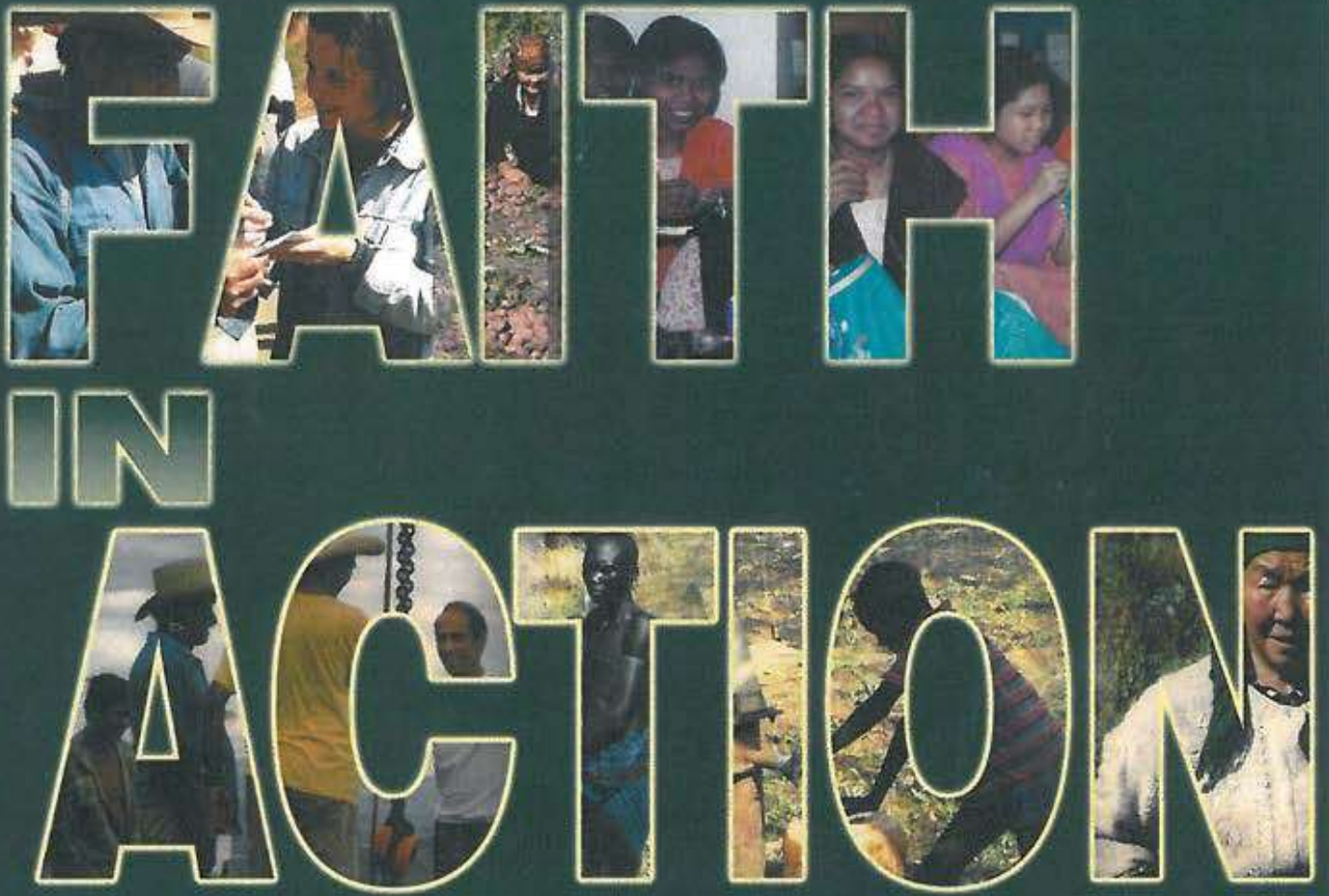


F A I T H I N A C T I O N



Understanding
Development Ministries
from a Christian Perspective

STEPHEN KNISELY

Faith in Action

Understanding Development Ministries
from a Christian Perspective

Stephen Knisely

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Preface

Bad News—Good News: Responding to the Needs around Us, Both Near and Far

First the bad news.

Consider these well-rounded, but significant figures: Half a billion people go to bed every night hungry. One-fifth of the world's people live on less than two dollars a day. Many millions of children cannot financially afford to attend school. One and a half billion people do not have access to clean water. Three billion people do not have sanitary sewerage. More than a third of the world's population lacks adequate health care. And these numbers continue to grow.

The news trickles in from poor rural and urban communities around the world. In our own communities we can see that just staying alive is difficult for many people. The gap between rich and poor grows ever more exacerbated. When governments and organizations enact austerity measures, the result is the reduction of social services, the closure of hospitals and schools, the removal of the social safety net. Scores of rural people flock to urban areas lured by the mirage of jobs, but end up as slum dwellers or homeless scavengers. They compete with other unemployed or underemployed for work in unsanitary and dangerous conditions with wages on which they can hardly survive. Natural and human-induced calamities claim many lives and destroy the livelihoods of numerous others.

Terms such as globalization, environmental destruction, structural adjustment, new economic order, and Balkanization fill newspapers and news programs, sometimes describing progress, but more often, social and economic injustice. Corrupt political and social systems marginalize large segments of the population, excluding them from economic and democratic privileges. The increase in economic difficulties, environmental crises, religious and ethnic radicalism, and social inequalities create a dangerous context that threatens the very existence of many communities around the world.

Should we be concerned about these situations? Is the “news” really so bad? Are we connected to these problems and people, or even somehow responsible for these situations? What does scripture have to tell us about our response to the conditions of the world around us?

Now the good news.

In the midst of so much “bad news” people of faith are living out the “good news” in their own communities and in other, not-so-near communities. People and congregations involve themselves in many ways to improve the quality of life for their communities and others beyond their community. They undertake acts of compassion, work for justice, and seek transformation for those in need. Consider the following scriptural references to good news and four stories of people sharing that good news in what could be called “development ministries.”

*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matt. 25:35–36).*



Photo by Rob Ellis

Members of a Mayan Presbyterian congregation offer hospitality and lunch to visitors in central Guatemala.

Greetings from the warm heart of Africa where the rain has stopped and the maize is being harvested. It has been a good growing season. Now around the villages small gardens have been planted and in some places rice is growing. In our nutrition project, one of our goals is to encourage diversification in food consumption. Ruth, our community health worker, is doing cooking demonstrations of soya (soya tea, soya meatballs, soya cake, etc.). These are done in the villages over an open fire and attended by both men and women, who always enjoy the samples. . . .

At the factory, we continue to mill for the local people. A hand-blender was designed by an engineering company in Blantyre and will be used to add fortificants to their flour. We have also started producing fortified maize flour for commercial sales. A roaster is being installed so that we can roast the soya and maize that will be used for the likuni phala that we will make. (*Likuni phala* is a high protein porridge used particularly to rehabilitate malnourished children; many people eat it to keep healthy.) Some hopeful signs of national concern for hunger is that the World Food Program has placed a large order for likuni phala with our association. There is also talk of the government starting a feeding program in the primary schools using fortified phala. Last month at an international conference on fortification in Washington, D.C., our project was used as a case study for discussion. . . .

The support that we have received from churches and friends has contributed to progress in other areas: electric lines are going into the primary teachers' houses. A new primary teacher's house has been built. Benches have been made for the under-five clinic. Free patient care has been subsidized. Students who would otherwise not be able to attend school have been provided with tuition fees. . . . A donation of children's clothing and shoes has gone to needy families. Yesterday, a ten-year-old deaf boy, who has been accepted at the school for the deaf, was given his first pair of shoes. I will never forget his smile and sparkling eyes.

*Dody Crowell, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Co-worker, Malawi,
Mission Connections Newsletter, May 1999*

Is not this the kind of fasting which I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice, and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? (Isa. 58:6-7)

Things Happen When a Community Works Together'

Residents of Humbolt Park, a Chicago neighborhood, have experienced increasing numbers of drug houses, deterioration of neighborhood properties, and gang-related crime problems. The community has seen a lack of city services, a loss of businesses, an increase of abandoned housing, absentee landlords, and vacant lots. These problems have affected not only the community residents but also the institutions located in the area. Many long-time residents have considered moving, while others have become prisoners in their own homes. Blocks Together (BT) is a grassroots organization made up of block clubs, individuals, and institutions dedicated to preserving the quality of life in West Humbolt Park.

Blocks Together works with outside groups to bring in resources otherwise not available to the community. For example, the BT leadership enlisted help from the National Training and Information Center, that provided an organizer trainee to the area. As a result, they developed an "issues" group representing 127 blocks. There are more than 12,000 residents in the apartments and single-family dwellings that make up the neighborhood. Together, they are combating and reducing prostitution and engaging in conversation with Neighborhood Housing Services to develop affordable housing. Over 300 people have found employment and numerous youth scholarships have been granted. City services have improved.

Police department and community members are effectively working to reduce criminal activity. This collaboration has led to the closing of twelve drug houses and reducing notorious drug traffic on the streets.

As the community has come together for mutual support over their concerns, community members have developed leadership skills and the ability to share their vision for the future. The most obvious change is that the residents have

learned to cooperate with each other for their own well-being. The leaders have found they are able to confront city officials, gang members, and tackle tough issues, knowing they have the strength of the group behind them. Blocks Together leader Octavio Lopez states, "This is happening because we are all uniting together. Now we can keep moving forward and we will make our neighborhood a better place to live."

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:16-17).

Their fiery Pentecostal spirit is something that I still haven't quite grasped. Their *pentecostalidad* (I'm not sure how to translate this word into English—their "way of being Pentecostal") drives them to overlook their own needs, limitations, deficiencies, in order to serve others in their communities, in order to bring about definite changes in their communities. It drives them to proclaim in the whole of their lives the liberation they have found in Christ, through the power and the love of the Holy Spirit.

So, I wonder, how does a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate (with all of the creature comforts that such a wealthy seminary offers) learn to be flexible and yet firm in her teaching? How can I learn to acknowledge the obstacles that my students face, and yet challenge them to grow spiritually and academically? How can I learn to appreciate the pride they take in being Latin American, in being poor, in being Pentecostal?

They don't appreciate being a satellite to a North American enterprise. They want to be who they are, with their own culture, their own struggles. They don't want relatively wealthy, educated North Americans coming in to tell them how to do things, how to live better, how to better understand the gospel. Nor do they need this.

How do I empty myself of the "privileges" I have grown up with in order to see the world from this Latin American Pentecostal perspective? What does it mean that "the Word became flesh and lived among us"? How do I have the same mind as that of Christ Jesus in Phil. 2:5-8, "Though he was in the form of God, [he] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness"? And not only did Christ empty himself, but he also humbled himself, even to death on a cross!

Kathleen M. Griffin, Mission Co-worker, Emmanuel Seminary of the Asociación la Iglesia de Dios, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Mission Connections Newsletter, December 1998

"As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:7-8).

The spring eight-week training program for Korean missionaries being sent from here to all parts of the globe has just finished, ending with a very moving communion service. One of the things Bob shares with Korean missionaries is to be sure to encourage their home churches to support their own home missions when they write back. We need to do that with you all as well! Each church sets priorities differently, but a good starting place, we believe, is to think in terms of "half and half"—half local, half global; half for ministries that focus on sharing the Word, half on actions that provide enabling or emergency help; half that is simply giving to the overall mission of our church, half that is designated and/or involves hands-on activity . . . you can extend the list!

