

CHAPTER 10

Evangelism and Social Action: Two Partners in Mission

Thus far in our study, we have learned basic principles which form the backbone of our approach to the remaining task of mission. We have attempted to see the world as God sees it, people by people. We know that there are thousands of people groups needing a specific cross-cultural strategy if they are to be reached.

The unreached peoples, for the most part, are also the world's poorest and most oppressed groups. Attempting to meet their needs is not only a good activity, but also an indispensable component of Christian mission. A starving man cannot hear the gospel clearly because his need for food overrides any other possible interest.

The Protestant church, until the early 20th century, tended to keep social action integrated with evangelistic outreach. Social action was seen as a natural overflow of gospel outreach. The first missionaries to follow William Carey overseas were actively engaged in a wide range of holistic ministries, including medical care, Bible translation which led into literacy and schooling, child care, printing, agricultural assistance and reform, animal husbandry, food production, orphanages, and campaigns against social evils such as widow burnings and child destruction.

Evangelicals retreated from Two Thirds World development ministries during the first half of this century. The "great divorce" between evangelism (as proclamation) and social action (as demonstration) came in reaction to a larger nationwide theological debate which arose in American Protestantism in the 1900-1930 period between the "liberals" and the "fundamentalists." In reaction to dangerous slippages in doctrine and as a backlash against liberalism, the evangelical church went into a period of retreat and separatism resulting in what has been called the "Great Reversal." All progressive social concern was nearly eliminated among evangelicals by 1930.

The social gospel (which was strongly identified with theological liberalism) emphasized Christian obligation to respond to physical need and oppression, the priority of social concern, and the task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth now through human efforts. The fundamentalists rejected these concerns and emphasized spiritual need, evangelism, and the future heavenly aspects of the kingdom of

God. Theological conservatives began to rigidly dichotomize and separate evangelism and social concern—word and deed.

The social discontent in America of the 1960s and '70s demanded evangelical involvement in social concern.* With the advent of “on the spot” television coverage and a whole series of natural disasters, worldwide attention has been drawn to the physical needs of our globe’s poor. Drought, cyclones, earthquakes, floods, and the plight of refugees have received substantial coverage. This exposure has aided immeasurably the flow of funds to evangelical agencies which are involved in relief and development assistance. It has also resulted in dramatic increases in evangelical attention toward social concern and Two Thirds World needs. The Lausanne Covenant, a major evangelical missions document produced during the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, directly addressed the relationship of evangelism and social concern, bringing this issue squarely into current evangelical missions dialogue.

In this chapter, we will attempt to discover a balanced approach to social action and evangelism. In the second section, we will survey the state of human need, defining who the needy are and where they are found. The last section will be devoted to examining a holistic framework for evangelization through Christian community development.

I. Holistic Mission

The debate over evangelism vs. social action in mission has been a polarizing subject for Christians. It seems that the issues have been couched in terms that demand that believers choose one side or the other. This dilemma is poignantly brought out and dealt with in the following article.

□ *Do We Have to Choose? ***

*Bryant L. Myers ****

It was a beautiful evening in the Kalahari Desert of Botswana. The heat of the day was slipping away. The sounds of the bush surrounded us. The Han clan we were visiting had eaten, the evening fire was lit. In the sky there were more stars than I ever knew were there.

Anna, a German missionary from South Africa, was talking quietly in Afrikaans to a Tswana who then spoke in Tswana to another man who spoke the

Han’s melodic language of soft clicks. He in turn spoke to the Han men, women, and children. In the Han culture, everyone has a voice around the fire.

The Han also are called Bushmen. They were the original inhabitants of Southern Africa. They were there before the black Africans invaded from the north and long before the first Europeans set foot in the Cape. They are the only hunter-gatherers left on our planet. Living in complete harmony with the

* One of the most significant of many evangelical books in the 1970s for Two Thirds World attention was Ron Sider’s *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*.

** Myers, B. L. (1992, September). Do we have to choose? *MARC Newsletter*, 92-3, 3-4.

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desert, for centuries they moved from water to water, living off desert plants and animals, always giving thanks to each animal they killed for giving them a meal.

The Han have always been despised by everybody. The warrior tribes of Tswana, Zulu, and Xhosa always despised the gentle Han. For centuries they killed the Han for “stealing” cattle, and when the whites came to Southern Africa it was more of the same. To the Han every animal was a gift of god for the purpose of food. The idea of someone owning a cow was something they could not understand.

Their oppression was complete. A Han woman’s only value was as a slave, a nanny for young children, or a concubine for the men. Han men were good for nothing, often hunted for sport, until they became “domesticated” and were used as cheap farm hands, army scouts, and a market for alcohol.

Today the Han are almost gone. There’s very little room left in the desert anymore. For the most part, they huddle in desert outposts, begging and drinking. Everywhere they are forced to be like someone else. Their culture is not valued. The Han are the poorest of the poor in Southern Africa. There is no room for them in the human inn.

A long time ago, I read several books by Laurens Van Der Post in which he told the Bushman story. He recounted the intense harmony their culture shared with the earth, their ability to share without owning anything. Van Der Post’s message to anyone who would listen is that the Han story is an important part of our story for the simple reason that, as hunter-gatherers, theirs was the first chapter of the human story, one we no longer can remember. Since then, I’ve always been fascinated by the Han.

Years later, because of a good friend who had heard my stories about the Han people, I found myself in the Kalahari Desert sitting beside a Bushman fire. I was full of wonder and excitement. I watched in-

tently as Anna tried to share the gospel with the Han squatting around the fire. I couldn’t understand much since the conversation was being translated from Afrikaans to Tswana to the Han language. But, I could understand its music. The conversation was quiet and gentle, everyone listening intently.

Suddenly, the only young woman at the fire burst into an angry series of clicks and gestures. I turned to my Afrikaans-speaking friend, “What was that all about?” “I’m not sure,” he said, “the translation wasn’t clear.”

Later that night, sitting in Anna’s simple house, I asked her the same question, “What did the young woman say when she became so upset?” Anna shook her head wearily. “It’s always the same. I’ve heard it many times before. I have no answer,” she sighed sadly. We knew from earlier conversations that, in her lifetime of missionary work in the Kalahari, only three Han had become Christians.

“What did she say?” I persisted.

“I had just finished explaining to them that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had died and was raised from the dead so that our sins could be forgiven. The young woman didn’t believe me. She said, ‘I can believe the Son of God was willing to die for a white man. I might even be able to believe that the Son of God would die for a black man. But, I could never believe that the Son of God would die for a Bushman.’” We wept together in the silence that followed.

What does one do with such a story? How does one think about Christian mission to people for whom centuries of oppression, neglect, and systematic dehumanization are so deeply internalized and reinforced? What is the good news to those whose poverty and alienation are so deeply rooted? I have no answers. This experience has haunted me for many years.

1. *What was the fundamental barrier to belief for the Han woman?*

Understanding poverty

Recently, from another part of World Vision's world, some ideas have begun to emerge which helped me move forward a little. The following is based on the reflections of my Indian friend and colleague, Jayakumar Christian.

As a Christian organization committed to empowering the poor in the name of Jesus Christ, we spend a lot of time trying to deepen our understanding of the causes of people's poverty. This is not an academic exercise and it's not for our benefit. Helping poor people understand why they are poor is a critical element in their being able to work for their own development. Sadly, understanding the causes of poverty is a very complex and nuanced task.

Most poor people believe they are poor either because they understand themselves to be in some way responsible or because God or the gods mean for them to be poor.

We have to begin with the fact that most poor people believe they are poor either because they understand themselves to be in some way responsible or because God or the gods mean for them to be poor. This is a result of two different processes. The first is an internalization of their own powerlessness and poverty—the psychological process of blaming oneself. The second is a process of socialization whereby they are being taught, by the rich and powerful (and sadly, sometimes the church), that their poverty is part of the natural order of things.

Historically, evangelicals have seized on the first reason and have tended to overlook the second. The first lends itself to understanding mission as simple proclamation: "You are a sinner, but God has sent His Son for the forgiveness of sin. If you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you will be saved. Jesus Himself promised life abundantly." This missiological point of departure leads to ministries like

proclamation, personal discipleship, and inner healing. For the Han woman, this promise simply was not believable.

The problem with this is that ignoring the impact of society and the accompanying socialization means that chronically unjust contexts are never confronted. The society, whose systems of economics, politics, and law sustain poverty and marginalize people (doing what the Bible calls "grinding the faces of the poor"), continues to be unaware of its own sin and complicity. By ignoring this reality, the call to repentance is directed only at the poor. Those who sustain unjust relationships are overlooked.

