped them plant small fast growing trees on the sides of their terraces as well as certain long grass species that held the soil together and provided nutritious fodder for their animals. It was slow work, far more relational than technical. When we participated in national level discussions regarding the forestry and erosion crisis and were asked to share about our approach, it was obvious that most of the “experts” felt what we were doing was next to useless. The opinion was that such efforts are fine if you only want to help a few villages, but it would take centuries before it would make a large scale difference, and by then it would be too late. Even within our own organization some staff were making similar statements and advocated doing what most international organizations were doing— establishing large scale tree plantations.

But in this particular location we stubbornly continued, household by household. After about five years, something very dramatic began to happen. Farmers from other surrounding mountainsides started to visit our area. They said they had been watching this hillside become greener and greener over the years and wanted to know why it was happening. The farmers in our locality shared their experience, explaining that they learned how to raise their own seedlings and do the planting themselves. The visiting farmers basically ignored us and asked the local farmers if they would teach them how to do it also. Like a stone gathers speed as it rolls down hill, so did the “almost useless” small effort made with a few farmers five years previously increase in impact, affecting far more lives than we had thought possible. Such was the success of that effort and others similar to it that community level forestry is now a national strategy in Nepal to address deforestation and soil erosion. Household by household can lead to dramatic and sustainable change in large areas over time.

Kingdom seed projects

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches. (Matthew 13:31,32)

Earlier in this unit we looked at Kingdom Mathematics, at how starting with what appears to be a very small contribution, by inviting God into the equation, a small thing can be multiplied and have a great impact. This is what encourages me so much about Carter’s story we read above. Carter was not an “expert,” but he was a disciple who knew that to follow Jesus means doing things to help people in need. Carter did not start an NGO and raise a lot of funds before getting started; neither did he do a masters course on development and social change! Carter just went, saw a need he thought he could address and then did something about it. But he did not do it by himself, but rather together with the people themselves. It was one step, a small step perhaps, but the Kingdom starts as a small seed.

Think About It

Answer Box # 11

Go to the additional reading at the end of this unit titled “Sample Kingdom Seed Projects.” Which of the examples are the kind of effort that might be possible in your own context, among the people you identified in Unit One as being very poor? Give reasons for your choice.

Within Christianity many of us have become very saturated with biblical truth—books, tapes, videos, seminars, conferences, Sunday school, preaching, Bible schools and seminaries, even masters courses! Our minds take in more information than we can possibly process. This can lead to a grave danger, and it is this: it is possible for us to think that as long as we “know” something, then our life somehow represents it. Jesus said, “Now that you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” (John 13:17). The blessing comes not from what we know, but from what we do with what we know. The Apostle James wrote, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man that looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” (James 1:22-24). It is not that having all this information is necessarily wrong; it is what we don’t do with it that becomes an issue in God’s mind.

It is true that Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing,” but he went on to also say that if we abide in him, we will bear much fruit. The secret to effectiveness as a kingdom citizen is to remain connected to the vine. In our case, the vine is His-story. It is the pulse, the heartbeat of God—God’s vision from the foundation of all creation. We are the branches and as branches, our life, our purpose, our identity come from the vine. We are the instruments through which much Kingdom fruit can be produced. Mother Teresa said it so well: “I am but a pencil in the hand of God.”

We have pondered and studied many things in this course, but ultimately our purpose is not to “know more,” but rather to do more. My hope and prayer is that all of you start or join a kingdom cell group in your community who will reach out to the people you have identified as being poor and oppressed. I hope that through such efforts, through such examples as the seed projects we have read about in this unit, that you too will become Kingdom mathematicians—starting small but having much impact in the lives of those to whom God, in Christ, personally came “. . . to preach good news to the poor . . . to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Like the old saying, “The ball is now in your court,” Jesus has said to us, “As the father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Readings

Kingdom Math Concepts and Principles

Dr. Robert Moffitt (Excerpt from the “Vision Conference Training Work Book,” Pages 227-230 - used with permission)

Introduction

Help for people in need can be seen on a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum is “relief.” Relief helps the helpless—those who cannot help themselves—to survive. Jesus’ parable of the “Good Samaritan” illustrates human aid at this end of the spectrum. At the other end of the spectrum is “development.” Development helps people to help themselves and reach their full potential. The story of Nehemiah in the Old Testament illustrates development.