Sherry von Oeyen, Mission Co-worker, Seoul, Korea, Mission Connections Newsletter, May 1999

The above stories and scriptures provide a glimpse of people proclaiming and living out the "good news" of God's kingdom. They are glimpses of people who know that God desires an abundant life for all humanity. The

acts of compassion, justice, and transformation in the stories represent a spectrum of activities, or ministries, that seek the betterment (or development) of people and communities. Within a Christian faith context, these activities could be considered as development ministries.

As the stories attempt to portray, development ministries take many forms. Giving direct aid in a crisis or other situation of need is a ministry of compassion. Engaging social structures and systems in order to address oppression and inequality is a ministry of justice. And working to effect change not only in another community, but also in one's own community, is a ministry of transformation. The following chapters describe the development ministries of compassion, justice, and transformation.

Perhaps you, your congregation, or your mission committee are helping others or are interested in helping others—perhaps the needy in your own community, or people on the other side of the world, or both. What do you need to know to effectively express the gospel of good news through ministries of development? What are the principles of “good development”? What processes, assumptions, and cautions of development should you be aware of? This material seeks to provide answers to these and other questions concerning ministries of development. This material will get you thinking and possibly challenge your assumptions and understanding of development.

Persons who could benefit from the information and ideas contained in these pages include: mission personnel; synod, presbytery, and congregational-level mission committees; Hunger Action Enablers; mission pastors; presbyteries and congregations involved in mission partnerships; members of a congregation; and anyone with a desire to express faith through the ministries of the church that reach out to the “least of these.”

The information, experiences, and stories related in these pages come from a variety of sources. Foremost, this book represents a composite of information found in several documents related to development ministry produced by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).² Material also came from other Christian denominations and secular literature, as well as personal experiences of the writer. Overall, this work represents a synthesis of these various sources.

Steve Knisely
December 1999
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Co-worker
Nepal, 1984–1990, 1992–1999

Notes

1. Adapted from “Stories That Make a Difference,” by Patricia Lane, the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1998, pp. 7–8. Blocks Together of West Humbolt Park in Chicago, Illinois, received a grant from the Self-Development of People program. Self-Development of People, a ministry program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has been significant in the lives of many church members who have become partners and friends of poor and dispossessed people, and who work to make their own lives meaningful and increase the quality of life in their communities.
2. See Bibliography for the materials published by the ministries within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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Annie Wu King, Women's Ministries
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Scott Smith, PC(USA) Mission Co-worker, India
Fredric Walls, Self-Development of People, Worldwide Ministries Division

Gabrielle Beasley wrote *Interactive Sessions for Faith in Action: Understanding Development Ministries from a Christian Perspective*, a study piece that can be used along with this book.

Dedication

Compiling a book such as this arose from a wealth of experiences which I was privileged to share in as a PC(USA) Mission Co-worker in Nepal. Much of what I learned and express in these pages arose from sharing in the lives of the “poor and marginalized” whom I sought to serve in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. To these people, with honor and respect, I dedicate this book. Through serving, partnering, and standing in solidarity with each other as all needy before God, we experience together the “good news” of God’s desire that all humanity experience abundant life.

*Stephen Knisely
Chester, Vermont
June 2001*

Compassion, Justice, and Transformation: Three Models of Development Ministries

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19).

Introduction

What wonderful words! What inspiration for mission! And what words of hope! At least intellectually. Do these words encourage you, confuse you, or provoke you? They certainly agitated Jesus’ listeners in the synagogue the day he preached this message, especially when he added, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

How do you react to these words of Jesus? Are you a passive observer pointing out the problems and impossibilities of such good news in today’s world? Or do these words challenge you to be about similar work in your community? Is your church active in proclaiming and living out God’s kingdom on earth? Do you accompany the proclamations with signs of freedom for prisoners, healing of the blind, and justice for the victimized? How have you and your congregation proclaimed the reality of good news to the poor in your midst?

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. . . . I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me” (Matt. 25:35–36, 40).

What are development ministries? *The term as used in this material relates to activities of compassion, justice, and transformation engaged in with a scriptural understanding that we are called to work together with the “least of these brothers and sisters of mine” for wholeness of life.* Development ministries can be as simple as helping an immigrant fill out a government form, donating time and talents at a homeless shelter, or writing a check for disaster assistance in Latin America. Or development ministries can be a more involved expression of faith such as participating in an overseas work trip, building a home, or being an activist for changing local employment policies in order to provide a more liveable minimum wage.

Ultimately, a vocation to development ministries could inspire us to establish close relationships with marginalized people whether nearby or in another country, people with whom we spend time and whom we get to know in intentional ways. A vocation to development ministries means devoting our lives to changing the community in which we live, or living deliberately with an oppressed community and working with them for long-term transformation of their community. Each of these representations of development ministries grows out of, and is formed by, our reading and understanding of scripture.

Definitions of Development

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

To understand the expression "development ministry," the term "development" requires examination. What does development mean?

EXERCISE

At the top of a sheet of paper write "Development is. . ." and under that write as many words and phrases as come to mind. Look at your list and see if you can categorize the items into concepts, processes, actions, results, or other categories. Which aspects of development did you find positive? Which negative? What does this tell you about how you interpret development?

Definitions

There is considerable confusion, debate, and literature about the term and concept of "development." The following will attempt to review some of the definitions and interpretations of the word, particularly as it has been used in materials produced by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The word "development" in most cases is prefaced by a modifying term to describe the specific "kind" of development. A few of the many definitions found in literature that indicate the breadth and depth of this large subject include the following:

DEVELOPMENT IS . . .

- a way by which we may all hope to be free—free from injustice, free from discrimination, free from poverty, free to be the responsible human beings God intended us to be.
- about spirituality, how you view the earth, its people, its animals, and our human responsibility as stewards of God's creation to care for everything from horned owls to garment workers in the Philippines.⁷
- modernization—more tools, more factories, more fertilizers, more roads . . . more things.

- what "brings people together, keeps them working together, and enables them to share the resources and benefits of their particular environment. In this process, oppression and injustice are restrained, a spirit of hope and trust is encouraged, and life takes on meaning where there has only been emptiness and despair."⁴

- "both an ambiguous term and an ambiguous practice. The term is used *descriptively* or *normatively*: to depict a present condition or to project a desirable alternative . . . development refers either to the ends or to the means of social change."⁵

- a process that leads to improving the quality of life of people. It ensures their cultural, social, political, spiritual, and economic well-being through a participatory and integrated process of empowerment, self-reliance, regeneration, and the removal of obstacles to this process. It is a process of change that leads to a better life for people and society. The development process is a continuous one. It starts where people are—with their perceptions of their situation and their needs. Development awakens people to the social and economic realities of their lives and to a realization of their capacity to change these realities.⁶

No consensus exists as to how development is defined, what its goals are, and what strategies should be adopted to pursue it.

Denis Goulet

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Normally people associate development with expanding economies. That is certainly what the stock market is all about. Economic growth results in more employment opportunities, the creation of

more wealth, and the production of more consumer items. Expanding markets allow greater financial freedom and a better life, or so the thinking goes. However, most people involved with development have moved away from strictly economic definitions of development, although financial terms still modify activities and are an important aspect. For instance, the United Nations Development Programme describes "human development" in the following way.

Human development is development of the people for the people by the people. Development of the people means investing in human capabilities, whether in education or health or skills, so that they can work productively and creatively. Development for the people means ensuring that the economic growth they generate is distributed widely and fairly. . . . Development by the people [means] giving everyone a chance to participate.⁷

The movement away from entirely economic delineations of development reflects the realization that financial progress, in one part of the world or for one group of people, often results in impoverishment for another place and people.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The most common type of development discussed today is "sustainable" development. This pairing of terms implies that there is a limit to development that must be balanced with meeting immediate needs. The most widely quoted definition of sustainable development is by the authors of *Our Common Future*.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of "needs," in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the

environment's ability to meet present and future needs.⁸

Sustainable development represents the conceptual framework that many people recommend as the remedy for global social, economic, and ecological crises. But it is also a widely argued about, varied, and vague two-word concept.

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

World Concern defines Christian development as "a process that enables people to consider, choose, and implement alternatives for their lives that are consistent with God's intention for mankind." This development process must promote self-reliance in meeting basic individual and community needs; it should progress toward the equitable distribution of human, economic and material resources; and it should provide each person an opportunity for fuller participation in the economic and political life of his country.⁹

PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

This term refers to a process by which a community develops the capacity to manage its own resources in a sustainable way to meet the needs of its own people. The process seeks broad participation by the people in the decisions that bring about change. This process of empowerment involves building stronger, more accountable institutions, and requires for its success local control of the resources needed for development. Included in this approach is a sense of equity, a sense that assets must be available to everyone and that their continued local control will create the conditions for self-reliant development. Achieving such conditions often requires the reform and transformation of institutions, power, and values so that community members attain at least a basic quality of life. Such empowerment of people may pose a threat to those traditionally wielding power.¹⁰

COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT

Human community as a focus for development is identified by many organizations and projects. The 208th General Assembly (1996) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) noted in its acceptance of *Hope for a Global Future* “the oneness and interdependence of the human family, the essential place of community in human fulfillment, and the validity of human claims upon one another for mutual support in the struggle for justice and sustainability” (p. 123). In this context, the purpose of development assistance “is to equip people and communities through financial and technical means to implement their own plans for just and sustainable development” (p. 137). The emphasis of this support takes the form of “decentralized, local, small-scale development owned by the communities themselves with assistance understood as facilitation of the people’s participation in designing and implementing the programs and processes that will enhance their own long-term well-being and self-reliance” (pp. 139–140). All agents of assistance should enter into “partnerships” with local communities that involve mutuality and cooperation and aim at increased self-reliance with respect to essential needs.

JUST AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The 208th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a document with this well-modified title that describes development fundamentally as a moral concept and an ethical concern. Specifically, “Just and sustainable human development. . . is the comprehensive enhancement of the quality of life for all (present and future), involving the integration of economic, social, political, cultural, ecological, and spiritual dimensions of being.”¹¹

The term “human development” further highlights the claim that the goals of development ought to focus on advancing human well-being. It is more—much more—than economic growth, as it entails not only improved economic standards of

living but also the full complement of social, political, cultural, and transcendental values and rights, and an emphasis on quality, not quantity. Human development seeks both to respect cultural and religious diversity and to uphold certain ethical values of justice, personal integrity, solidarity, and sustainability. It reflects the understanding that human development is a universal need and is the business of the whole human family. It cannot be achieved without a solidarity among all of God’s children that recognizes and uses the gifts of all.

A BEST DEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENT?

It seems there is no single, best, or concise definition of development. About the only element that all definitions have in common is that each

The theological basis for community development is biblically grounded and supported by “the Reformed tradition’s witness to Calvin’s concern that the heart of Christian spirituality is a passion for the reform of the human social order and its institutions, both civil and ecclesiastical.”

Philip Newell, *Church-Based Community Organization and John Calvin*

assumes that change will occur. Generally, the sought-after change is positive and is therefore called “development.”