Ecumenical folk tend to go at this problem the other way around. They often limit their mission focus to the socialization issue. "No, the God of the Bible did not and does not want you to be poor. You are poor because the rich and powerful have created systems of politics, economics, and laws which are designed to keep you poor and to protect their wealth and power. Jesus came to liberate the powerless and bring down the rich and powerful." This missiological point of departure leads to ministries of "conscientization," community organization, and working for justice.

The problem with an approach that challenges only the social reinforcement of poverty is that the end point of ministry becomes access to power and resources. While the poor desperately need access to power and resources in the social arena, they also need to hear the news about the possibility of being rightly related to God.

This approach is also inadequate from the perspective of the rich and powerful. While it exposes their sin, it does not deal with whatever it is the rich have internalized, which allows them to be unaware of or to rationalize their oppressive behavior. They are not told that God has good news for them as well. They are simply demonized. Yet, if the rich are not transformed, nothing changes for the poor.

2. In what two ways do most of the poor understand their poverty?

3. Why does the author feel it is an error simply to focus on the poor in attempting to alleviate poverty?

The question of identity

Thinking about the causes of poverty in this way gave me another perspective on the story of the young Han woman. I began to realize she is captive to her own processes of internalization and self-blame as well as to her socialization from the context in which she lives. The good news of Jesus Christ, presented solely in terms of sin management and restoring her relationship with God, could not get through to her, for the simple reason that her context so strongly reinforced her sense of unworthiness that the good news was not believable. While it is true that she needs to hear the good news Jesus brings for her inner self, it is also true that her profound sense of alienation cannot be relieved without also transforming the poverty-sustaining oppression of the world in which she lives. If the way white and black folk live with and value the Han isn't seen to change, it's hard to see how her view of herself and her people can change.

Once again we arrive at the conclusion that Christian mission must be holistic. It must include both the interior and the exterior, the forgiveness of sins and the fullness of life, evangelism and justice. The whole message of Jesus must be for both the life inside oneself and the world in which one lives and from which one learns. The reason for this is that there is a deeper, underlying issue which links both self-blame and oppression. This issue is identity, both individually and in relationship. The questions, "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" are answered both from within oneself and by one's context.

This of course is precisely the question the gospel of Jesus Christ is trying to answer. The gospel tells us who and whose we are. The good news is that, through Jesus Christ, we can be sons and daughters of God and heirs to His emerging kingdom on earth. We no longer have to live under bondage either to ourselves or our societies. This is good news for both the Han woman and for the white and black people who inhabit the structures which oppress her so profoundly.

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Understanding the question of identity as the heart of the matter is the key to enlarging our missiological playing field. Now one does not have to choose between what has been presented by some as two incompatible or mutually exclusive frameworks for understanding human need. In fact, choosing one over the other reduces the gospel either to proclamation or to the pursuit of just relationships. Those evangelicals or ecumenicals who insist on a choice are both wrong, but for different reasons.

4. How does the concept of holistic mission attempt to reconcile the debate over evangelism vs. social action in mission?
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Holistic mission demands that Christian mission minister both to man's spiritual needs *and* to his physical, emotional, and social needs. It must be a "both/and" approach, not "either/or." In principle, most contemporary evangelicals would not argue this point. The debate continues, however, in relation to what proportion of Christian mission each need should occupy. In the following excerpt, Peter Wagner defines the parameters of the current debate.

□ On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy *

C. Peter Wagner

The mission—no options here!

The definition of mission has been a topic of constant debate for the past 100 years. It revolves chiefly around the relationship of what have been called the *cultural mandate* and the *evangelistic mandate*.

The *cultural mandate*, which some refer to as Christian social responsibility, goes as far back as the Garden of Eden. After God created Adam and Eve, He said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:21). As human beings, made in the image of God, we are held accountable for the well-being of God's creation. In the New Testament we are told that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39). The concept of neighbor, as the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches, includes not only those of our own race or culture or religious group, but all of humanity. Doing good to others, whether our efforts are directed toward individuals or to society as a whole, is a biblical duty, a God-given cultural mandate.

The *evangelistic mandate* is also first glimpsed in the Garden of Eden. For a period of time, whenever God went to the Garden, Adam and Eve were waiting for Him and they had fellowship. But sin entered into the picture. The very next time that God went to the Garden, Adam and Eve were nowhere to be found. Fellowship had been broken. Humans had been alienated from God. God's nature, in light of the events, was made clear by the first words which came out of His mouth, "Adam, where are you?" (Gen. 3:9). He immediately began seeking Adam. The evangelistic mandate involves seeking and finding lost men and women, alienated from God by sin. Romans 10 tells us that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But they cannot call if they have not believed, and they cannot believe if they have not heard, and they cannot hear without a preacher. "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace" (Rom. 10:15). Bearing the gospel which brings people from darkness to light is fulfilling the evangelistic mandate.

Both the cultural mandate and the evangelistic mandate are essential parts of biblical mission, in my

* Wagner, C. P. (1992). *On the cutting edge of mission strategy*. In R. D. Winter & S. C. Hawthorne (Eds.), *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader* (rev. ed.) (pp. D45-D47). Pasadena: William Carey Library.

opinion. Neither is optional. There is a growing consensus on this point in evangelical circles.

This was not true as early as 22 years ago when the Berlin World Congress on Evangelism was held in 1966. Not only was virtually no mention made there of the cultural mandate (Paul Rees of World Vision was a minor exception), but such a prominent evangelical spokesman as John R. W. Stott defined mission as including only the evangelistic mandate, and not the cultural mandate—although he did not use that precise terminology. One of the first evangelicals to stress the cultural mandate in a public forum was Horace Fenton of the Latin America Mission at the Wheaton Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission, also held in 1966. Following that, the social consciousness generated by the social upheavals of the 1960s brought the cultural mandate to prominence, until it was given a relatively high profile on the platform of the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne in 1974. By then John Stott himself had changed his views, recognizing that mission included both the cultural and the evangelistic mandates. The Lausanne Covenant makes a strong statement on the cultural mandate in Article 5, and on the evangelistic mandate in Article 6.

The current debate involves four positions: (1) those who would prioritize the cultural mandate over the evangelistic, (2) those who would give equal weight

to both—even arguing that it is illegitimate to divide them by using such terminology, (3) those who would prioritize the evangelistic mandate, and (4) those who would hold the pre-Lausanne view that mission is the evangelistic mandate, period.

While we must not neglect our Christian social responsibility, it must never get in the way of soul-winning evangelism.

My personal view is that of the Lausanne Covenant. But I spend little time fussing with those who hold that mission should be understood as evangelism and that social ministry should be termed a Christian duty or an outcome of mission rather than part of mission itself. I see either of these positions as contributing more positively to the evangelization of the world than the other options. But I do not accept the prioritization of evangelism solely on pragmatic grounds. I believe it best reflects the New Testament doctrine of mission. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 10:10), and we move out in Jesus' name to do the same. While we must not neglect our Christian social responsibility, in my opinion, it must never get in the way of soul-winning evangelism.

5. *In your own words, define the cultural mandate.*

6. *Which of the four positions mentioned by Wagner are the only viable ones in his thinking? Do you agree? Why or why not?*

It seems that somehow, the church's mission must reconcile polarized positions on evangelism and social action. This implies a balanced viewpoint which is not dominated by one side or the other. The vision of this kind of ideal "partnership" between these two approaches to mission is clouded, however, by a pragmatic issue: which approach should act as the "leading partner"? In the following article, Samuel Moffett articulates his views on this matter of key strategic importance.

□ *Evangelism: The Leading Partner* *

Samuel Moffett **

The New Testament uses the word *evangelize* in what seems to be a shockingly narrow sense. A whole cluster of verbs, actually, is used to describe evangelism: "preaching the word" (Acts 8:4), "heralding the kingdom" (Luke 9:2), "proclaiming the good news" (Luke 4:18; 8:1). But in essence, what all these words describe is simply the telling of the good news (the gospel) that Jesus the Messiah is the saving King. Evangelism was the announcement of Christ's kingdom. It was more than an announcement. It was also an invitation to enter that kingdom, by faith and with repentance.

What evangelism is not

Evangelism, therefore, is not the whole of the Christian mission. It is only a part of the mission. Jesus and the disciples did many other things besides announce the kingdom and invite response. Evangelism is not worship or sacraments. "Christ did not send me to baptize but to evangelize," said Paul (1 Cor. 1:17).

And it is not church growth or church planting. The planting and growth of the church are surely goals of evangelism and its hoped-for results. But evangelism does not always produce a church or more members for it. Neither is evangelism confined to apologetics. Paul says, "We try to persuade" (2 Cor. 5:11), but insists that he was sent to tell the good news "without using the language of human wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:17, 20).