Spiritual, physical or social aid is not usually 100 percent relief or 100 percent development—but a mixture of both. The kind of assistance given should depend primarily on the ability of the receivers to use it to move them toward God’s intentions for their full human potential.

Examples of true relief are the orphanages for abandoned newborn children and the homes for the dying founded by Mother Teresa. Newborn, abandoned children and abandoned, dying adults cannot help themselves. Abandoned babies cannot live without outside help. The abandoned dying cannot die with dignity without outside love and attention. Relief, then, does not help people develop. It helps them to survive or, in the case of the dying, to die with dignity.

True development assistance will cause those who benefit from it to do more with locally-available resources than they would have been able to do, otherwise. True development aid is a catalyst. It promotes the maximization of known resources and the discovery and utilization of new resources.

Although it may use outside resources to stimulate development, it does not create ongoing dependency on outside resources to sustain basic physical and social community needs.

The "Down Side" of Modern Relief and Development

Sometimes, missionaries who come from materially wealthy cultures think of the people to whom they minister as being "too poor" to help themselves. Often, the aid given by missions and/or Christian relief and development agencies depends heavily on large amounts of outside capital, technology, and trained staff to implement the technology. Often, the intent is to use whatever outside resources are necessary to make the largest impact in the shortest time possible. Often, there is not much—if any—awareness or attention given to the long-term impact on the local people. This style of intervention is similar, if not identical, to that of Western-based secular assistance programs, except that it is done by Christians. Often, there is little or no clear, intentional recognition of God's direct role as designer, enabler, and agent of change regarding the needs of the recipients.

For the local church, this has resulted in some of the following problems:

- A diversion from the biblical truth that God is the able and willing source of healing and that conformity to His plan is the prerequisite for healing our brokenness and meeting our needs
- An unhealthy dependency on the "outside"—a mentality of powerlessness that assumes that positive change is not possible without outside money, technology, or skilled people
- A limited understanding of the universality of the commands and blessings of stewardship, sacrifice, and servanthood—that the blessings and obligations are for the poor as well as the wealthy
- A sense that material assistance is a right, an entitlement, something that it is "owed" by those who have more—especially if aid is given inappropriately over a long period.
- Much assistance given in the name of development has actually disempowered people, holding them back from self-sufficiency. When assistance does not meet relief and development criteria - for example, when relief is given but development was needed - the following will be true:
 1. The assistance will be counterproductive to true development.
 2. The aid will make future development more difficult.
 3. The assistance will create a sense of inadequacy to "do things on our own."
 4. The resources will create attitudes of dependency.
 5. The aid will foster such attitudes as "Why should we do this when someone else might do it for us?"

Wholistic development of a community is highly complex. Each facet of the development is interrelated with the whole. It is complicated further when people try to achieve wholistic community development using a plan developed by (and for) sinful man. Unfortunately, much development has been done without a clearly stated and practiced dependency on God. As a result, recipient people learn to look to outside people, money, and technology as the sources for meeting needs—rather than looking first to God and the resources He has given them.

There is also a "down side" if the poor do not—or are not encouraged to—love others by sacrificially investing what God has given them. If they don't, the Bible teaches that they will lose what they have and there will be reason to question their membership in the Kingdom of God.

The "Up Side" of Modern Relief and Development

Fortunately, there is an "up side." Let's look at several positive characteristics when God is at the center of our development activities.