If the people concerned with “sustainable” development agree on any one point, it is this: the topic is extremely controversial. It is complex and confusing, upsetting and divisive. Worse, there are no clear solutions to any of the urgent problems contained under the general heading of “sustainable development.” At times, merely suggesting the topic can seem to threaten the structure of international trade, capitalism, and profit motivation. Some people hurl words like

“communist,” “idealist,” and “threat to U.S. economic interests” to dissuade discussion of sustainable development. Cool-headed dialogue is often difficult to maintain.¹²

If you participate in development ministries, it is important to understand the wide range of elements, values, and assumptions that underlie the type of development with which you are involved.

All the above definitions are valuable as they express some facet of the development experience, even as they vary between expressing a hoped-for condition or describing a process of achieving an improved quality of life.

Some of the definitions are morally ambiguous with no implied values. They beg such questions as: What is important to sustain for the future and for whom? Who decides which needs will be met and through what system of distribution? What process will ensure equitable sharing of decision making and benefits? What is the moral and ethical basis of the kind of development being sought? In any development undertaking it is important to understand, and to be explicit about, which values inform and create change and which values will not survive the change process.

An essential assumption that pervades many of the definitions is the crucial difference between quantitative and qualitative types of development. From a faith perspective development is about the “abundant” life that God desires for all humans. We speak of abundance not in terms of having more things, but in terms of being more fully the creatures that God has designed us to be. A community, then, is more human or more developed, not when members have more, but when all its citizens are enabled to be more. The primary criterion of development is not the production or possession of goods, but the totality of qualitative human enrichment.¹³

Perhaps the best definitions of development arise out of ongoing relationships between external and internal partners and communities as members struggle and come to terms with the unique conditions of each other’s lives. These differences in cultures and environments, and other people’s vision of what they want for themselves, require

adaptations of what we might think “good” development should be for them. For each development effort, a new definition of development will emerge, based on that particular context and values.

Ultimately, development at its core is a relational process whereby individuals move toward conditions of humanness and wholeness. Development tends to be described in terms of projects, activities, and budgets. However, people need relationships. As Christians, we are called to be in partnership with God and our neighbors. Such relationships are based on love. This love seeks the welfare of others because, like us, they too are precious in God’s eyes. Furthermore, our relationships are based upon the belief that the human family shares a common “likeness” and that there are universal norms that all people have a right and responsibility to live out. With this moral and spiritual mandate and motivation, development becomes a manner of living with people in ways that benefit us all. Our definitions of development then become personalized with human faces and names.

Biblical Basis

What does the Bible say about development? Nothing directly, but it does convey principles and foundations in which development efforts are grounded.

Throughout these pages you will find passages that paint the rich scriptural backdrop for development ministries. Probably at an intellectual level most of us readily affirm that as Christians we should be involved in programs that express love to our neighbors in need. However, it may be helpful to review in broad strokes a theological, or biblical grounding, of why we should help “the least of these” that we know, and the marginalized “strangers” that we don’t know. What are the themes in the Bible that prompt and inform our commitment to express our faith through development ministries? How do these scriptural principles articulate the quality and kind of relationships that should exist between the “haves” and the “have nots”? Indeed, who are the truly poor

and rich in God's view? Might we be in need of the spiritual riches of those we consider materially poor and socially oppressed?

Love¹⁴

First, and paradoxically, one of the continuing rationales for some Christians not to do anything on the one hand, and for other Christians sometimes to do too much, is that theology cannot provide precise policy instructions or strategies for undertaking development ministries. Biblically-based theological study furnishes for us, as creative, free, and responsible humans, "an enlightening and empowering perspective or worldview." And this worldview arises out of the biblical expression—and experience—that God is love. Love is the foundation and goal of all that God does. From this basic theological premise follows the moral implication that all human beings, as subjects of this divine love, must be treated with appropriate care and concern. *"For God so loved the world . . ."* *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. . . ."* *"We love because he first loved us"* (John 3:16; Mark 12:30–31; 1 John 4:19).

All of God's people are called to be involved in ministry. The church's ministry is to be a manifestation of the creating, sustaining, and redeeming graces of God's all-embracing love.

One of my favorite questions to ask non-Western Christian leaders is, "What are the qualities of a good missionary?" I asked a pastor in Haiti that question, and I received a provocative response. Without a moment's hesitation, he said, "A good missionary is someone who loves Jesus and who loves Haitians."¹⁵

Dignity

The first chapter of Genesis declares unequivocally that humans are created in the image of God. This relationship provides us with a moral status, an honor above all other creatures, and a great responsibility.

The concept of the image of God provides a basis for Christian affirmations of the dignity of all individuals, human rights, and democratic procedures. It suggests that human beings have a God-given dignity and worth that unite humanity in a universal covenant of rights and responsibilities—the family of God. All humans are entitled to the essential conditions for expressing their human dignity and for participation in defining and shaping the common good.¹⁶

Justice¹⁷

Being created in the image of God brings with it rights and responsibilities that are inextricably tied to the emphasis on justice found in scripture and the Reformed tradition. Love seeks the well-being of others in response to their needs and to the God who is love. Justice is an indispensable dimension of love. Love is not present without the fair treatment of others and full respect for their rights. We render to others a continuing obligation of love because of our respect for their God-given dignity and value.

The God portrayed in scripture is the "lover of justice" (Ps. 33:5; 37:28; 11:7; Isa. 30:18; 61:8; Jer. 9:24). God "executes justice for the oppressed" and "gives food to the hungry" (Ps. 146:7). Indeed, justice, in the prophetic tradition, is a spiritual discipline, an act of worship, without which the value of other spiritual discipline—prayer, fasting, sacrifice—is negated (Isa. 58:1–10; Amos 5:21–24; Hos. 6:6).

Faithfulness to covenant relationships demands a justice that recognizes special obligations, "a preferential option" to widows, orphans, the poor, and strangers—in others words, the economically vulnerable and politically oppressed (Exod. 23:6–9; Deut. 15:4–11; 24:14–22; Jer. 22:16; Amos 2:6–7; 5:10–12).

The commitment to justice is clearly visible in the New Testament. Jesus was certainly in the prophetic tradition of Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea when he denounced those who "give [God] a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin, but you have neglected the more important matters of the law—

justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former.” (Matt. 23:23; cf. Luke 11:42). Similarly, Matthew’s Gospel recalls the prophets in its description of divine judgment. Christ comes to us in the form of people suffering from deprivation and oppression, soliciting just and compassionate responses.

Individuals and nations will be judged on the basis of their care for the “have nots” (Matt. 25:31–46).

Justice is at the ethical core of the biblical message. It is a moral imperative for Christians, especially in our time. Justice demands that we focus especially on meeting the needs of the poor and oppressed, both domestically and globally. Likewise, the economic, social, and political systems through which assistance is procured must also be evaluated against how they affect the dignity of all people, particularly the disadvantaged and marginalized.

A Preferential Concern for the Poor

The Bible could be described as God’s relationship with poor people. In fact, one might say the Bible shows God’s preferential concern for the poor. A theme throughout scriptures is God’s interest in the condition of the needy and the “aliens,” and God’s intention to include them in the kingdom. Jesus’ good news actively focused on the poor, which included the “captives,” the “blind,” the “oppressed,” the “demon possessed,” the “woman at the well,” and the many other people who lived at the edges of society, far from the center of power. Jesus sought to restore them as full participants in society through his ministries of healing. He challenged the traditions and structures of society that marginalized them. Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of God belonged to them.

The Old Testament is full of stories and people who were marginal in the eyes of society, but who made up the core of God’s covenantal plan. Abram and Sarai were well past childbearing age, but from them came the nation of Israel. Moses was rescued from the swamp and became the intermediary between God and the people. The many laws given to the people while in the wilderness directed them

toward “opening their hand to the needy,” and taking care of the destitute (widows and orphans) in their own midst. David, the youngest of eight sons, became a man after God’s own heart and the king of Judah. The prophets championed the cause of the poor and pointed out that the oppression of people by those in power would be the cause of their downfall. The poor were intimately tied to the privileges and futures of those in power.

References to the poor in the New Testament highlight important principles for our understanding of the kingdom of God. “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promise those who love him?” (James 2:5). The early church described in Acts portrays the members as living in community together, with no “needy persons among them” (Acts 4:34). And Paul, describing Jesus, says, “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). But it is Jesus’ ministry that most clearly reveals a preference for the poor and which so challenged the religious and political powers of his day.

Jesus’ vocation could be summed up in his reading of Isa. 61:1, “The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.” His commitment and ministry to the poor can be seen through his teachings and parables, his healings and miracles, his attitude toward the humble and the arrogant, the issues over which he clashed with the authorities, and finally his forsaken death on the cross. From these experiences and interactions a theology of the poor arises. This theology of the poor urges us to view the world with the eyes of the poor, to see reality, not from the center of power, but from the margins, and to read the Gospels from the perspective of the underprivileged.

A Theology of the Poor¹⁸

What are the critical elements of a theology of the poor, and how do they relate to development ministries? The following four aspects of Jesus’ ministry to the poor demonstrate briefly how we

are to be concerned about the poor in our own world. Theologically, these elements provide a partial basis of why we carry out development ministries with the poor—and they with us.

• JOINT HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

Jesus places the needy at the very center of his kingdom; those at the margin of society become the center, the last shall be first, and the first shall be last. As heirs of the kingdom, the poor are distinguished as more than just recipients of help in our physical world. They are our brothers and sisters. Mere condescending and paternalistic gestures towards the poor grossly miss this theological point. Because we are all receivers of “help” from God (who provides us all that we have), the presence of the poor among us inevitably raises questions: Who is the giver, who the receiver? Who are the rich; who are the poor? How can the non-poor enter the inheritance of the poor? Being joint heirs with the poor means we must minister to each other to fully realize our spiritual inheritance.

• TRANSFORMATION

Instead of having only a charitable, or sympathetic, concern for the poor, Jesus announced to them the dawn of the kingdom, the rearrangement of human relationships, the turning upside down of hierarchical structures, and the end of the root causes of their plight. “No one can look deep into the eyes of a needy person and remain the same.”¹⁹ The poor can shake and transform us, and give us new and spiritual values and priorities.

• CHRIST IS PRESENT TO US IN THE POOR

Jesus shared the condition of the poor and the needy by identifying himself with them. He took upon himself the cause of the poor so radically that he could say, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). Or Paul could say of him, “Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor” (2 Cor. 8:9). Christ makes himself present to us in the poor (Matt. 25:40). If this is true, then it

is through our ministry to the poor that we become spiritually rich, that we more fully meet Jesus, that our eyes are open to the mystery of salvation and to the meaning of human relationships.

• CHALLENGING THE STRUCTURES

Providing for a needy person (healing a crippled woman for instance—Luke 13:10–16) was for Jesus a greater priority than the observance of religious laws and social traditions. Through his ministries of compassion, Jesus challenged the religious, social, and political structures of his day. These establishments grow nervous when groups take a radical stance in favor of the poor. Although the challenge of the poor remains a major agenda of the church and political systems of our times, these entities can only truthfully say that they are organizations for the poor, but not organizations of the poor.

A Framework for Development Ministries

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).

Having surveyed definitions of development and examined several biblical references to God’s concern for the poor, we can move into shaping an understanding or framework of development ministries. As indicated earlier, development ministries refer to activities undertaken with a biblical concern that we are called to minister to the “least of these brothers and sisters of mine” in all dimensions of life. What do development ministries “look” like?

Ministries of development are relational; they necessarily involve relationships of serving, partnering, and being in solidarity with people. For example, the focus of all the preceding verses describes some way of acting toward others, with others, and before God. Therefore, the overall outline of this material rests on human and divine relationships and builds on two sources: first, the

three types of activities required of us by God in the Micah passage; and second, from adapting frameworks found in the great amount of secular development literature.