Finally, evangelism in the New Testament was not confused with Christian service, or Christian action and protest against the world's injustices. A revealing and disturbing incident in the book of Acts tells how Greek speaking Jews among the early Christians rose as a minority group to complain of discrimination in the distribution of funds. The reply of the apostles seems almost callously narrow: "We cannot neglect the preaching of God's word to handle finances" (Acts 6:1-2, TEV). Of course, they did immediately proceed to do something about the injustice. But they did not call it evangelism.

In kingdom context

In the context of the kingdom, however, the evangelistic proclamation was never so narrow that it became isolated from the immediate pressing needs of the poor, the imprisoned, the blind, and the oppressed.

Here I am reminded of Korean evangelism. I asked a pastor in the Philadelphia area why his church was growing so fast. "When Koreans come in," he replied, "first I get them jobs; I teach them some English; I help them when they get in trouble with their supervisors. I invite them to church. And then I preach to them the gospel." That is putting evangelism into context.

But if there is anything worse than taking the text out of context, it is taking the context without the

* Moffett, S. (1992). *Evangelism: The leading partner*. In R. D. Winter & S. C. Hawthorne (Eds.), *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader* (rev. ed.) (pp. D207-D209). Pasadena: William Carey Library.

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text. Just as Christ's salvation is never to be isolated from the immediate, real needs of the people, neither is it to be identified with those present needs. When Jesus quoted the Old Testament about "good news to the poor" and "freedom for the oppressed," He did so on His own terms. His salvation is not Old Testament *shalom*, and His kingdom is not Israel.

There is nothing quite so crippling to both evangelism and social action as to confuse them in definition or to separate them in practice. Our evangelists sometimes seem to be calling us to accept the King without His kingdom; while our prophets, just as narrow in their own way, seem to be trying to build the kingdom without the saving King.

More than balance

There was a time when most Christians believed that evangelism was the only priority. They were wrong. Then the Church swung too far the other way. The only Christian priority for some has been social justice through reconstruction. That, too, is an important priority. But it is not the only one. And when they made it the only clear mission of the Church, the result was a disaster. In trying to speak to the world, they almost lost the Church.

Others tried to restore the balance by pointing out that "Christ mediates God's new covenant through both salvation and service.... Christians are called to engage in both evangelism and social action." But even that is not enough. What the Church needs for the future in mission is more than balance. It needs momentum. Not an uneasy truce between faith and works, but a partnership.

Now in most practical working partnerships, there must be a leading partner, a "first among equals," or nothing gets done. Which should be the leading partner in mission? Evangelism or social action?

I submit that what makes the Christian mission different from other commendable and sincere attempts to improve the human condition is this: in the Christian mission our vertical relationship to God comes first. Our horizontal relationship to our neighbor is "like unto it," and is just as indispensable, but it is still second. The leading partner is evangelism.

This is not to exalt the proclamation at the expense of Christian action. They belong together. But it does insist that, while without the accompanying deeds the good news is scarcely credible, without the Word the news is not even comprehensible! Besides, the real good news is not what we in our benevolence do for others, but what God has done for us all in Christ. Evangelism, as has been said, is one beggar telling another where to find bread.

The supreme task of the Church, then, now and for the future, is evangelism. It was the supreme task for the Church of the New Testament. It is also the supreme challenge facing the Church today.

Half the world unreached

The determining factor in developing evangelistic strategies, I believe, is that evangelism moves always in the direction of the unreached. It must focus on those without the gospel. More than one-half of the world's people are still without the simplest knowledge of the good news of God's saving love in Jesus Christ. There is no greater challenge to evangelism in mission than that.

Christians are rightly concerned about the grievous unbalances of wealth and food and freedom in the world. What about the most devastating unbalance of all: the unequal distribution of the light of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ?

In this connection it may be useful to note that for general strategic evangelistic planning, some missiologists suggest as a rule of thumb that "a group of people are classified as unreached if less than 20 percent claim or are considered to be Christian." Christians are rightly concerned about the grievous unbalances of wealth and food and freedom in the world. What about the most devastating unbalance of all: the unequal distribution of the light of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ?

I am not overly addicted to statistics. But what does it say about a "six-continent approach to evangelism," for example, to find that most of our church mission funds still go to ourselves on the sixth

continent, which is between 70 percent and 80 percent at least nominally Christian? Africa, however, is perhaps 40 percent Christian by the same rough and imprecise standards. And Asia, which holds more than one-half of all the people in the world, is only three percent to four percent even nominally Christian.

In the next 10 years, the number of non-Christians which will be added to the population of Asia will be greater than the entire present population of the United States multiplied almost three times (650 million, compared to 220 million). Treating all six continents as equals for strategic purposes is a selfish distortion of the evangelistic realities of the world.

One last thought. There is an unexpected bonus to keeping the definition of evangelism simple. It means that anyone can get into the act. One of the

happiest lessons I ever learned about evangelism came not from a professional evangelist, but from a watermelon vendor.

It was in a Korean village, and my wife came up to ask him how much a watermelon cost. He was so surprised at finding a long-nosed foreigner who spoke Korean that at first he was struck dumb. He even forgot to tell her the price. There was something more important he wanted to say. He asked, "Are you a Christian?" And when she replied, "Yes," he smiled all over. "Oh, I'm so glad," he said, "because if you weren't I was going to tell you how much you are missing."

If more of us were so happy about what we have found in the Lord Jesus Christ that we couldn't wait to tell those who have not found Him how much they are missing, we would need to worry no longer about the future of evangelism.

7. *Why must evangelism be placed in the "context of the kingdom"?*

8. *What primary scriptural justification does the author make for recognizing evangelism as the "leading partner"?*

9. *If evangelism is indeed the leading partner, how will this affect our overall mission strategy?*

There are both scriptural and pragmatic reasons for developing a holistic view of missions. A framework which includes both aspects of ministry is important to contemporary missions. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that one of the primary distinctives of evangelical mission is its recognition of evangelism as the leading partner in this alliance. With this in mind, we will now shift our thoughts to the current state of world needs.

II. The World's Needy

We live in a desperately hurting world. The horrors of wars, famines, and natural disasters are brought into our homes daily through mass media. Refugees stream across borders into precariously built camps, while AIDS ravages entire populations of some nations in Africa and Asia. Hundreds of thousands of abandoned children roam the streets in South America. Poverty is the norm in many parts of the globe, and starvation is a common occurrence. In more affluent sectors of society, drug abuse and a general breakdown of the family and its values have produced a sense of perpetual crisis. Everywhere we go, we are met with devastating physical, social, and spiritual need.

In attempting to evangelize a specific unreached group, we have learned that one of the key steps in planning an effective strategy is attempting to determine people's perceived needs. It is often these needs that give readiest access to the people and that allow us to demonstrate God's love in ways that are tangible and real. In essence, the major emphasis in our getting to know a people group and identifying with them is this understanding of their needs in order to minister to them effectively.

Who are the most needy? The following definition of the needy and where they are found is excerpted from the video script *Is There Good News for the Poor?*

□ *Is There Good News for the Poor?**

Tom Houston and Eric Miller

Tom Houston: In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus visits the synagogue in Nazareth immediately after He had resisted the temptations to use popularity, publicity, or power to accomplish His mission.

Standing, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to announce the year when the Lord will save His people (Luke 4:18-19, TEV).

Later, when John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask about His credentials as the Messiah, Jesus healed many people of their sickness, diseases, evil spirits, and gave sight to many blind people. He answered John's messengers:

Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf can hear,

the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor (Luke 7:22, TEV).

Clearly for Luke, bringing or preaching Good News to the poor is central to Jesus' understanding of His mission. The poor are to be special beneficiaries of His Good News. As I studied Luke's Gospel, I was puzzled because Luke sees the poor as central to the mission of Jesus and then seems to say little about the poor as such. I felt I was missing something that was there.

As I looked more closely, I noticed something similar in both places where Luke talks about Good News for the poor. In Jesus' announcement of His mission in Luke 4:18-19 (TEV), He proclaimed:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and to announce the year when the Lord will save His people.

* Miller, E. (Producer). *Is there good news for the poor?* [Videotape]. Madison: IVP Missions/2100 Productions.

Could it be that Jesus was including the captives, the blind, and the oppressed among those whom He calls poor?

Then I looked at Luke 7:22 (TEV), at the evidence Jesus gives that He is the Messiah:

Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life.

Perhaps the blind, the prisoners, the oppressed, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf are examples of the poor that Jesus is speaking of.

In other words, the Good News is preached to the poor. Perhaps the blind, the prisoners, the oppressed, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf are examples of the poor that Jesus is speaking of. Blind and lame people in the Gospels were often beggars. Prisoners were often in jail for debt or theft and did not come out until they had paid the last penny. Lepers were outcasts from society and were cut off from all means of making a living. If “the year when the Lord will save His people” was a reference to the Year of Jubilee, that year was intended to benefit debtors, slaves, and those dispossessed of their land.