- Although the magnitude and complexity of brokenness are beyond human solution. God gives His people hope for their healing. The story of Nehemiah illustrates this principle. God is capable and willing to heal the brokenness of the people and their "land" (II Chronicles 7:14).
- God is eager to heal our brokenness when we meet his conditions (II Chronicles 7:15).
- The poor are not exempt from Jesus' command to love their neighbor. This can be very good news, because obedience to this command is connected to blessing.
- God provides all that is needed for the poor to meet His requirements for healing.
- God blesses the sacrificial giving of the poor. This blessing is threefold—the giver, the recipient, and God's Kingdom. When the poor give sacrificially, God seems to do "more with less."
- God doesn't do all the healing "for" us. Rather, He gives us an important role in our own healing and in the healing of others. He invites us into a partnership—He is the chief partner, and we are the assistants. As we obey, He restores our sense of dignity and worth.
- God is not limited to visible, known resources. He can make resources available that are presently unknown, at least at three levels.
 1. God knows about resources that we don't see. He can show us the resources, just as

- he pointed out fish on the other side of the boat to Peter and the other disciples.
2. God can reveal to mankind how to use the resources in new ways. Oil, which was relatively useless two hundred years ago, is now a valuable commodity.
 3. God can supernaturally create new resources to meet human need. We call this intervention a "miracle."

Summary

[Based upon the story in Matt 25:14-30], the following questions and answers summarize the "down side" of holding on to what God has entrusted to us and the "up side" of loving others with what we have.

Question: How did the unfaithful servant spell faith? Answer: FEAR.

Question: How did the faithful servants spell faith? Answer: RISK.

May God give us all the courage to risk our resources in a demonstration of love for our neighbor—and therefore for God. If God has called you to work with people who are materially poor, may He give you the wisdom not to rob them of blessings that will come as they risk resources in obedience to Him.

Examples of Kingdom Seed Projects

All but the last story below are from the experience of people who have attended one of the Vision Conferences mentioned earlier in this course. Used with permission, they are included here to both demonstrate what can be done as a result of Kingdom Mathematics and to perhaps give you some ideas of the kind of activity which might be relevant in your context also. In many cases the stories are about churches carrying out a project, but they could just as well have been done by a different sort of Kingdom cell group.

Ethiopia: Street Children as an Opportunity

Three young men attended a Samaritan Strategy conference in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. The young men were already putting into practice what the conference teaches about service. They were ministering to many street children in that city. They provided counsel, food, and shelter—using their own simple and limited resources. At the conference, they were asked to share their testimony. Afterwards, the people who attended the conference took an offering and gave a prayer of dedication for the ministry of these young men.

Their story made an impact on others at the conference, including a Lutheran minister. He was particularly touched by their work because his church had a "problem"—street children were taking refuge on church property. After the conference, the pastor proposed to the people in his church that they develop a new perspective. He suggested that God might want the church to see the street children as an "opportunity" for service, not a problem. The members of the church agreed.

Before long, the street children were integrated into the church fellowship. More than one hundred children began to attend Sunday school, and the church provided them a meal each Sunday. The church also began to offer counseling and assistance for health and employment. This was not only a change in attitude, but personal sacrifice - using the resources of the church.

Myanmar: Rice Paddies Plowed

The following story is from a Baptist pastor who attended a Samaritan Strategy conference in Myanmar (Burma):

After attending the conference, I visited one of our churches in lower Myanmar. While at this church, I taught the lesson Seed Projects - demonstrating God's love using local resources. While there, I learned about a non-Christian man with five children. This man only had one ox, and this was not sufficient for him to plow his rice paddies to prepare them for planting before the rainy season.

I told the church members about this man, who is from a different ethnic group than the tribes represented in the church. There is an ongoing history of conflict between the tribes represented in the church and this man's tribe. The church members chose to ignore the historic animosity between the tribes and provided assistance to the man.

The church members responded by bringing six oxen to the man's rice paddies and helped him prepare the fields for planting. This act of kindness had a great impact on the man and his family. The oldest daughter in the family has become a believer who has been baptized. The entire family now attends the church and is learning about the Christian faith.