In Table 1, three models of development ministries are presented. Each model represents a particular relational focus: Compassion (Micah's *to love mercy*, or in other translations, *kindness*); Justice (*act justly*); and Transformation (*walk humbly with your God*). Being humble before God certainly requires change in our natural human nature!

The table, or matrix, puts into a development ministries perspective each of these types of relationships, which will be further described and explored in other chapters. In using this matrix and other information found throughout this material note the following assumptions:

- The relational elements described are from a materially rich, North American perspective.
- The matrix seeks to characterize development ministries carried out at both local and international levels.
- No one model is “better” than the others; they are just different expressions of Christian faith and witness.
- The major difference between each model is the intentionality and depth of commitment to the relationship, and the degree to which political, social, and economic systems are addressed.
- A congregation, group, or individual might be involved in relationships that entail aspects of more than one model.
- The matrix and model descriptions in no way represent the “best” possible paradigm. This table of models and elements simply attempts to portray general relational aspects of three development ministry types for learning and study.

The models in the matrix move from a familiar, more traditional, and service-oriented approach to development to a third model based on reflection, solidarity, and personal and corporate lifestyle

change, which are methods as well as the results of development efforts. All three represent paradigms with specific theological basis and corresponding types of relationships. Each model also encompasses particular assumptions, principles, and constraints. These principles and related theological assumptions are important to understand and adapt when you undertake development ministries as individuals, committees, or congregations.

In summary, all the three models of



Photo by Rob Ellis

A health care worker celebrates with students who have had health exams in Karamtola, Bangladesh.

development ministries illustrate appropriate mission endeavors of the church. However the matrix and other information found in this publication is used, it is hoped that reflection and action arising from this study will yield more effective and spiritually rewarding change in the world and relationships around us.

Development Ministries—Something New?

He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous (Ps. 146:7–8).

Of course, providing material aid and services to poor and disadvantaged people, partnering with overseas congregations for relationship building, and engaging in projects is not new for

Presbyterians. For the past two centuries Presbyterians have been feeding and clothing the hungry, preaching to the unconverted, and healing the sick of their diseases. Mission, doing something for those in need as well as sharing the good news of God's kingdom, is clearly understood and practiced.

What might be new is a growing awareness that the patterns and assumptions of how development ministries are undertaken needs examination. Have our programs of assistance, although of the best intentions, only treated "symptoms," or even led to more problems, such as dependence later on? Are American "know-how" and "can-do" attitudes sufficient in themselves to tackle the problems confronting communities here and in other countries? What is an appropriate role for outsiders (external agents) as they participate in development ministries? What is the position of the "beneficiaries" in "receiving" assistance? Are there better ways of partnering with communities of need, ways that create dignity for all participants? How do globalization, structural adjustment programs, and global markets increase the marginalization of communities? Who actually benefits from development ministries? These, and many similar questions, are being asked today as the needs of the world continue to grow and resources to alleviate them appear to be shrinking.

The efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), congregations, and mission personnel have made a difference in a world of poverty and need. However, much more can be done when principles of "good" development are understood and put into practice as part of development ministries. Effective, positive change can happen, even when funds and people are limited.

Something else that may be new to some is the concept that when effective development ministries are undertaken with others, all participants involved are transformed in some way. As North American-based church members grow in relationships with partner churches and communities, in their own neighborhoods and around the world, they learn new aspects of faith from Christian brothers and sisters. They learn that

each brings different faith experiences, and different, yet complementary, gifts to the ministry, and as a result each comes to a deeper spiritual understanding of God's good news for all people. Development ministries lead participants to a higher level of spiritual, personal, and community transformation.

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

Fishing for a Change²⁰

Fishing for a living involves hardship whether it be in the sea, in rivers, or lakes. Yet the members of the Aveme-Beme Co-operative Inland Fishing and Fishmongers Society of Aveme-Beme, Ghana, have taken up fishing to insure employment opportunities for themselves. The fishermen go out in the night and all day every day except Sundays and Tuesdays. The women are in charge of the day's catch; they either smoke, salt, or place the fish in cold storage. All members participate in the mending of the nets before the fishing boats set out again.

The National Committee on the Self-Development of People entered into partnership with the Aveme-Beme Society by providing the funding to purchase fishing gear, building materials for a cold storage building, and training.

The progress of the project has been gradual, yet it has been constant in increasing employment for its members, helping them move from poverty to sustainability. The Society has increased its tonnage of fish from six to eight. With the new fishing equipment the group has been able to do deep river fishing and catch much larger fish. New methods of smoking fish have been developed, making it possible to preserve more fish. The newly built cold storage unit has helped the Society avoid waste and store more fish.

The project has actually changed the living conditions of the people for the better. The women in the Society sell fish to earn their living and to pay for the children's school fees. Most of those who were unemployed, including the youth, now

Table 1 - A Framework of Development Ministries: Three Models

| Relational Elements | Development as: | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | I. Compassion | II. Justice | III. Transformation |
| Role and Experience of External Agent* | Benefactor / "Servant": pray, give money, send missionaries, assist in development | Partner / Advocate: pray; share resources, leadership and control with partners; identify injustice; reciprocal relationships | Companion in Solidarity: pray, reflect, receive, spiritual growth; just use of resources; lifestyle change; long-term relationships |
| The "Receiving" Community's Role and Experience | Receive gifts, people, projects, limited and short term life improvements | Initiate, design and implement projects; receive and provide personnel, receive funds, conditions of life improved, justice as major concern | Individual renewal; full community development, spiritual and quality of life growth; just systems and dignity of life; cross-cultural, long-term relationships |
| Objective | Meet immediate and perceived needs of others by provision of goods, services, training | Develop relationships with partner communities and with them identify and seek to overcome causes of needs and injustice | In solidarity with partner communities and members seek humane community development and just structures and systems |
| Relationship & Focus | Serve others to meet basic needs | Partner with others for quality of life change | Stand in solidarity with others for structural and personal justice and change |
| Decision-making & Accountability | High external control, "we" doing for "them" | Shared control and joint actions | Mutuality and collaborative actions |
| Type of Activities | Specific, time-limited | Integrated, moderate-term | Holistic, long-term |
| Common Assumptions of External Agents | The poor cannot help themselves and need our help - they lack sufficient resources and knowledge | Cooperatively, the poor and we may improve their lives and our understanding of their situation | We all need to change and have justice in our lives and systems; we need each other to fully be God's people |
| Community Reactions to Assumptions of External Agents | We need your help, but don't treat us as objects, we have knowledge | Ensure our dignity in the partnership; do you trust us enough with resources? | Are you truly open to change? |
| Common Questions by External Agents | What are your needs and how can we help? | What strengths can we both bring to improve your community? What can we learn and do together? | What is our vision for a just world? How can we together accomplish it? How must we and our communities change? |
| Efforts Prompted by: | Compassion, sense of duty, desire to serve, Bible reading | Seeking to do justice, application of scripture | Desire to be present with and enriched by the 'poor,' deep reading of scriptures |
| Theological Basis | Deut. 15: 7-11 Open your hand to the poor; Matt. 25: 31-46 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat." | Zech. 7:9-10 administer true justice, show mercy; Matt 23; 1-39 Woe to the unjust Pharisees who don't practice what they preach | Is. 58:1-12 God desires a change of heart to produce justice, love and mercy; Lk 10:25-37 Love your neighbor as yourself |
| Constraint | Responds to symptoms; often only short-term, can result in dependency and paternalism | Difficulty of unequal relationships and expectations; requires long-term commitment of people and funds | Requires personal and corporate lifestyle and world view change; long-term commitment of engagement and reflection |

* "Agent" could be replaced by materially rich organization, congregation, or individuals

work with the Society and are earning a living. Other people living in the immediate community are benefiting as well. A group of women formed a Fish Retailers' Association and purchase fish from the Society, treat it, and then sell it in the various markets. They also participate in the workshops on fishing and treatment offered by the Society.

Everyone in the community and surrounding areas has benefited by the increase in catch, because the cost of fish has come down. The Society members are now working on other plans to improve their community, like setting aside funds to establish a day care center for working mothers and an adult literacy class.

*Our present acceptance
of widespread poverty,
ignorance, and misery
is a blight that can
destroy all of us.*

Margaret Mead

Project manager
R. K. Akorli writes,
"Our partnership
with the Self-
Development of
People has been very
successful and
helpful to our
communities. Self-
Development of
People has helped us

transform our lives from below the poverty line to above it. We are most grateful to God who has given us SDOP to transform our lives."

Issues of Development Ministries

As apparent from the variety and ambiguity of development definitions, there are many aspects, assumptions, and attributes of development that must be taken into consideration when participating in and conducting related ministries. Development is a complex process and strategy of change, one requiring reflection and dialogue. Without adequate understanding and consideration of a number of issues and their implications, development efforts of compassion, justice, and transformation may be ineffective and even detrimental. Before diving

into development ministries, please see Table 2 and then turn to Appendix 1 for a more complete examination of relevant terms and issues.

Principles of Development Ministries

The information in Table 3 attempts to describe guidelines for assessing development activities. Additionally, Appendix 2 provides a list of community development principles that supplement Table 3. In using the information found in Table 3, keep in mind the following aspects:

- The table could be used with any development activity, whether it is related to ministries of compassion, justice, or transformation. The table format is not related to the outline used in the previous two tables.
- The focus questions across the heading of the table represent four primary development activities: Planning, Implementation, Results, and Impacts. The first three questions center on who is involved in each of these activities, and the fourth considers if true development occurs. The terms used down the left side of the table represent the elements of each activity focus.
- The bulleted items within the table are primary

Table 2 - Terms and Issues Related to Development Ministries

| Issues | Development as: I. Compassion | II. Justice | III. Transformation Issues |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Attitude and Understanding | If our understanding and preconceptions of the local situation and problems are incorrect, our efforts may result in failure or worse | How much is known about the local power structures, relationships, values and culture? Are our efforts of help appropriate? | How much do we really know about the local context and our impact on it? Can we change our assumptions and jointly improve our understanding? |
| Capacity Development | The knowledge, resources and skills of the marginalized community needs improvement | Limited by their social, economic and political situation we must assist them to analyze their situation and organize to effect change | We need to understand the complementarities of each other's strengths and work together to eliminate factors that limit everyone's full capacity |
| Community | All members of a community can be treated the same and have similar needs | What are the unique power structures, relationships values, and needs of different members of the community? | What conversations and reconciliation happen to enable people to mutually engage in seeking the common good? |
| Control | Outside control ensures project is accomplished and contributed resources are used "appropriately" | Ownership of activities must be local for appropriate planning, responsibility and self-reliance | Promoting mutual accountability empowers all participants |
| Cultural Values | Do funds, "things" and teaching result in materialistic based relationships and homogenizing of culture? | Are activities and concerns for justice culturally based and acceptable locally? Do they alienate others? | Diversity of cultural practices and values provide rich possibilities for creativity and learning. Are positive cultural values encouraged? |