The two words used for “the poor” in the New Testament are *penes* and *ptochos*. *Penes* refers to the person who is oppressed, underpaid, the working poor. *Ptochos* refers to the person who has no work to do and thus has to beg. It is sometimes translated “poor” and sometimes “beggar.” The basic idea is dependence on others for the essentials of life, like food, clothes, shelter, and health.

With that in mind, when we read Luke and Acts with this linguistic clue, we discover many references to the poor:

1. The hungry and their children, that Mary says will be filled with good things (Luke 1:53);
2. The people, and their children, who are oppressed by tax collectors who take more than their due, and by soldiers and policemen who

take their money or bring false charges against them (Luke 3:12-14);

3. The disabled blind, deaf, lame, paralyzed, lepers, and demon possessed, and their children, who cannot work for a living and are cut off from society (Luke 3-7);
4. The widows, like the one in Nain, whose only son died, leaving her with no breadwinner in her home (Luke 7:11-17);
5. The widows who cannot get justice from judges (Luke 18:2-5), whose houses are expropriated by hypocritical religious leaders (Luke 20:47);
6. The women with medical problems who have spent all their money on doctors (Luke 8:43);
7. The victims of famine in Judea, and their children, who were helped by the Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:27-30).

It is evident in Luke and Acts that the poor to whom Jesus and the early church brought Good News included the naked, the hungry, the disabled, the oppressed, the imprisoned, the sick, the bereaved widows, and orphans. But the question remains, *What kind of Good News was needed by all these people?*

What was the Good News?

It was the kind of Good News that brought a prostitute to wash Jesus’ feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair, and then hear Jesus say, “Your sins are forgiven” (Luke 7:36-50, TEV).

It was the kind of Good News that brought the leper to kneel and say, “If you want to, you can make me clean,” and feel Jesus’ touch and hear Him say, “I do want to.... Be clean!” (Luke 5:12-15, TEV).

It was the kind of Good News that prompted a disabled man’s friends to bring him to Jesus and have their faith rewarded by hearing Jesus say, “Your sins are forgiven you, my friend.... Get up, pick up your bed, and go home” (Luke 5:17-24, TEV).

It was the kind of Good News that challenged a prominent religious leader to think about inviting the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind, who

could not repay him, to a banquet as the true way to blessing (Luke 14:1-14).

The Good News of the kingdom of God is that sin, disease, and oppression are never the last word. Where Jesus is King, He brings forgiveness, healing, and liberation.

Because evangelism and social concern were inseparable in the mind of Jesus, they must be inseparable in our minds and ministry.

Jesus expected—and it should be expected today—the preaching of the Good News to bring help and hope to the sinner, help and hope to the poor. Because evangelism and social concern were inseparable in the mind of Jesus, they must be inseparable in our minds and ministry.

As representatives of Jesus, we must ask, *Who are the poor today who are desperately calling for Good News?*

Who are the poor—today?

Young voices: We are the blind.

Narrator: Two hundred fifty thousand children will become permanently blinded this year for lack of a 10-cent vitamin A capsule or a daily handful of green vegetables.* And that is only one instance where people become blind because they are poor.

Young voices: We are the lame.

Narrator: Each year 230,000 children are struck by polio because they do not receive the immunization which has virtually eliminated polio in the West.

Female voices: We are the mothers who lose our children before they are five years old.

Narrator: Fourteen million children will die this year from common illnesses and malnutrition. Most could be saved by relatively simple, low-cost methods. Two and a half million of them die from dehy-

dration due to diarrhea, yet a solution of eight parts sugar and one part salt in clean water could save their lives.

Male and young voices: We are the husbands who lose their wives, and the children who lose their mothers and become orphans from preventable deaths in childbirth.

Narrator: In the next 24 hours more than a thousand young women will die because of something going wrong at childbirth. As long as the nutrition of girls is placed second to that of boys, as long as women eat last and least and work hardest and longest, as long as half of the babies in the developing world are delivered with no trained person in attendance, child bearing will remain 150 times as dangerous as in the West.

Mixed voices: We are the people who cannot read.

Narrator: Many are poor because no one has taught them to read. They are cut off from much that could enrich their lives.

Young voices: We are the children who cannot go to school.

Narrator: In the last few years, governments of the 37 poorest nations have cut spending on health by 50 percent and on education by 25 percent, in order to pay the West the interest that they owe on their huge debts.

Mixed voices: We are the refugees who have lost our homes.

Narrator: Today 14 million displaced people have lost citizenship, homeland, relationships, and the opportunity to work, and much that gives life meaning.

Young voices: We are the orphans.

Narrator: Thousands of children are orphaned by war, civil strife, revolution, and terrorism. Millions more are being abandoned by their parents. There are 3 million of these in Brazil alone.

Women's voices: We are the prostitutes.

* *The state of the world's children 1989* (p. 40). London: Oxford University Press.

Narrator: To provide for their children, many women are forced to turn to prostitution. Many children in cities like Bangkok are sold by desperate parents as slave labor or for sexual exploitation.

Young voices: We are the children of the streets.

Narrator: One hundred million children living in the streets of our great cities are drawn inevitably into a life of crime and corruption.

Young voices: We are teenagers, losing our future.

Narrator: The future of many teenage boys and girls in our cities has been taken captive by drug pushers, violence, and promiscuity; they end up as unmarried

mothers, victims of drug violence, or wasting away from AIDS.

Mixed voices: We are the prisoners.

Narrator: The world's prisons are overcrowded. Some are in prison for crimes, some for conscience, others are the victims of unjust legal systems. All their families suffer.

Mixed voices: We are the destitute.

Narrator: There are nearly one billion people who are defined as "the absolute poor," whose existence is characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, and disease, and is beneath any reasonable definition of human decency.

10. *How do the authors define the poor?*

11. *What signifies "good news" to these poor? Is that the same "good news" we have to offer them?*

12. *Why is Christian witness so closely linked to ministry to the poor?*

We don't have to travel far to come in contact with the poor and destitute. In a world full of need, how do we determine where to focus our attention? Even the cities of the affluent West are filled with homeless and indigent peoples, as well as working poor, drug abusers, and others with desperate needs. In the following article, Bryant Myers seeks to present some criteria for application to mission strategy.

□ Where Are the Poor and the Lost?*

Bryant L. Myers

The issue is strategy. The place is the world. The primary problem is how to allocate the limited resources available for sharing the good news with those who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. The second question is, What strategy might be most effective?

Who? Where? How? Hard questions, loaded questions. Even theological questions. What information might help us begin to struggle toward some answers?

When we use the phrases, "most needy peoples" and "poorest of the poor," we intend to include those who have both great physical need, as well as the need to hear the good news.

In recent times, the phrase "the poor and the lost" has been used to communicate our meaning more explicitly.

World Vision recently undertook a research effort to gather demographic and socio-economic information which covers both the spiritual and the material dimensions of need in the world.

Traditional sources of information on poverty do not include the spiritual dimension. Don Brandt, a research specialist in World Vision International, worked with staff from MARC (Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center) and developed four indices, made up of a number of indicators. The four indicators attempt to approximate the need for and the openness to the good news in a variety of ways. These indices must be used with a great deal of care. They do not stand up fully to the rigorous tests one normally associates with sociological research. They are rough measures designed to be applied loosely and with discretion by managers who are facing decisions about the allocation of resources.

There are four different ways in which we can view the world in answer to the question: Where are the

poor and the lost in the world? We have combined one spiritual index with one index of physical need.

1. Which countries have the highest child mortality rates and the highest constraints to evangelism?
2. Which countries are the highest on the human suffering index and have the largest percentage of non-Christians in their population?
3. Which countries are highest human suffering and highest constraints to evangelism?
4. Which countries have the highest numbers of people living in absolute poverty and the largest non-Christian population?

When we screen the countries of the world through these evangelization indices and six socio-economic indices, 14 countries show up on all of them. We can consider them the most needy in terms of both poverty and the need for hearing the good news.

Eleven of these countries are primarily Muslim: Afghanistan, Algeria, Chad, Indonesia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Two are Buddhist: Vietnam and Cambodia. Nepal is Hindu. Eight are in Africa, four in Asia, and one in the Middle East.

The most dominant impression one gains from looking at the world in this way is that the lost are often materially poor. Whether one approaches the data from a desire to learn where the good news needs to be heard, or a desire to find the poorest of the poor, the answer is the same.