The dialect or language spoken in the church is different than the native dialect of the family. The father wants to learn about the Christian faith in his own language. This man and some of the church members are constructing another building where services can be offered in this man's native language.

The simple act of helping a man plow his fields resulted in a demonstration of God's love in a way that brought family members to faith, in addition to extending the proclamation of the Gospel in another dialect.

Dominican Republic: Seed Projects in El Dique

El Dique is an urban barrio community, created when hurricane refugees settled on the steep bank of a river. Church leaders met together weekly to plan community-outreach Seed Projects in the four areas of Jesus' growth mentioned in Luke 2:52 - wisdom, physical, spiritual, and social.

This church in El Dique knew of children in the community who could not afford to pay school fees. The church approached an international child-sponsorship agency to get school sponsorships, but the agency turned down the request. Church members decided to start a sponsorship program themselves. They designed it and invited church members to sign up to sponsor one child at twenty pesos per month - the monthly school fee. One church member volunteered to sponsor one child. Two others joined together to sponsor one child at ten pesos each. Four others had more limited resources and jointly sponsored one child.

Church leaders decided they needed more people to counsel their members about spiritual and psychological problems. They contacted a local agency that provides training for lay counselors, and a team of church members was trained.

Church leaders found a woman who is known to be a good manager of her household budget. They invited her to give a seminar about managing a household with very limited income. All the community was invited. Many people from the church and the community came for this teaching.

Church leaders discerned a need in the church and the community for teachings on family relationships. They contacted a local person with a background in family counseling and planned a seminar on husband-wife and parent-child relationships. Advertisements were posted throughout the community. Church members, as well as a number of people from the community not associated with the church, attended the seminar. Church leaders also used the opportunity to share their faith and explain their interest in serving the community.

Honduras: Seed Projects in Tegucigalpa

This example is from a middle-class church in La Alameda in Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras. La Alameda is in the center of this large metropolitan area.

The pastor of the church challenged each member to fast one meal a week and to bring the funds not spent on food to the church, to share with needy people in the surrounding barrios.

Major soccer games are on Sunday and conflict with church services. Drinking, gambling, and foul language are associated with the games, and those who play soccer are seldom found in church. Church leaders knew that many young men like to play the sport, but lacked opportunity. The church sponsored a soccer league that did not play on Sunday. The league quickly grew to eighteen teams. The church offered its building as a meeting place for the league's leaders. Church members demonstrated their concern for the young people and shared their faith during practices and games.

Several doctors and medical students in the church organized a clinic in the church. They also began several clinics in neighboring barrios, meeting residents' physical and spiritual needs.

Venezuela: Seed Projects in Carapita - a small church in an urban low income area

A government social worker met with the church and invited the young people to help clean up - and then plant trees - in a mountainous area near the local hospital. Twelve young people joined others from the community, the hospital staff, and the local public school in this two-day project. The government provided the tools and seedlings. Organizers of the event publicly expressed gratitude to God and to the local church. They said it was the first time they had seen a Christian group participate in this kind of activity.

A local public school badly needed repairs on the toilets, the electrical system, and a sewage ditch. They had money for materials, but not enough to hire laborers for the repairs. About twenty-five people from the church joined an equal number of community people to do the repairs on a Saturday. Women from the church and community prepared sandwiches and drinks for the workers. School authorities and teachers publicly gave thanks to God and invited the church to do other activities with their students, such as movies and conferences.

Kenya: A School in the "Knife"

Meshack was an unemployed high school graduate in his mid-twenties who attended a small church in a dangerous slum area of Nairobi called Kagishu. In the local language, "Kagishu" means "The Knife." Meshack's pastor asked him to attend a training session where he learned about Seed Projects. On his return to the community, Meshack and the pastor began to pray about how to demonstrate God's love in their community—even though the church had only thirteen members and was materially poor. One community problem was that most of the children in Kagishu could not afford to go to school.