Table 2 - Terms and Issues Related to Development Ministries

| Issues | Development as: I. Compassion | II. Justice | III. Transformation Issues |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Dependency | Is the relationship of giving only one way? Does the giving encourage more asking? | How does the relationship and activities enable greater freedom and independence for the "recipients?" | Is the giving and receiving of gifts reciprocal? Does the relationship create interdependence? Are we able to receive gifts? |
| Education | What do the "beneficiaries" of development activities learn? Are they able make changes in their lives as a result? | A facilitated process of raising awareness of local resources, problems, root causes and potential solutions leads to change | Learning is a mutual vocation which can only occur through companionship. "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." |
| Empowerment | Are root causes or only symptoms of needs being addressed? Are issues of power identified as part of the development activities? | Do people acquire greater control and decision making over the systems under which they experience needs? | Liberation occurs both socially and spiritually as people empower each other and create opportunities for becoming the new creatures God envisions |
| Equity | Are all "recipients" able to "equally participate in benefits? Do some require "welfare" while others need only a "step up?" | A community must proactively determine how members will "enjoy" both responsibilities and benefits of development | A preference for the poor seeks to bring them into full partnership of development as well as enables us to be more fully joint heirs of the kingdom of God |
| Evangelism | Development can be used as the "stick" to create converts | Spiritual freedom results in a desire for social justice | A holistic, integrated process of development is a lifestyle of good news in all realms of life |
| Expectations | Whose hopes are fulfilled in providing assistance? | Are they realistic? Are the desires of the marginalized a part of the development agenda? | Expectations of personal and corporate change are jointly shared and jointly find fulfillment |
| Facilitation | Is facilitation possible in providing aid, or is outside control more efficient? | Supporting local planning, implementation and evaluation allows true ownership | Facilitation is a primary method of engaging in transformation, although even it might be too strong a means |
| Gender | Do men and women receive equal benefit? Should women be a particular focus of assistance? | Ministries alert and responding to specific needs of marginalized women are necessary in every culture | Men and women must understand and be equal in the partnership of development ministries |
| Holistic | Can assistance provide for improvement in more than one area of life? | Integrated development includes social, physical, political, economic and spiritual activities | Enabling holistic transformation in other's requires openness to personal and corporate experience of transformation |
| Marginalized | Do the most marginalized benefit? | If the conditions of the most poor do not change and they are not involved in the change, are activities just? | In what ways are we as the "benefactors" marginalized? How can those we consider marginalized help us? |
| Money | How does cash both accomplish acts of compassion and undermine them? | Financial arrangements of a partnership require wisdom, transparency, accountability, and trust. How are these just? | Money should be a low priority of transformation, and certainly not a condition of solidarity |
| Ownership and Accountability | Could more of the development activity be "owned" by the beneficiaries? | What processes are used to encourage local initiative, implementation and skills? | Local and personal accountability reflect a concern for mutual transformation |
| Participation | Do recipients participate simply to receive aid, to be part of the donor's agenda? | Are all stakeholders involved in decision making, risk and benefit sharing? | Reflection before action, and consensus building lay the foundation for participation |
| Roles | Is it important for outsiders to play specific roles that ensure effective assistance? | Relationships built on mutuality and trust determine appropriate outsider roles | Relationships of depth and solidarity form the basis for transformation |
| Self-Reliance | Does the provision of assistance encourage self reliance or dependency? | Self-reliance requires the redistribution of resources and opportunities to access them | How does a basis of self-reliance enable solidarity and dignity in relationships? |
| Status Quo | Does aid support or help change the reason for the need? | The status quo creating the need must be challenged and changed to achieve justice | The status quo of personal and corporate lives needs continual examination and renewal |
| Sustainability | Does the assistance contribute to sustainable development? | Local people need to determine what is sustainable and what values are important | Perhaps sustainability is less important relative to authentic development |
| Technology Transfer | What are the maintenance requirements? Are there local alternatives that could be adapted? | Does introduction of outside technology further marginalize people? Is it accessible to all? | Technology needs and resources require careful reflection and valuation. |

Table 3 - Framework for Assessing Development Ministries

| Focus Questions | Who initiates the work? | Who owns and controls it? | Who benefits from it? | Are root causes being addressed? |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Basic Principles: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People must participate in their own development. • People know what they need and what is priority. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people must own the process and activities; they are also responsible for their knowledge, decision making, and actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be equal sharing or equity of benefits. • Priority of benefits for the most poor and vulnerable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poorest must benefit to know real change has occurred. • Change must be holistic and address systems. |
| Assumptions: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have the capacity to determine and effect change • Development will be successful to the degree local people participate • Outsiders can't always know what is best for others. • Small projects enable greater awareness and organization building • All people have potential to develop, but all people haven't had the opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a commitment of local resources • People's indigenous knowledge has value • All people are informed and aware of the process and work, there is transparency. • The "process" is more important than the "project" • People will be able to undertake long-term maintenance. • Pace of work and cultural practices will be different | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women generally are one of the most marginalized groups. • Women will be equal partners and are often key to development, as they are most concerned to improve their families and communities. • Risks are equally shared. • Strengths and potentials of people are also enhanced • The project will result in greater community development and pride. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will be freer. • Root problems: unequal relationships, power and resources, dependency, injustice, exploitation • Systemic change is needed for true development, rather than only treatment of symptoms. • People have a vision for a transformed society • Change occurs in community |
| Outsider's Role: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators and catalysts of change • Listeners and observers • Organizers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners in change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companions in spiritual benefits • Joint learners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companion • Advocate |
| Requires: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trust</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cultural and ethical sensitivity</i> • <i>Joint accountability</i> • <i>Knowledge sharing</i> • <i>Patience and trust</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Flexibility</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transformation</i> • <i>Changed worldview and lifestyle</i> |
| Local Results: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Local problem-solving capacity development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development • Empowerment • Self-determination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliance • Stewardship of resources • Self-esteem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity • Justice |

issues to address, understand, and reflect on when involved in development ministries.

To summarize the principles described in Table 3, consider the following concepts. These are core premises by which two national church programs undertake development ministries with partner organizations. The Presbyterian Hunger Program and the Self-Development of People Program provide assistance to communities of need based on the following principles refined through many years of experience.

- Development must be initiated in and specific to the context of the people in need. Local

people themselves must determine what they require and how development will be conducted and how it will effect them.

- Communities of people must be the basic social component of development activities rather than individuals and programs.
- Building relationships with groups and entering into affirming dialogues with them are as important, if not more so, than the actual development ministries undertaken with them. This principle recognizes that we as the "donor" have something to learn and gain from entering into a relationship with so-called "beneficiaries."

- There is a difference between giving bread to a hungry person, providing wheat seed and training a person to grow it, and assisting a group of poor farmers to start and manage a seed cooperative. Although relief is necessary for survival in many situations, ultimately underlying causes of the disadvantaged condition must be addressed as part of the help to be given.

Getting Involved in Development Ministries

If Christian individuals, groups, and congregations are to deal effectively with the many issues, possibilities, and needs facing people all over



A boy and camel sit on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

the world, they must ask tough questions and give serious consideration to their own role and responsibility in the context of development ministries. Taking a first step, or becoming more engaged in development ministries is not impossible, but it does require reflection and effort. The following are initial and concrete steps you can take toward putting into practice what is presented in this material.

Six Things You and Your Congregation or Group Can Do to Get Involved

1. *Pray*—for yourself and each other to be:
 - open to a particular concern or issue in your own and the global community;

- creative in your approach;
- and sensitive to the need.

2. *Read*—about

- the issue;
- what other organizations and people are doing about it;
- what the causes are;
- where resources are available;
- and how it effects your community.

3. *Study and discuss*—

- the topic with others in your group, congregation, or presbytery;
- how you and others might respond to the particular issue, locally and globally;
- what it means to be a part of a church as it relates to a society that is dealing or not dealing with the issue.

4. *Initiate*—

- activities personally;
- action within your congregation to confront and heal the particular issue;
- the gathering of resources needed for the activities.

5. *Act*—

- with your group or congregation;
- on one need in your community.

6. *Participate*—with other organizations concerned with the same issues to share

- ideas;
- problems;
- successes.

Six Dimensions in Which Development Ministries Should Be Undertaken²¹

1. *Locally*—addressing needs in your own community.
2. *Globally*—learning about, and financially and prayerfully supporting, development programs internationally.
3. *Personally*—through individual contributions of time, money, and skills to development ministries.
4. *Corporately*—supporting and participating in ministries through your congregation or other organizations.
5. *Denominationally*—through learning about

- and supporting specialized programs and projects undertaken by the national church.
6. *Ecumenically*—joining efforts among other denominations in local and global contexts.

[Jesus] called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. . . . These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “. . . As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep” (Matt. 10:1, 5a, 7–10).

Notes

1. For additional and excellent thinking on development and related issues consult the following publications of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):
 - “Hope for a Global Future,” *Church and Society*, January/February 1997.
 - *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, with Study Guide, Office of the General Assembly, 1996.
 - *Sustainable Development, Reformed Faith, and U.S. International Economic Policy*, Churchwide Study Document, Committee on Social Witness Policy, 1994.
2. Office of the General Assembly, *Policy on Development* (New York: United Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1970).
3. Starr Luteri, *To Walk in Beauty: Sustainable Development*, Adult Foundational Curriculum, Frank T. Hainer, ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1995).
4. Art Beals, *Beyond Hunger: A Biblical Mandate for Social Responsibility* (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1985) p. 102.
5. Denis Goulet, “Development: Creator and Destroyer of Values,” *World Development* 20, no. 3 (1992): p. 467.
6. Division for Global Mission, *Policy Statement Concerning Development* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1991).
7. United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report* (New York: Oxford Press, 1993) p. 3.
8. World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (New York: United Nations, 1987).
9. Beals, *Beyond Hunger*.

10. Committee on Social Witness Policy, *Sustainable Development, Reformed Faith, and U.S. International Economic Policy*, Churchwide Study Document (Louisville, Ky: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1994).
11. *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, with Study Guide (Louisville, Ky: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1996), p. 1.
12. Luteri, p. 27.
13. Denis Goulet, "The Search for Authentic Development," *The Logic of Solidarity: Commentaries on Pope John II's Encyclical on Social Concern*, Gregory Baum and Robert Ellsberg, eds. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989).
14. Much of this section's material is adapted from *Hope for a Global Future*, pp. 59–70.
15. Tim A. Dearborn "An Idea Whose Time Has Come, Mutually Transforming Global Church Mission Partnerships: A New Pattern of Church-Mission Involvement for the New Millennium" (World Vision US, Institute for Global Engagement, September 1998).
16. *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 62.
17. Portions of this section are adapted from *Hope for a Global Future*, pp. 62–67.
18. Adapted from Aharon Sapsezian, "Jesus: Advocate for the Poor and Needy" (a paper presented in the Jinishian Memorial Program International Consultation, Yerevan, Armenia, May 20–27, 1999).
19. As told to Aharon Sapsezian by a colleague who worked with destitute people in Sudan.
20. This story is from Patricia Lane of Self-Development of People.
21. Adapted from the Synod of the Northeast page in the *1999 Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study*, Mission Interpretation and Promotion (Louisville, Ky: Congregational Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1999) p. 199.

Development as Compassion: Channeling Aid—Serving Others

Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land (Deut. 15:10–11).

Introduction

Overview

As the body of Christ is built up in a community of faith and hope and love, it is confronted by the suffering and pain of the world's people. William Carey did not go to India to bring relief to the sick and the suffering.... But having come to India, he and his colleagues found themselves surrounded by human need of every kind: illiteracy, disease, malnutrition, and poverty on an overwhelming scale. They had the answers to some of these problems: Western medicine, education, better agricultural skills. Being disciples of Jesus Christ, they could not avoid taking on these problems. So COMPASSION was added to the essential tasks of their mission.