The second dominant impression one gains from looking at the world this way is that those who are poorest and in greatest need of hearing the name of Jesus live in Muslim or Buddhist contexts. Both religions tend to be highly resistant to the good news of the gospel for different reasons. Islam understands Christians as being expressions of the ancient

* Myers, B. L. (1989). Where are the poor and the lost? In F. K. Jansen (Ed.), *Target earth* (pp. 94-95). Pasadena: University of the Nations/Global Mapping International.

enemy, Christendom—a source of secularism, Westernization, and a very suspect spirituality. Buddhism evades the truth encounter by offering to assimilate Jesus as just another god, while labeling Christianity as an unwanted foreign intrusion from the West. People, in both contexts, not only have not had an opportunity to hear the gospel, but they live in environments that are not open to having it proclaimed.

Both of these general conclusions lead up to some interesting thoughts about missions in the years ahead. If those with whom we desire to share are poor and closed to the good news, what kind of strategy would make the most sense?

It would seem that the place to begin is with the second of the two great commandments singled out by Jesus: Love your neighbor as yourself. A ministry of love, care, compassion, and ultimately of transformation seems the only right place to begin.

At the same time, one could hardly claim to love one's neighbor if one did not feel compelled to share one's valuable possession—the news about the person who saves and transforms. Furthermore, when

one begins by sharing the worth of the gospel through signs and deeds of love and mercy, it is likely that the people will become increasingly willing to listen to words about the truth of the kingdom of God and its King.

If the lost are often poor, then a holistic ministry—one in which compassion, social transformation, and proclamation are inseparably related—would seem to be the strategy for this time in human history.

What does this suggest? If the lost are often poor, then a holistic ministry—one in which compassion, social transformation, and proclamation are inseparably related—would seem to be the strategy for this time in human history. If incarnation is the model practiced by the One who ministered to such as these, then holistic practitioners, people whose lives are eloquent concerning the values and worth of the gospel, would seem to be the messengers of the hour.

13. *What two primary indexes are combined to determine strategic countries for world evangelization? Do you agree with this approach?*

14. *What religious affiliation do the most needy groups tend to hold? What is their general response to the gospel? Why?*

15. *Answer the author's question: "If those with whom we desire to share are poor and closed to the good news, what kind of strategy would make the most sense?"*

If it is true that “the poor and the lost” are primarily found in countries that are severely restricted to Christian witness, how does God open the doors of opportunity? Many Christian relief and development organizations work among these peoples and offer opportunities for service.* While they focus primarily on alleviating human suffering and poverty rather than on church planting, they often support spiritual ministry to the extent they are able.

The poor, oppressed, and war ravaged have always sought to alleviate their condition by moving to locations where their lot could be improved. With little to lose in their traditional countries or areas of residence, they set out to escape their circumstances. While reaching people through their needs is a basic principle of successful evangelization, refugees are particularly open to spiritual influence. These people are often uprooted suddenly from their homes and cut off from the traditions and filial pressures that have kept them isolated and in spiritual darkness. They are ready to hear a new message, particularly if that message is ministered with practical love which addresses their displacement and also their felt need for a new identity.

The following excerpts from an article by Paul Filidis explain the dynamic opportunity these migrating populations represent for those who wish to reach the least reached.

□ **Worldwide Migration: Phenomenon and Opportunity ****

Paul Filidis

Many mission fields have arrived at our doorsteps!

Millions of people worldwide are on the move. Their reasons for packing up are diverse; the effect on their new host societies considerable. Communication media are said to have made the world a global village, but immigration and emigration—both voluntary and involuntary, legal and illegal—all amalgamate and internationalize the world’s community on a face-to-face level and scale never witnessed before.

The plight of war refugees is usually the most newsworthy and thus most evident. The United Nations reports that there are currently over 16 million refugees who have had to flee their country, while at least the same number of people are displaced within their own country’s borders.

But migration is not only due to war. While many seek to escape disaster and starvation, or are forcibly relocated by their governments, huge numbers are drawn by the glitter of ever-expanding urban centers. According to U.N. estimates, nearly 500 million people will have moved to the city during the last decade of this millennium.

Great numbers of job seekers (mostly from the southern hemisphere) come to claim their share in the (often-flaunted) prosperity of the North. For many, their dreams either remain elusive or are achieved at a cost—the loss of home, family, and cultural identity.

* Some of the more prominent Christian organizations involved in relief and development include Church World Service, Compassion International, Food for the Hungry International, Inter-Church Aid, Lutheran World Federation, Mennonite Central Committee, Tear Fund, World Concern, World Relief, and World Vision.

** Filidis, P. (1991, August). Worldwide migration: Phenomenon and opportunity. *World Christian News*, 4(2), 1-3.

Foreign study opportunities also contribute tremendously to international relationships. Millions of foreign students are conveyors of their home culture as well as of the values assimilated abroad.

Are immigrants today's conquerors?

Some observers interpret these demographic developments in a more threatening light. They comment that today's conquerors, unlike the past, are less likely to come in the form of invading military armies. Instead, the "takeover" of a nation occurs more slowly from within as millions of immigrants alter the fabric of the host societies. Other observers paint a more positive image, majoring on the opportunities to share with the less well-off, to provide refuge, and to be enriched by other peoples' cultures.

As economic conditions worsen, attitudes toward foreigners deteriorate as well. They are then seen as a threat to the society, causing changes to the character of a nation, competing for jobs and social benefits.

During economic booms, immigrants are often welcomed, filling job areas deemed less desirable by the locals. As economic conditions worsen, however, attitudes toward foreigners deteriorate as well. They are then seen as a threat to the society, causing changes to the character of a nation, competing for jobs and social benefits. Here are just a few examples of diverse migration cases:

- The racial composition of the U.S. population changed more dramatically in the past decade

that at any time in the 20th century. Largely due to immigration (about 700,000 immigrants are permitted into the U.S.A. annually), Asians increased by 107 percent, and Hispanics by 53 percent.

- Tens of thousands of Hong Kong Chinese, dreading the future prospect of Chinese rule, are buying their way into new home countries.
- Millions of Afghan refugees, suspicious of developments at home, are staying put; many have begun a new existence elsewhere.
- Until the recent Kuwait crisis, millions of South and East Asians had been employed in the Middle East.
- Millions of North Africans and Middle Easterners have made their home in Western Europe. Some analysts anticipate 25 million more during the next three decades.
- Khomeini's era has led 3 million Iranians to begin a new life in exile.
- The Chinese rural work force of 400 million is double what the country needs. Hundreds of thousands are migrating to the big cities. Guangzhou, a city of about 4 million, has had an estimated 30,000 migrants descend on it daily in recent weeks.
- Asylum requests for Europe and North America have increased from an annual average of 25,000 during the '70s to 70,000 in the '80s. In 1990 the number exploded to over 500,000, with the majority from the Two Thirds World.
- In the U.S.A. alone, an estimated 350,000 foreign students—future potential leaders in their home countries—study in any given year.

16. How many kinds of "migrations" does the author describe? List these.

17. With what two perspectives can today's "invasions" be viewed?

**A strategic development
and opportunity**

The internationalization and mingling of the world community has of course many ramifications. From a missions point of view, it constitutes a significant trend. Many peoples that were hitherto less approachable because of political, geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers are now more accessible.

People who formerly may never have listened to the gospel message now consider it with interest—at least for a season. They do so, often, because they are in a vulnerable state, detached from the sway of their traditional socio-cultural context. Although the occasion may be tragic, as in the case of war refugees, similar dynamics apply to immigrants, guest workers, urban migrants, and to those who study abroad.

An estimated 1,000 largely non-Christian ethnolinguistic peoples from the Two Thirds World are now represented in sizable numbers in "Christianized" countries. About 200 of these peoples are from the "World A" (constituting the world's *least evangelized* population segments).

Besides the basic biblical injunction to show kindness to strangers, Christians in these host societies frequently have a unique opportunity to declare and demonstrate the gospel to those belonging to *unreached people groups*. Numerous stories of Christians extending helping hands in a context of hospitality and friendship evangelism have proven this strategic development to be a very rewarding opportunity.

18. How does what we know about both forced and voluntary migrations contribute to our understanding of mission strategy?

Much of what has been discussed in this section supports strategies which use aid and relief to access unreached populations. There is, however, a proactive side of social action which focuses on helping others help themselves. In the following section, we will focus on community development as a strategic framework for mission strategy.

III. Community Development

Development is not a new concept. Since the middle of the 20th century, as a matter of policy, Western governments have attempted to aid poorer nations through various large-scale economic strategies. Based on theoretical models of economic development, massive infusions of dollars have been aimed at raising per capita income levels. Billions of dollars later, the general conclusion is that these large-scale development efforts have been ineffective in alleviating poverty, while contributing to serious problems such as the mass migration to cities.