The pastor, his wife, and Meshack were the only members of the church who had high school educations, but they decided they could offer to hold reading and math classes if the parents of Kagishu were interested. Their small-scale Seed Project was to visit the community and see if parents wanted the church to hold classes for their children, even without trained teachers. The parents did. The next Monday, classes started with almost three-dozen children. For several months, the three “teachers” taught the community children without pay. The parents paid a very small fee, with which the church paid rent and purchased some food to meet basic nutritional needs of the children. The numbers of students kept increasing.

The sacrificial activity of this small church began to attract attention from other Christians in Nairobi and even abroad. They began to help financially. At the end of the first year, the school had grown to over two hundred children, and there was sufficient funding to support a staff of ten. The church had grown from thirteen to two-hundred-fifty baptized members. The new believers were mostly parents of the children who were attracted by the sacrificial demonstration of this little church that began to serve its community with the resources it had.

Old Dutch and a young family in America

Let me conclude with one more example. A Kingdom cell group may be a family. Here is a story of a seed project my own family was blessed to be a part of many years ago.

Around 1983, between mission fields and mission agencies, Linda and I were in the US living in a little house which we rented from the church next door to it. Just after we moved in, the pastor told us in a “Oh, by the way” manner that we needed to be careful about the old man who lived across the street, and keep an eye on our young son lest he stray over in that direction. The pastor said something was not right about that old man. He rarely appeared. He made loud and strange noises which could be heard all the way over at the church. By the look of his small house and yard, he was obviously an alcoholic, and perhaps worse. The church folk kept their distance and the pastor suggested we do the same.

One day, Linda, who is one of those types who listen more to their heart than to their head, said to me as I was about to go to the store that maybe I should go over to the old man and see if he might need some shopping done. I was hesitant, but with some prodding she made me feel guilty enough to knock on his door. After several series of knocks I heard some rustling and the door swung inward. The odor which confronted me when that door opened almost made me faint. Peering at the disaster within, I determined the pastor was right. I couldn’t run because I was pretty sure Linda was watching out of our window. So, while attempting to hold my breath and talk at the same time, I quickly introduced myself and asked him if he needed something from the store. He was obviously surprised by the offer and after a bout of severe, loud hacking, coughing and wheezing, he explained how he had just run out of medication and asked if I would pick up his prescription.

His name was Dutch, and yes, he was old and something of a mess. The noises which terrified and offended the church folk were the result of a very serious bronchial condition, not evil spirits. He had other disabilities which kept him hobbling around, and because he knew he was not a pretty site he stayed indoors. Pranks were often played on him by neighbor kids, and no, the church folk who met across the street had never paid him a visit. Dutch had learned to accept his rank in the neighborhood hierarchy.

We reached out to Dutch, Linda with real intent, I with some reservations. Linda washed his clothes (the first batch almost caused her to become ill and she needed to re-wash it several times for the clothes to become clean). We shopped for him when needed, and our two year old son paid him visits. He started to come out into his yard to greet him. He shared our Thanksgiving care basket, together with several other neighbors he knew in the community who could use a bit of cheer as well. Over a six month period we watched Dutch change before our eyes.

Linda, Jamin, and I left for Asia, but some people we knew moved into that little house and picked up our friendship with Dutch where we left off. After three months or so they wrote that Dutch had accepted God’s grace and salvation. They also said Dutch was terminally ill, but because of the changes in his life he had been reconciled with a sister living in another part of the country and her family had asked him to come live with them so they could provide him care. He died about six months later.

We did not do a lot for that notorious “old man across the street,” not really. In fact, I am still ashamed that Linda had to prod me in the beginning to show him even a small amount of compassion and care. We were not even the ones who “led him to Christ.” But when I think about it, “being led” is a journey of a sorts, and it must begin somewhere, by someone. For old Dutch it began with a somewhat reluctant neighbor knocking on his door. It began as a simple gesture, just a seed of kindness really, but it grew and bore eternal fruit - in his life and in ours.