Each succeeding generation has continued the ministry of compassion. But as the complexities of modern life have increased, so has the variety of ways in which Christian compassion has been expressed: orphanages, refugee work, community development, livestock, better nutrition, public parks, recreation, famine relief, peacemaking, leprosy centers, modern nursing techniques, literacy, rights of women, and special ministries to the blind and deaf, the physically and mentally disabled. In all these areas Christians have pioneered.

Compassion should not be considered just a means by which we do our evangelizing. Compassion is expressed for its own sake. It has no other motive. We engage in compassionate service not as a gimmick to make non-Christians into Christians, but because we are Christians! It is because we are disciples of the one who said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40). If compassion were not a part of mission, then our witness to Jesus Christ would be incomplete and truncated.¹

Wherever a person responds in love to the needs of others—providing food, clothing, shelter, safety, welcome, dignity, self-respect, or the chance to grow—God is present. Through meeting the needs of others in our community or overseas, we demonstrate compassion and kindness, and contribute toward improving life. Compassion prompts us to help an individual or community to return to a prior condition of better life (such as after an earthquake), or to achieve a sustainable level of living.

Development ministries of compassion generally furnish material and monetary aid, and send skilled professionals from "rich" communities to poor communities. Compassion is a spiritual impulse. The idea of serving others through the giving of monetary or material support arises out of commands in scripture, for instance the passage from Deuteronomy cited above. When people-who-have give to people who are poor or disadvantaged, they intervene in a needy situation and provide something that is lacking.

Table 4 - Compassion model of Development Ministries

| Relational Elements | Development as: I. Compassion | Relational Elements | Development as: I. Compassion |
|---|--|---|---|
| Role and Experience of External Agent* | Benefactor / "Servant": pray, give money, send missionaries, assist in development | Community Reactions to Assumptions of External Agents | We need your help, but don't treat us as objects; we have knowledge |
| The "Receiving" Community's Role and Experience | Receive gifts, people, projects; limited and short term life improvements | Common Questions by External Agents | What are your needs and how can we help? |
| Objective | Meet immediate and perceived needs of others by provision of goods, services, training | Efforts Prompted by: | Compassion, sense of duty, desire to serve, |
| Relationship & Focus | Serve others to meet basic needs | Theological Basis | Deut. 15: 7-11 Open your hand to the poor; Matt. 25: 31-46 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat." |
| Decision-making & Accountability | High external control, "We" doing for "them" | Constraint | Responds to symptoms; often only short term; can result in dependency and paternalism |
| Type of Activities | Specific, time limited | | |
| Common Assumptions of External Agents | The poor cannot help themselves and need our help - they lack sufficient resources and knowledge | | |

Portrait of Compassion

At the sound of a single chord struck on the Hampton congregation organ, the people rise to sing the "Doxology." One rises painfully. She is Hampton's "widow lady," a ninety-two-year-old retired schoolteacher and great-grandmother of twenty-two Presbyterian children scattered across thirteen of the United States.

As the minister prays over the envelopes and folded dollar bills that fill the brass offering plates, the widow lady lifts her prayer also. Today she and many of the other members have placed two envelopes rather than one in the plates, for it is the Sunday of One Great Hour of Sharing. The widow knows that part of this offering goes to help refugees overseas, where the fighting is. And she knows that another part will be used in America to help poor people in their fight to escape trouble. She likes the idea of this second half just as much as the first, for she remembers a year during the Depression when she and her unemployed husband had a chance to farm fifteen acres but didn't have the necessary tools, and a group of friends clubbed together to help them buy some.

The Hampton widow, like most Presbyterians, doesn't think of herself as an "evangelical" or a

"Calvinist." She doesn't think of what she does, or even about the work of the church, in terms like "getting people saved," or "nurturing the saints," or any other such theological esoterica. Saving people is God's business, she believes, and He is more merciful than some of her neighbors think. But on the wall in the family home that she still inhabits, Sallman's Head of Christ holds a prominent place; she hopes other people will get to know Christ—that is important—for He has helped her and her children through much trouble, and she thinks the church should help to make that friendship possible for other folks as well. But mostly, for the widow lady, the church is a place where she can sing and pray and take Communion and be in contact with little children and younger people. And she thinks of it as an agency through which she can join others to show mercy to people in difficulty.²

Preparation for Development Ministries of Compassion

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

Innumerable passages of scripture express implicitly or explicitly that the satisfaction of basic needs is essential to life. The apostle Paul assures the Corinthian church, "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always

having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8 NRSV). Having "enough of everything" frees a person and a community for the "good work" of ministering to the needs of others.

In the gospels, Christ explicitly demands that we are to minister to the physical needs of the poor, hungry, sick, and imprisoned among us—both strangers and neighbors, without distinction. In the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10, Jesus illustrates our responsibility to help anyone we encounter who is in need. In the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, Jesus teaches that whenever we neglect a person in poverty, a person who is hungry, or one in anguish, we neglect our duty to Christ.

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

MATTHEW 25:31–46

In the parable of the great judgment Jesus says that the nations will be gathered before the king.³ In the separation that follows, we may surmise that it is not only the nations who are distinguished as righteous or unrighteous but that individuals as well are measured by their practical concern for those most needy, those who are the "least" in Jesus' family. His family—those whom he calls "family"—surely is universal, and not limited to those who know that they belong. We may leave judgment to the king, acknowledging with the "righteous" that we are not worthy of the grace the king extends, but perhaps agreeing also with the "unrighteous" that we did not realize the implications of our neglect. Nevertheless, the message of the parable is clear. We must respond to needs and deprivations around us by doing justice, extending kindness, and walking humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

What are the implications of this message for our church's policies? What are the implications for

development assistance? How does the message speak to church members who determine policies and effect interventions?

If the message is only to extend relief to those who hunger and suffer, most people will readily respond. But surely Jesus does not wish us to tolerate the conditions that prolong suffering. Hence the need for "development." It now gets harder to respond. And harder yet when we see that Jesus wants us to treat recipients as members of his family—our family! ("I was a stranger and you invited me in.") It gets still harder when we begin to realize that in today's interdependent world that the policies of our nation and our church and even the way we live our lives may have some causal bearing on the predicament of the needy.

Human misery is not lack of money, it's not knowing who you are.

Don Jose Elias Sanchez, quoted in *The Human Farm: A Tale of Changing Lives and Changing Lands* by Katie Smith

It is not easy to begin with Jesus' message and come out with the specifics of a response to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the imprisoned—especially when they are not only near at hand but are also our distant neighbors in a complex world. We don't know how to begin; yet, somehow, we know that this is where we have to begin.

What does it really mean to minister to people through development assistance? How do we minister in a way that actually eases suffering and that helps to change the conditions that prolong it? What does it mean for us if changing the conditions entails changing policies and lifestyles from which we have benefitted? What does the Bible have to teach us? An example of what we might learn is found in the story of a meeting between a man born blind and Jesus.

JOHN 9:1–41

This passage offers insights into Jesus' ministering in compassion to the needs around him. Studying such passages with an eye to the details and elements of the biblical experiences can provide important principles and encouragement for our own and the church's development ministries.

The passage reveals principles of providing healing or assistance to a person (or community) in need.

- *Know the specific need and the context of the need.* Often our initial assessments of the need, or of what causes the condition, are false. We must ask questions and respect the perspective of the one(s) who need help. To learn the truth of why or how the need exists, ask the one(s) with experience, those who live with the need.
- *Ascertain the willingness of the recipient(s) to receive your ministry.* There were several levels of "blindness" addressed in the passage—obviously the physically blind man, but also the spiritually blind disciples and Pharisees. The "spiritual eyes" that are able to see the purposes and possibilities of God in a situation may be closed by human tradition and prejudice. We can surmise that the blind man desired to see; the Pharisees were not willing to "see," and the disciples were having difficulty in seeing. Development ministries of compassion can only be successful where people are willing to be ministered unto, or to have their eyes opened.
- *Take the initiative—act.* Jesus took the initiative in the healing. He did not rationalize the man's condition or debate whether healing him was a good idea. Jesus acted to change the situation because he saw the possibilities for renewal and for expressing the "works of God." In contrast, the local authority and "powers," the Pharisees, were more interested in the past and used it as an excuse for not doing anything.

- *Involve the recipient(s).* Don't do or give everything yourself. The man who had been blind had to take some action, to play a role in his own healing. Jesus also used local resources of mud and water in carrying out his healing.
- *Be prepared for criticism and hostility.* Often development means going against traditions. The Pharisees were not happy when Jesus challenged the religious context and doctrines that allowed the man to be blind, but not to receive his sight. Jesus was hardly popular when he pointed out to the Pharisees the truth of their spiritual blindness.
- *Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit; allow the Spirit to work through you.* A sense of self-worth was created for the one healed through the intervention and through the interactions that occurred afterward. He spoke boldly to the Pharisees of his healing and of his insights into God's work. In the follow-up conversation with Jesus he professed belief resulting in spiritual healing and dignity in the eyes of God.



Photo by Bob Egan

A student receives an ear exam as part of the physical in Karamtola, Bangladesh.

Objectives

The primary aim of assistance provided by external agents is to provide relief and to ameliorate the needs of disadvantaged people and communities. External agents are outsiders, such as materially rich organizations, congregations or individuals, who have come to promote change in

a community or situation that is not their own. (Rich is a relative term, but if we think of rich from a global perspective, most people in North America are rich.) External agents provide aid to people in situations of natural disasters and of calamities created by humans; and they contribute resources for projects to improve quality of life in poor communities. Typically, such development ministries provide funds, personnel, goods, and services to meet immediate, urgent and perceived physical needs.

Contributions toward assistance include, for example, financial donations, building materials, blankets and food, medical camps, skill and job training, computers, and water pumps. Ministries of compassion generally are for specific, time-limited programs, such as relief for hurricane victims, providing water pumps for a well program in Africa, and donating food and time to a food pantry in Detroit.

Hope for a Global Future includes the statement that “the purpose of development assistance is to equip people and communities through financial and technical means to implement their own plans for just and sustainable development.”⁴ This statement points out that the purpose of development assistance encompasses more than providing aid to meet a need. Ultimately, assistance should be part of a process that enables people to implement their own plans for development. In some situations, such as disasters, immediate alleviation of suffering is required. However, for long-term, sustainable development to occur, assistance must be in a form that recipients can use to accomplish their own plans of self- and community-improvement. Financial and material assistance become the means of development rather than only ends in themselves.

It’s like the familiar example of a fish and a fishing pole. The fish is eaten today and gone, but a fishing pole can catch more fish for tomorrow’s meal. Consider these two statements.

- “Our community is more developed now since a well was dug and a pump installed!”
- “Our new well provides clean drinking water

by which we can expect to be healthier, and the time saved by women in collecting water from the old spring can be used in other productive ways.”

Which statement indicates that the people saw the assistance as a means instead of only an end? Which statement indicates that the people are on the road to sustainable development?

But sustainable development alone is not enough. We must strive for sustainable and just development. We expect and hope that assistance is used justly to accomplish development. Seeking justice should be an objective of both the benefactors and recipients of assistance ministries, and justice the basis on which aid arrangements are generated. The adjectives just and sustainable certainly complicate the giving of financial and material assistance, but we must keep them in mind when providing aid. Although the gifts of North Americans in general and Presbyterians specifically have brought relief to many people around the world over the years, they have also, in some situations, been less than effective and perhaps even detrimental in terms of development, because the external agent or the recipients did not consider the just and sustainable use of aid.