Interestingly, development economists have come to similar conclusions about strategizing for development as missiologists have about reaching the unreached. There are no “standard” solutions to development. While economists don’t speak of a “unique solution” strategy, they do admit that there is a need to incorporate institutional and cultural variables more fully into the equation. In the following article, Edward Dayton draws some further conclusions about development based on its history and points out why Christians are best prepared to implement successful strategies.

□ *Evangelism as Development* *

Edward R. Dayton

Development is a many-meaning word. For some it has a sense of Western imperialism: the “developed” country is attempting to impose their own values and desires on “lesser developed” countries. “Developed to what?” they ask. For what? There is a built-in assumption that things are better when they are “developed.”

Development has about it the ring of human progress. *Human* progress. It can find its roots in the Age of Enlightenment, when for the first time in history, a large segment of society began to believe that they really could control their destinies. The humanists of the 17th and 18th centuries were stimulated in their thinking by the great discoveries (for the West!) of the Americas and the African Continent. What we can now see were often coincidences of history worked together to convince them that by dint of hard work and high ideals man could triumph over his situation. The stories of Horatio Alger became the everyday coin of our belief. The Calvin-inspired Protestant ethic became an end in itself. “Progress” was measured by acquisition.

Once the West was won, those who were a part of the grand adventure naturally concluded that what

they had been able to accomplish should be a possibility for others. They looked with compassion, mixed with a good degree of superiority, at their neighbors in less “developed” countries and set about to help them develop. Failures outnumbered successes at every turn. The American State Department’s Agency for International Development finally concluded that there was little hope for replicating the developed West through massive doses of Western technology. It was a somber, but wise, conclusion.

The assumption is that if we can deal with an entire community that is still intact in its community setting, that development is possible.

We are now involved in a fall-back situation of operating on the principle that our mistake was one of scale. To attempt to develop an entire nation was beyond our scope, but there still remains the possibility of *community* development. The assumption is that if we can deal with an entire community that is still intact in its community setting, that develop-

* Dayton, E. R. (1979, March). Evangelism as development. *MARC Newsletter*, 4-5.

ment is possible. There are many who agree that this is the right approach. We do too.

Now, the goal of community development always was and still remains to bring a group to a place of self-reliance or self-sufficiency: they find within themselves all that is needed to maintain life at a desired level. The fly in the ointment is the underlying premise of those involved in micro-development, namely, given the right circumstances and resources, mankind is capable of creating for himself a *good* society. The premise is false.

The premise is wrong because man's values are flawed. The natural man is turned in on himself, concerned for himself and his own welfare. Given a choice between his own welfare and the welfare of his society, he will usually erroneously conclude that his own best ends are served by serving himself. This is particularly true if he follows the model of the West. For the model of the West is, "You can do it! Look at me. *I did it!*" Or, to put it in the title of a not-so-old popular tune, "I Did It *My Way*."

And so it is quite easy for us to become involved in valueless community development. We can look with Christian compassion on a group of people living on the edge of poverty and conclude that if they had a better water system, better farming methods, and basic preventive medicine, they would be all right. Community development is possible. But, along with those changes in material standards, there needs to be a change in spiritual standards. There needs to be the announcement of the gospel of the kingdom, the possibility of a radical change at the core of one's being.

Don't miss the point: It's not a question of material development that is accompanied by the gift of eternal life found in Christ. It's a question of the basic motivation to want to change, to want to find a new relationship with one's neighbor, to want to put spiritual values before material values. Evangelism is at the core of true development. It is the catalyst that makes the rest of the mix take form and endure.

Perhaps an extreme example will make the point. World Vision is currently involved in an area of the world which has recently been resettled by the government. Each family has been given a plot of

ground, half of which is to be used for a cash crop controlled by the government and the other half of which can be used for personal use. People have come from many different settings to take advantage of this offer. They each have a means of livelihood. Their material needs are met, but there is a great deal of unrest, strife, and social upheaval. Our "development" solution is to support the establishment of a Christian community center that will bring a common value system to the community. The anticipation is that as people become one in Christ, they will relate to one another in a new way. Helping to plant a church that will provide the missing values turns out to be the key element of development.

Evangelism is at the core of true development. It is the catalyst that makes the rest of the mix take form and endure.

Christians have been uniquely equipped to do development. First, we come to the task with the right motivation. The love of Christ constrains us. The demands of righteousness and justice are upon us. It is not a question of can we, but first a question of *should* we.

Second, Christians come to the task with a balanced sense of the times in which we live and an ability to work out our lives in the midst of the tension that, while we believe we are called upon to work against the forces of evil we find in our world, at the same time we believe that only in Christ's return will that evil be permanently defeated.

But Western Christians live in the midst of what a recent writer has called the Culture of Narcissism, a culture in which the individual is turning in on himself to find a fulfillment or self-understanding or self-awareness or a host of other "in" words. We tell ourselves that the society is out of control. Our leaders are found incompetent or corrupt. Our technology threatens to overcome us rather than save us. History loses its meaning for us. What was right 70 years ago is no longer important. Today's problems, we reason, are so different that we will have to make up the rules as we go along. And without recognizing what is happening, we Christians easily follow the same path. We adjust our theology to fit the circumstances we can't change. And therefore it

becomes easy for us to conclude that what one values, what one holds most important, probably varies for everyone. And who are we to tell someone else how to live? And that's about the way non-Christian development approaches the task.

The message of the gospel is a radical message. It not only says, "Change your mind about things," it also demands, "Let Christ change your life—think

about your sister and your brother. What's important is not how much you acquire but how you live out your life." Salvation is not just eternity. Salvation begins now with a new mind in Christ.

Let's listen again to that message—daily. And if we really believe that Christ changed our life, let's believe that evangelism is a key part of development.

19. *What approach have experts concluded should be used for development? How does this differ from previous approaches?*

20. *Why is secular community development bound to fail?*

21. *What unique qualities do Christians possess that allow us to believe that we can succeed in community development?*

Christians are in a unique position to implement community development. Indeed, it is a "natural" instinct which has drawn countless missionaries into innumerable "projects." Unfortunately, many of these projects have failed, not for lack of good intentions, but because of inadequate understanding and resources to carry out the plans. The following excerpt from "Helping Others Help Themselves" more fully explains the nature of community development and the team approach which can most adequately ensure the success of development projects.

□ **Helping Others Help Themselves:
Christian Community Development ***

Robert C. Pickett and Steven C. Hawthorne **

Many factors point to the need for “Community Development.” In the Third World the poorest and those unreached by development are mostly (80 percent plus or minus) in remote rural areas which suffer from lack of transportation and communication. There is little hope for them to enter into the international trade and buy their basic needs—they must be shown how to produce and meet their own needs themselves in the context of Christian sharing. Development seldom continues well or far if the spiritual needs are not simultaneously being met.

Evangelism is the key to community development, when people are freed from their fears or indifference—or even hate—to truly help one another.

Many people in developing countries become defeatist or fatalistic and think of themselves as poor and incapable. They think their country or area is also poor and lacking in resources. The challenge for the Christian (who ideally is also a developer) is to help the local people see hope—for the abundant

life here on earth as well as for the life eternal. After hope comes the need for the local people to become motivated to contribute to their own development. Then comes the adequate assessment of their own personal talents, abilities, and resources as well as the natural resources about them. This can bring release from the syndrome of, “We’re a poor people in a poor country and cannot improve.”

Another factor hindering development is the tendency of many people to look at factors limiting food production, for example, and then blame the lack of adequate programs or performance on the “flood, drought, pests, diseases, etc.” The challenge is to adequately assess these problems, make plans to overcome them, and begin adequate production on a renewable basis. The tendency to “find a scapegoat” must be overcome if adequate development is to take place.

Christian community development is the key. Evangelism, in turn, is the key to community development, when people are freed from their fears or indifference—or even hate—to truly help one another. Community development begins where there are hearts of love and hope in a community.

22. *What are the primary factors hindering development?*

* Pickett, R. C., & Hawthorne, S. C. (1992). *Helping others help themselves: Christian community development*. In R. D. Winter & S. C. Hawthorne (Eds.), *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader* (rev. ed.) (pp. D216-D219). Pasadena: William Carey Library.

** Robert C. Pickett is a professor in community development at William Carey International University in Pasadena, California, and was for 22 years a professor of agronomy at Purdue University. He has worked as a consultant for crop improvement and community development projects in over 100 countries.

Steven C. Hawthorne is part of Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas, and serves with the Antioch Network, helping churches with practical vision to plant new churches among the world’s least evangelized peoples. He has led on-site research projects in Asia and the Middle East.

23. *What is the key to successful Christian community development?*

Physical development factors

Christian community development efforts must address themselves to the whole need complex of a community. Care must be taken to work with the cultural “givens” of the community. Changes must be proven to be desirable. The survival patterns of many communities are so fragile that unforeseen side effects of improvements can prove disastrous. The risk of doing things differently often appears too great to those at or under a subsistence level of living. Any tools, foods, and new technology must be carefully studied to insure that they are appropriate culturally and are renewable and sustainable physically. But most community development is a simple matter of a partnership of strengths and common sense of different cultures. Several basic development factors should be coordinated for holistic development:

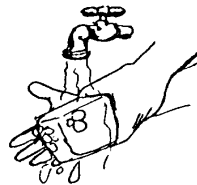
1. Water

Pure drinking water is a daily necessity, and water for at least garden irrigation is desirable. Nonpotable water is perhaps the greatest purveyor of human physical misery. Diseases and parasites from the water lead to lethargy. Pure water can often be provided by constructing protected wells. Communities can be instructed on how to boil, filter, or chemically treat their water.



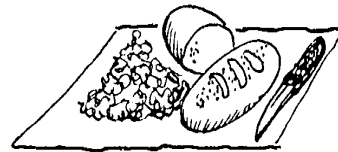
2. Sanitation

The prevention of contamination of water and food by diseases and parasites is largely a matter of education. Simple instruction in proper washing of hands and food and the proper disposal and isolation of human and animal wastes can make a great difference.



3. Food

Both the amount of food, i.e., total calories, and the nutritional balance are important. Many people do not have enough to eat, but many more suffer from nutritional deficiencies of protein, vitamins, and minerals not present in the usual basic diet of cereals, or in roots and tubers which are high in carbohydrates and starch but deficient in the other necessities. Thus, improvements must be made both in amount of food and in a proper balance of protein, vitamins, and minerals. These nutrients can be provided by such foods as grain legumes (beans, peas, etc.), green leafy vegetables, and other fruits and vegetables that can be grown in intensive home gardens, if not generally available. Simple plans for crop rotation and storage can alleviate the “feast or famine” syndrome.



4. Fuel

Wood is by far the number one cooking fuel in the world, particularly in the “hungry half.” Native forests are rapidly being cut down in many developing areas and are long gone in more ancient areas of civilization. The hope for renewable firewood production lies in several promising species of fast growing tropical trees including Eucalyptus, Leucaena, Melina, and Pinus species. Several of these are already widely used and are being replanted on hundreds of thousands of acres each year.



5. Health

Westerners are conditioned to think of health as a gift. Health care then is focused on curing diseases with expensive hospital and clinic complexes. In community development efforts, the stress should be in preventive medicine. Important components are teaching sanitation and public health, inoculations, parasite and disease control, and nutrition training. These should be added to whatever curative medicine is present.



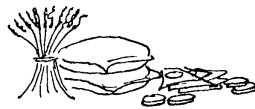
6. Shelter and clothing

These should be designed and provided by making maximum use of local crops, e.g., cotton for cloth and bamboo for buildings. Many other plant materials can be used in addition to rock, clay bricks, etc., where available for buildings.



7. Income production

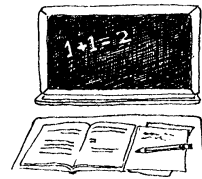
Cash crops are the primary exports and cash earners for most developing countries (except oil-exporting countries). Typical cash crops include coffee, cocoa, sugar cane, rubber, tea, and palm oil, as well as some of



the very food crops developing countries need most, such as beans. "Cottage" industries and village co-operatives can be encouraged. Using local labor and materials, these arrangements hold great promise with good marketing technique.

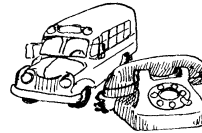
8. Education

In many needy countries there is insufficient education, and literacy rates are very low. Thus literacy often gets first attention in education improvement. Next comes the choice between so-called classical education toward skills useful only at government desks (the biggest employer in many countries) or education toward meeting the needs of the people. The latter desperately needs expansion.



9. Communication and transportation

These two interacting factors are almost unbelievable in their negative effects on the welfare of the people in remote areas. The majority of the people in developing countries live in these areas. Regional or national programs are often necessary to make improvements, but the possibilities for local action should be thoroughly studied.



24. *Why must great care be taken when introducing innovations in a community where people live at a subsistence level?*

25. For each of the general areas above, list possible trained resource people who could be used to meet these needs (e.g., water—well driller, water analyst, water systems engineer).

A team strategy

There are three kinds of gifts that are needed in Christian community development. One is the gift of bringing others to Christ and planting churches. Another is a gift in a needed technical area like food production, health care, literacy, or vocational training. The third is a gift of administration in order to design, implement, and evaluate programs to help the people.

A key strategy is to organize teams that have people with special gifts in these three areas of church planting, needed technical expertise, and management. While all these gifts may be found in one person, it would be more advisable to have these tasks assigned to specific members of a team.

Each committed Christian should strive to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ as his first priority. Each member of a team is best trained first as a “generalist” in addition to being trained as a specialist in a specific task. General training can be given to teach basic and practical skills and information that can

be shared with the people. This can be on witnessing for Christ, small-scale family food production, health promotion, disease prevention, first aid, and simple treatment. Each member can also be trained to be more effective in planning and organizing his or her own work, in leadership, and in controlling (or getting the desired results). The latter means getting information on how the program is doing in order to improve areas that are not doing well.

The hungry half and the hidden people

Community development holds the most promise for the Christian worker desirous of promoting fundamental change in human societies. Community development is consistent with the posture of humility and involvement that Jesus modeled for His disciples. Community development revolves around vigorous yet sensitive evangelism. And the “hungry half” that are most in need of community development are more often than not the “hidden peoples” that are justly receiving increased attention by the church of Jesus Christ today.

26. Why should an “unreached peoples” team seek to include the three basic types of gifted people mentioned above?

The Bible strongly supports the concept of expressing Christian love through meeting basic human needs. Matthew 25:31-40 hardly allows us to treat this practice as “optional.” The fact that meeting human need through Christian community development can also open the doors to unreached people should stimulate the church to actively pursue this channel for evangelization. It is not unreasonable to expect missionaries to develop a profession or skill of direct use in community development, in addition to obtaining Bible and church related training.

As we conclude this section (and this volume on strategy), we want to emphasize that mission is essentially God centered, not man centered. In the following article, Bob Moffitt eloquently brings us back to this focus with a biblical perspective of development.

□ *Biblical Development* *

Bob Moffitt **

What is development? How is it defined? What are its characteristics? Secular and Christian development provide different answers to these questions.

Secular development is designed to improve living conditions. It supports and encourages a higher quality of life. It believes that people, individually and corporately, can improve their quality of life through intentional human effort. In the Two Thirds World, secular development works primarily to meet physical and social needs—health, water, housing, agriculture, economic enterprise, education, etc. Good secular development has two key characteristics: it helps people help themselves, and it is sustainable (it can be continued without ongoing external support).

Biblical development is God centered: from God, seeking to honor God, and relying on Him as the principal participant in the development process.

Biblical development affirms much of this, but with a radically different orientation. This difference is critical. Secular development is man centered: for man, by man, limited to what man can do for him-

self. Biblical development is God centered: from God, seeking to honor God, and relying on Him as the principal participant in the development process. Biblical development does not exclude man, but sees him cooperating under God in the process of man’s healing.

In biblical development, “quality of life” is determined by God’s intentions for His people. It is not limited to the tangible and visible arenas of man’s need, but includes the healing of areas of emotion and spirit. It is not limited to what man can do for himself, but is as limitless as God’s power, love and mercy.

The goal of development is God’s intentions

Development must have a goal, an objective, an agenda. The Christian objective and agenda is directed by God’s intentions. Secular development asks, “What are your needs?” Biblical development asks, “What are God’s intentions for you and this particular need?” The answer sets the goal for biblical development.

Felt needs are legitimate concerns in development works, but they are not the only concern. Heroin addicts feel the need for heroin. Some women ex-

* Moffitt, B. (1992). *Leadership development training curriculum*. Tempe, AZ: Harvest Foundation.

** Bob Moffitt is the founder and president of Harvest Foundation, an organization which is involved in curriculum development for leadership training in Two Thirds World churches. He is the author of *Adventures in God’s Kingdom and the Leadership Development Training Program*.

press a felt need for abortion on demand. A teenager may express a need for a car. These represent real feelings; however, responding to them may actually hinder development. Therefore, the question must be, “What is the root need beyond the felt need?” Unless the felt need is life-threatening, such as food for a starving child, development work is best directed toward the root need.

Christians realize root needs are related to underlying spiritual causes. Scripture describes the relationships between all these needs, and God’s solutions. Before setting goals, Christians ask, “Father, what is your perspective of this need, its root, and your solution?”

Jesus’ development models God’s intentions

Jesus, though divine, was also man, and He is our model for development. To understand God’s intentions, Luke 2:52 is a good starting point. Luke, a medical doctor, described Jesus’ development in four domains—wisdom, physical, spiritual, and social. “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (NIV).