Process

Typically, processes of providing aid have been relatively straightforward. Contributions of funds and materials are collected for specific disaster situations or programs such as food banks, building a health clinic, or job training, and passed on to organizations established to help meet these needs. Skilled personnel may also be sought to participate in need alleviation.

However, development ministries of assistance should also seek and facilitate people’s participation in designing and implementing programs and processes that enhance their own long-term well-being and self-reliance. The overriding emphasis when providing assistance should be on developing recipient participation and increasing self-confidence, so that recipients become self-reliant in solving ongoing needs.

The church needs to put its support in perspective and understand that it can only be an accessory to local development as the initiative and ownership must remain in the community of poor and oppressed people. As we contribute our resources to a particular movement, we must respect the importance of the efforts invested by the local community, appreciate the deadly risks that they often take for challenging the powers that be.⁵

One of the concerns we now share with many others is for unity in the coordination of financial support and other forms of national and international solidarity. This concern is motivated especially by danger signs in cases of bilateral preferentialism of international partners and in tendencies among national partners to sometimes go it alone. We are concerned, too, that the impressive outpouring of international financial support and material aid not do more harm than good by creating new patterns of dependency and not leave people to cope by themselves rather than empowering them to rebuild their lives. And we also share with partners here the concern for our ongoing mutual commitment to seek a new vision of mission together in the new century, now taking into account post-Mitch realities.

J. Gary and Margaret Campbell, Mission Co-workers in Nicaragua, December 1998

Assumptions

There appears to be a belief in our society, even among Presbyterians, that poor people lack the capacity to change their own lives or make decisions on their own behalf. Certainly, they often lack the opportunities, resources, knowledge, and access to power that are necessary to address effectively the conditions of poverty in which they find themselves. They are marginalized. But the general assumption upon which ministries of assistance is grounded is: "Without our help, people and communities of need will not improve." This premise is true to varying degrees depending on the situation, but it should not be the sole basis on which we offer assistance. Such a mindset creates blinders in the brain, limiting how we think we can help the poor. In the long run, assistance provided on this belief may lead to prejudices about

- who should and can decide what is best for the poor
- the worldview and personal view the poor hold about themselves
- who must control the money and assistance provided to the poor
- what the expected outcome(s) should be

Another common assumption of providing assistance concerns control, and how control must be kept in "our" hands, although with the best intentions of course. Recipients are presumed not to be trustworthy or capable of handling money or projects. Recipients respond saying, "We need your help, but when you retain control, and when you don't recognize that we have knowledge, aspirations, abilities, and skills, then you treat us as objectives of your largess."

Together with the recipients we can shape the process so that recipients maintain their dignity—or develop dignity—though they receive assistance. We can change the assumptions. There are risks in giving up control of the "purse strings" and of how an aid program is run. But turning over such control is part of the development experience. We are called to extend kindness and be openhanded

toward our brothers and sisters, toward the poor and needy.

Our Mother's Bread⁶

African immigrants and refugee women are one of the weakest and most vulnerable groups in Canadian society today. Canadian statistics show that there are between 300,000 and 400,000 people of African descent living in the Greater Toronto area. The majority of these immigrants were driven out of their countries of origin by political and war-related problems. They came to Canada with wonderful dreams of success.

Unfortunately, many have begun to lose hope. They feel isolated and have lost their motivation. The problems they face include difficulty in finding jobs, insufficient funds to further their education, loss of connections because of emigration, family separation, inability to be self-sustaining, language difficulties, cultural adjustments, discrimination, lack of Canadian work experience, and the rejection of their education certificates from home countries. Violence, especially wife abuse, is on the increase. This situation greatly affects the children and is slowly disintegrating the African immigrant family.

A group of twenty-two concerned women, with determination to succeed, formed the Women Supporting Women Network Group (WSWN). Many of these women have been unemployed despite the fact that they have valuable skills. After doing a feasibility study, the women discovered that there is a large market for African bakery products, and they realized that they have a great deal of baking experience brought from their home countries.

The Women Supporting Women Network Group has raised \$5,000 through fundraising and \$20,000 through their own in-kind contributions. They applied for and received a \$30,000 grant from Presbyterian Self-Development of People, one of the ministries of One Great Hour of Sharing. The Network project has helped the women work together to address their own needs. It has empowered them to make decisions, seek solutions

to their problems, and to find ways to improve their lives and the surrounding community.

Already, the women have developed and improved their baking skills, have extended their market beyond the African community, and are bringing in income to improve their economic situations. Others in the community are noticing the differences and are interested in participating or starting other ventures. Their dreams of becoming self-sufficient and having a purpose are becoming a reality.

Carrying Out Development Ministries of Compassion

The world needs not only more aid but better aid. The kind of development assistance and the means by which it is provided matter even more than the amount. A common model of development assistance is one in which intermediary organizations carry out activities with funds and materials donated by contributors. An example is giving

your old clothes to a group that collects from many individuals and organizations and then distributes clothing to people who need it. More and more, however, congregations seek to carry out development activities directly. An example would be a congregation that has a "clothes closet." Members donate their old clothing and staff the closet; people in need come to the church to select their clothes. In this example the congregation is directly involved with those in need. As individuals or congregations begin to carry out developmental ministries they need to be aware of possible pitfalls.



Photo by Bobo Ekin

The nomadic, cattle-raising Surma People are among the most marginalized people of Ethiopia. The well is part of the Surma water development project, which the Surma People did themselves.

Areas of Caution

Related to the development ministry model of compassion are three primary areas of caution. History unfortunately provides many “good” examples of development projects going bad because those who gave the aid or those who administered it gave little attention to these issues.

PATERNALISM

The idea that “we know best” poses a constant danger for development projects, especially assistance-related activities. Donor assumptions and perceptions of the local situation, its needs, relationships, and power are often only partially correct and generally insufficient as a basis for conducting efficient interventions. Many well-

In all of this travel, whether within Malawi or within the region, I have seen a wide variety of needs and responses to needs, and I would like to challenge us all to think about how we should respond to need as a church. People appreciate help but do not want to be dependent forever. Think about using local materials and resources—for example, think of paying several local ox-cart owners to haul materials rather than importing a very expensive tractor that no one knows how to use or maintain. Channel resources in constructive and appropriate ways, empowering and validating local leadership where possible.

Frank Dimmock, Mission Co-worker, Malawi
Mission Connections Newsletter
December 1998

intentioned projects end in failure because the Western approach, or “big brother” stance, fails to adequately address the real needs of a community.

When we display paternalistic attitudes we further marginalize recipients of assistance. Donors are paternalistic when they assume that “locals” do not or cannot speak and act on their own behalf. Such a judgment diminishes the self-confidence and dignity of those helped, and undermines the actual development efforts.

For benefactors the alternative to paternalism is humility and a proactive endeavor to learn about the specific concerns and context of a community of need. Working and learning with the “beneficiaries” offers not only a more efficient project design, but also an opportunity to develop relationships based on mutual concern.

DEPENDENCY

Recipients of aid become dependent on an external agent when they see the benefactor as having the wisdom, knowledge, and know-how, and when they identify the benefactor as the provider of the money, resources, technology, and sometimes labor. Recipients become dependent when they see themselves as passive receivers of the external agent’s munificence. Here are some questions to raise as you consider involvement in an assistance project.

- Is the outside donor the only source of funds and resources for a development project? Are there local contributions for the work that promote local ownership?
- Do beneficiaries say what they want donors to hear in order to get something, rather than saying what they really need?
- Is the relationship through which assistance is provided only by way of one or a few persons? What happens when that person(s) leaves?
- Have donors encouraged an attitude that they are there only as a “milk cow,” as a source of funds for those in need? What else can donors offer as people of faith seeking the welfare of others?

Creating relationships of dependency is both

easy and debilitating. Donors must be diligent in working cooperatively with others, rather than merely doing for others.

SYMPTOMS OR CAUSES?

“It is much easier and even more dramatic to provide temporary help for urgent needs than it is to solve the underlying problems which create the need.” Simply providing assistance may also promote dependency where needs remain and root causes are not addressed. Identifying and responding to the underlying reasons for a condition of need is essential for effective development ministry.

Using homelessness as an example, the soup kitchen and shelter treat the symptoms, providing for the immediate needs of the participating homeless people, but they do little to eliminate homelessness. However, a skill development program that teaches people marketable skills eliminates the root cause of homelessness for a group of people, empowers them, and frees them from the need of soup kitchen and shelter.

Learning from the “Green Revolution”⁸

Over the past few decades, activities collectively known as the Green Revolution took root in a number of nations that suffered prolonged periods of famine. Foreign agricultural experts introduced strains of food crops resistant to disease, pests, and drought. Theoretically, modern technology would put an end to hunger and break the cycle of dependence on foreign aid by enabling farmers to feed their own communities. The Green Revolution held great promise for success, and charitable agencies supported such programs as a much-needed practical answer to the twin problems of hunger and poverty.

But by the end of the 1980s, it was clear that the Green Revolution had a serious flaw. Crop yields were impressive for the first few years, but as the grain produced ever greater quantities of food, it also required more and more chemical fertilizer. Eventually, third world farmers were trapped in yet

another form of dependence on the first world: they needed fertilizer that required cash, which was just what the farmers lacked. The Green Revolution’s promise of prosperity turned into a snare of continuing debt.

What can be learned from the well-intentioned efforts of the Green Revolution? First, good intentions are not enough. We will find ourselves providing aggravation instead of relief if efforts are not carefully researched and designed. Second, we must think less in terms of the present and more in terms of future generations—long-term and sustainable solutions. Third, we must always be ready to recognize mistakes and quickly change direction when a program turns sour.

Implementation

PRACTICE

The types of development assistance that are commonly requested represent a variety of needs. They include such concerns as food aid, clean drinking water, nutrition, improved agricultural practices, appropriate technologies, job training, primary health services, sanitation projects, educational programs, environmental concerns, starting small businesses (such as an apple co-op), and credit plans to name a few.

The important issue of practicing ministries of compassion is that they not only meet immediate needs but also are small and practical enough that beneficiaries can be involved in meeting their own needs and gain self-reliant skills, confidence, and knowledge as a result.

SERVICE

The operative word in ministries of compassion is service. A sense of service is the basis of providing assistance. Service may be used in the sense of “How may I (we) be of service?” as well as in the sense of one of “us” responding to the needs of “them” or “others.”

Compassion is a natural and spiritually motivated response to needs and calamities. We react to such situations because, like Christ, we feel compassion for those in need, and feel a Christian

The hospital was busy in October with the shallow wells program, an incredibly successful partnership between Marion Medical Missions (MMM) of Illinois and the villages in our area. Villages apply to have a shallow well placed; they mold bricks, dig the well as a community. The hospital and MMM supply cement and the well itself. Each well will last perhaps a decade or more and serve about 300 people. In the first year of this project, six wells were placed. This past month, over 200 were placed! That's 60,000 people who received access to better drinking water. The program works because of the maintenance. A village person is assigned to fix minor problems and alert the hospital plumber for major problems. The community pays for the plumber's services in bags of maize annually.