If Jesus needed to develop in all these areas, so do all men. God is concerned about the *whole man*. Development must reflect this *holistic* or *balanced* concern to represent God’s intentions. The purpose of Jesus’ development was to honor God, to serve and give His life for others. Man also should grow in order to love and honor Him, to love and serve others. Biblical development will promote this.

It is well to note that Jesus’ development was in the context of *adequacy* rather than *affluence*. God insured Jesus the necessary resources to grow in wisdom—a simple synagogue school in which the study of God’s law was the focus. He had the necessary resources to grow physically—shelter, clothing, food, water, sanitation, physical labor, etc. He had the necessary resources to grow spiritually—a God-fearing home and ability to read the Scriptures. And, He had the necessary resources to grow socially—a loving, functional family who modeled appropriate relationships in the family and community. Jesus’ development took place in an

environment of *adequacy*, or even relative poverty, rather than in an affluent, technically advanced environment.

The primary resource for development is God

God is the originator of development. He created all things. He sustains all things. All resources come from Him. As stewards of talents and resources God provides, development workers prayerfully and courageously invest them to advance God’s goals.

As Creator, God deals in the supernatural. He is not limited to the existing material world. His principles can and do produce blessing and change. Because development workers are servants of the Living God, they are not limited to visible material resources. In the face of insurmountable difficulties, they can take confidence in the biblical principle God has promised those who walk in His righteousness, that He will heal the people and their land.

Ten years ago I visited an impoverished village in central Mexico. Village leaders, recently converted, committed to live God’s way. They weren’t particularly interested in development. Yet, the village has been transformed from a place where families were killing each other in blood feuds to one where they serve one another in love. In a place where pigs once freely walked through mud huts, there are now tidy wooden houses. (The first seven houses were built for village widows.) In a place with a small stream and not one latrine, there is now running water and sanitation. In a place with an empty, deserted schoolhouse, children now go to school.

Ten years ago, the prospect for development in this village looked bleak. However, God’s intervention was not limited to visible resources. The people of this village entered into a pact of righteousness with God—a pact in which they sought and followed His intentions. Leaders in the village regularly went to the forest to study Scripture and pray for several days. They stayed till they reached agreement on what God wanted them to do. Then they put their convictions into practice. I marveled as He moved to “heal their land.”

27. Why isn't it enough for development to deal with "felt" needs?

28. Why is the primary resource for development God Himself?

The local church should be an active participant in development

The local church is the most visible and permanent representation of God's kingdom in any community. More than any other institution, it can reflect God's concern in each domain of man's need. Other Christian institutions have a particular focus—evangelism, education, health, economic development. They are limited by organizational mandate in their ability to represent God's concern for the whole person.

Where there is a local church, it should be actively involved in servant leadership in development. Thereby, local churches grow their ability to proclaim and demonstrate God's intentions for the people of their respective communities. The potential for sustainability of the work will increase, as well.

Development is required of the poor as well as the wealthy

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) teaches that *no one* is exempt from the responsibility to courageously risk their resources for the kingdom of God. Damage results if the poor are regarded as too poor to play a part. Unless the issue is survival, the appeal to outside resources often reinforces a sense of powerlessness. If provided before local people learn to value and invest the resources God had entrusted to them, long-term dependency on outside financial, material, and technical aid may occur. The history of modern development is replete with examples of well intended effort which inhibited rather than advanced development.

God multiplies the gifts of the poor. In biblical accounts of the widow of Zarephath, the feeding of

the 5,000, and the widow's mite, God acted in response to sacrificial commitment of resources. Even the poor must demonstrate God's love to those around them. This is their gift from God.

In India, a village church realized they had a responsibility to invest the little they had to demonstrate God's love to their Hindu neighbors. They went out to see what needs existed. They discovered that some Hindu women owned only one sari. Every other day, when the sari was being washed, they could not leave their homes for shopping or other necessities.

No one is exempt from the responsibility to courageously risk their resources for the kingdom of God.

The pastor asked if any in the congregation with three saris would give one to the Hindu women's need. The result? All the saris needed (about 12) were given and delivered. At the same time, Hindu women requested Christians to come and pray for the protection of their unborn children. Matching needs with resources has become part of the Sunday worship experience of these Indian Christians. A church which had seen itself as too poor to make a difference, now entered a much fuller dimension of outreach.

Encouraging sacrificial stewardship for the poor in no way exempts those whose resources are abundant. In John 12:28 Jesus says, "You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me" (NIV). This is often quoted to excuse indifference to the plight of the poor. In fact, Jesus

was quoting Deuteronomy 15:11, which gives a very different conclusion: "Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land" (NIV).

God requires compassionate and liberal sharing with those in need. *All* people are to risk their resources for the kingdom. Isaiah 58, Matthew 25, Luke 10:25-37, James 2:14, and 1 John 3:16-18

make it clear that it is impossible to love one's neighbors without being open to promote all God's intentions for them.

The responsibility exempts no Christian. If the poor are held accountable for this, how much more will the rich be expected to use all they have to bless others, honor God, and expand the kingdom. Lovingly done, this is biblical development.

29. *What is the role of the church in development?*

30. *Why should poor Christians as well as the rich participate in community development?*

Summary

The 20th century evangelism vs. social action debate has moved evangelicals steadily towards a reconciliation of the two positions. While balance has been sought, evangelism is still recognized as the "leading partner." Notwithstanding, the biblical and practical reasons for engaging in social action are numerous and essential to contemporary mission strategy.

The breadth and intensity of human need around the globe are beyond comprehension. War, famine, and pestilence affect whole segments of humanity. All of these crises offer Christians a chance for involvement. The poorest of the poor socially are also the poorest spiritually. They also tend to be located in the most restricted access countries for Christian witness. Their needs, however, may become the open door to reaching them. Often, these same people become more accessible through migrations intended to escape their circumstances. Initially, these immigrants and refugees are particularly open to the good news shared by loving Christians.

Improving the lives of the poor in under-developed countries is a mission which has been attempted on a large scale by Western governments. Readdressing the issue through community development is only viable if the beneficiaries can also be transformed in their basic motivations. Only Christ can do that, and He must be the center of Christian community development. Christians are uniquely suited to engage in this activity, but they should recognize that teams with adequately equipped resource people provide the best framework for achieving holistic mission. God-centered development will encourage dependence on Him as the ultimate resource and will allow all the participants, rich and poor, to risk sharing their resources to the benefit of all.

Integrative Assignment

In this assignment, you will be drawing up a basic plan for implementing a mission to your targeted people group. You will attempt to answer the question: *How shall they be reached?*

WORKSHEET #4: THE PLAN

The Goal

Based on your previous research, you are now ready to attempt to formulate a *strategy* for reaching your targeted people group. Your planning must be based on a clear vision of what you are trying to achieve. We assume you have the “right” goal and plan to establish a “cluster” of reproducing churches within your people group. All plans and objectives must contribute to this end.

1. State your goal succinctly and in measurable terms. (Example: One thousand baptized believers in at least 20 viable groups in key locations throughout the Tbuli region by the year 2000.)

The Process

You must now try to envision the steps that are required to reach your goal. These steps should be sequential and should be stated in general terms, such as, “recruit and equip a nonresidential missionary,” “establish a missionary presence among the people,” “train the emerging leadership,” etc. Each step, in turn, may have its own objectives and may require an individual plan. Keep in mind, however, that an objective is not an end in itself but part of a harmonized process which leads to the final goal. This suggests a logical sequencing which begins with initiation of the mission and ends when the goal has been reached.

2. Based on what you know about the accessibility of these people and their felt needs, what general approach or methods will you use?

3. What “partnerships” must be forged with others from the force for evangelization? What role does each partner play?

4. How will you know when the first “church” is established?

5. How will the leadership be selected (qualifications) and trained (process)?

6. What needs to happen to initiate and support a “spontaneous multiplication” of churches in this region (and beyond it to unreached groups)? How will you support this movement?

7. List your general objectives in sequential (chronological) order.

The Resources

Through your research, you should have identified people, churches, agencies, funding sources, and other resources for the evangelization of the targeted people. You will be using these resources to achieve your objectives. *The key to implementing your plans successfully is to anticipate the resources needed to carry out your plans, to pray faithfully, and to work towards applying the resources in achieving your goal.*



8. What resources will you need to carry out each of the general objectives you've listed above? Think in terms of people, tools, and money.* List your resource needs next to each objective.

9. Which "partner" will fill each of the resource needs? Tag each resource need with the initials of the source or sources that may meet this need.

* This exercise does not replace prayer or dependence on the Holy Spirit. It does, however, help us to be specific in our prayer requests and hope in faith for expressed needs to be met.