Cosimo Storniolo and family, PC(USA) Mission
Co-workers in Malawi, Missionary Newsletter,
December 1998

motivation to respond. Once Jesus taught 5,000 men, plus women and children. As evening approached, the disciples worried about where people would get their dinner. Jesus told the disciples, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat" (Matt. 14:16 NRSV). Even in the midst—maybe especially in the midst of overwhelming need—God insists that we be of

assistance to our neighbors. Sometimes the poverty seems so impossibly beyond our means we're not sure we can make much of a difference. But it is not our responsibility to make it work. Success is God's responsibility. This is the special quality of service. All we can do, and all that God expects us to do, is to offer whatever resources we have in the face of the problems that exist, to be the servants entrusted with God's property. Then it is Christ's job to multiply those resources to meet even the most enormous of needs.

Working with People

RELATIONSHIPS

It is possible to participate in development ministries of compassion from a distance, with no face-to-face relationship between the donor and the beneficiary. The main purpose of a contribution or intervention is generally to meet particular needs within a time-limited program rather than building relationships, although the later may be an outcome, or even a coincidental activity. The focus is one way, from benefactor to recipient. Typically there is strong donor control over what resources are provided, especially financial ones. The recipients have no decision making say-so on how funds or other resources are used. That responsibility remains in the hands of the implementer of the aid program. A prime concern of many donors is that the money be spent as intended by the donor, and that stipulation is attached to the gift. Therefore any relationship created from or through development assistance is generally from "us" as benefactors, to "them" as recipients of "our" help.

Anonymous and charitable giving has been a hallmark of Presbyterians for years and has alleviated much pain and suffering in times of disaster or refugee crisis. Despite the general lack of direct connection between contributing Presbyterians and the receivers of their aid, this giving is an effective and significant expression of the church's concern for the "least of these" in the world.

PEOPLE

Although there may not be direct relationships established between donors and beneficiaries in some charitable ministries, the people affected by the activities are more important than the projects. Remember three principles when supporting development activities and the people involved in them.

- Although assistance types of ministries are undertaken on behalf of others, “those” people should not be considered as mere “objectives” of “our” charity. Work to develop and maintain the dignity of both “donors” and “beneficiaries” in the development process.
- We tend to rush into a situation eager to help, eager to fix whatever is wrong. Before you leap, take the time to consider the value and possibility of the people themselves working through the problem. When we take over, others lose the possibility of providing their own resources and developing their own solutions. The opportunity of learning from each other about each other is also lost. As much as possible, donors should seek to understand the context and the people for which they provide assistance. Such understanding ensures that not only is the help appropriate, but also that beneficiaries gain relief and problem-solving experience.
- Those who are the recipients of a development ministry have expectations of what is coming that may not be what is offered. On the other hand, those bringing the ministry may have doubts about how the assistance will be used by the recipients, whether wisely or efficiently. The two groups must identify the desired outcomes, clarify expectations, and generally agree on what aid is needed and how it will be used.

What is critical when people are assisted is that they have some control over the vision, creation, operation, and use of resources in carrying out what ultimately are their dreams for improvements in their lives.

Thinking through Compassion

When a congregation or other external agent is interested in participating in a development ministry of compassion, they need to think through how the activities of that ministry will be carried out and what impact they will have on the recipient. Consider the case of Bhim’s pig.



Photo by Rob Elin

A Palestinian shelter for people with disabilities provides rehabilitation therapy for those who are on the margin of the marginalized. This shelter is affiliated with the Middle East Council of Churches.

DIFFICULTIES OF DEVELOPMENT: BHIM’S PIG⁹

An expatriate living in a rural area of Nepal bought an improved variety of female pig for Bhim, the woman who worked in his family’s village home. He and his family were leaving the country soon and he hoped to secure an investment for Bhim’s future. The plan was that the sale of offspring from an improved variety of pig would provide a continuous and long-term source of income, since it would be in greater demand than the local breed of pig. Bhim was a widowed woman with three school-aged children. Her home was more hovel than house, and she had no land. Bhim’s only income was the salary she received from washing the expatriate family’s clothes, keeping their village house clean, and cooking their meals. The plan seemed like a practical and good way of contributing to the welfare of a needy woman after the expatriate family left. Or was it?

- Bhim had no vegetative resources of her own to feed her pig, and precious little leftover food from her family's meals. The smaller, local varieties of pig roamed free and foraged a significant portion of their daily food. Unfortunately, an improved variety of pig was too big and voracious to freely roam.
- The pig was large and needed to be confined. Bhim had to find money to purchase materials to build a cage for the pig.
- To keep an improved breed animal in good health, and certainly as a pregnant animal, Bhim needed to buy special grain feed from the market. It was another costly item.
- Bhim had to pay a charge for breeding the pig.

Bhim seemingly managed to overcome the above obstacles. The pig successfully mated and produced a litter of piglets. But challenges remained.

- The first litter of piglets sold at a good price, but Bhim had to give most of the income to a local money lender to pay off previous debts. She used the small balance that was left for urgent household expenses.
- Without money to pay for more grain and breeding costs, Bhim decided to slaughter the pig and sell the meat, as the income would provide an immediate large amount of cash without any further costs.

And that was the end of the pig. Bhim and her family's economic situation remained much as it was before the pig. They had a few new clothes and better food for a time, but income from the pig enterprise largely went to pay off outstanding loans.

ISSUES:

- Bhim happily received the "foreign aid," but she did not understand, nor was she equipped for, the challenges of maintaining and servicing the improved pig. Could she have been better prepared and thus able to overcome the obstacles she would face?



Not Bhim's pig. This unimproved pig forages for food in a Guatemalan dump. It probably would do better in Bhim's environment than the improved pig she received.

- Providing an improved pig seemed like a good idea as far as the expatriate understood the local context and Bhim's need. However, Bhim did not "own" the idea of raising a pig. The expatriate discussed with her what would happen as far as receiving a pig, but he did not discuss the original idea of a pig. Why is it important that the recipient of aid be involved in identifying and developing a possible solution to a problem they live with?
- Could there have been a different and better project for providing long-term income for Bhim? How could it have been developed?

Helping the poor improve their lives is a natural desire, but not something benefactors should engage in impulsively. External agents and recipients should intentionally and mutually develop assistance ministries in order to avoid creating new or additional problems.

THE CLINIC

One typical example of assistance is that of congregations or other groups contributing to the construction of a building, such as a health clinic or school, in needy communities. Help of this kind, although sincerely requested by a community, might not be in the best interest of the community in the long run. The following are questions that a group might ask as they consider

building a health clinic for a poor community.

- Who will ultimately benefit from the project? Are they involved in planning and constructing it? Will all members of a community benefit from the facility?
- Once the facility is built, who will maintain it, and where will maintenance funds come from?
- Where will equipment come from and who pays for it? Are spare parts available locally and readily? Who is responsible for maintenance?
- Where will the budget come from for reoccurring operating expenses, such as staff salaries and office supplies?
- Is there a management committee for the facility? Is it made up of community representatives who have a stake in the project?
- Is there a local source of medicines and minor medical equipment?
- Is there a plan to make the facility become self-sufficient (that is, without support from external agents)?
- How is (are) the local church(es) involved in the project?
- Is this really the best use of resources? Could the funds be better used to fund a different project?

Strengths and Limitations¹⁰

What are the strong points and drawbacks to charitable approaches to development ministries undertaken by congregations in particular and other external groups in general?

STRENGTHS

Congregations involved in ministries of compassion

- are sources of funds and expertise for development
- provide prayer support
- often have personal links with development projects overseas through missionaries, and

members involved in work locally

- potentially can mobilize a large number of people to work on a project

Ministries of compassion that meet immediate concerns of communities in need

- provide an easy, usually time-limited, focus for outreach activities
- can be supported simply by writing a check
- do not require significant personal risk or lifestyle change

What the poor need is not charity, but capital, not caseworkers, but co-workers.

Clarence Jordan

LIMITATIONS

Congregations (or other groups) conducting development ministries of compassion

- often work vicariously through intermediary groups and therefore have no direct connection to beneficiaries
- have only a few persons actively involved and interested in the work
- find difficulty in sustaining interest of supporting members over long periods of time
- may confuse the primary aim of development ministries with simply giving away resources
- often do not engage the receiving community in the decision making of the program
- may create or contribute to a development assistance program that does not address the entire community the congregation seeks to help

Evaluating Effectiveness

Before venturing into a development ministry of compassion, take a hard look at the proposed project. Ask lots of questions. Periodically as you are involved in a ministry, evaluate the project,

your participation in it, and its effect on the recipients. When the project ends, evaluate again. Learn from your experience. When evaluating programs and activities, emphasize decentralized, local, and small-scale development programs owned by the communities of need themselves.

Questions to consider:

- Do you know who you are serving or helping?
- Have you considered establishing a relationship with the group or individuals receiving aid?
- Are the technologies and equipment appropriate and manageable by the local people?
- Are the donated goods and services relevant to the local context? For example, do farmers trying to recover from a hurricane in Honduras need winter clothes and dress shoes?
- Are the right people being trained in new skills? For instance, in one country, nutrition training was given to women since they prepare the family meals. However, men also should have been included in the training, as they buy the food in the market.
- Are the activities time-limited and focused so that there is a clear objective to be achieved?

Opportunities for Congregational Involvement in Ministries of Compassion

Presbyterian congregations across the country are actively involved in both local and foreign mission outreach activities with marginalized people. Many community ministries are ecumenical, which prevents the duplication of

There are some people so poor that God cannot appear to them in any form except that of bread.

Gandhi

services and maximizes resources.

How do congregations become engaged, and stay engaged, in development ministries? Mission pastors, people involved in development activities overseas and in this country, identified the following common essential elements.

- *Create interest.* The mission committee (or other appropriate group) must educate themselves on opportunities for involvement in assistance ministry and choose one that is likely to grab the interest of most of the congregation. Inform the congregation of the nature of the ministry, why it is necessary, why and how the congregation may get involved.
- *Build a people-to-people relationship.* Congregations need a “human face,” a way they can connect with someone directly involved with on-site ministry, or a way they can connect with the recipients.
- *Establish two-way communication.* The congregation not only needs to send prayers, support, and resources to the assistance project, but also needs to hear about how the assistance is making a difference.
- *Involve the whole community* (both the “giver” and “receiver” communities) so that all members know what is happening and what the benefits are. Community-wide communication limits the ability of a few people to control what occurs.
- *Cultivate an attitude of “thinking globally, acting locally.”* That is, what is undertaken locally arises out of what is known about the global conditions that help create the local situation and vice versa.

How Congregations Are Involved in Development Activities¹¹

A survey of participants at a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) global mission conference in St. Louis during the fall of 1997 provided information on which of sixteen types of global mission activities their congregations have participated in or financially supported over the previous two years (see below). The four areas of the largest

percentages of involvement were construction/renovation (58 percent), health and medical care (58 percent), disaster assistance (54 percent), and children and youth (51 percent). The average respondent indicated congregational involvement in four of the activities listed below.

Areas of Global Involvement over the Last Two Years (from greatest to least percentage of involvement)

- construction/renovation (wells, clinics, hospitals, and so forth)
- health and medical care
- disaster assistance
- children and youth
- hunger/human development
- mission workers
- education
- peacemaking
- international evangelism
- ecumenical/interfaith relations
- justice/human rights
- women
- refugees
- agriculture
- leadership development
- other

RESPONDING TO DISASTERS

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) provides immediate relief to disaster survivors, but within a development framework. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods devastate communities. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance works ecumenically to provide relief in a coordinated and effective manner, and also takes a long-term, development approach to the situation.

When Hurricane Mitch hit Guatemala, it wiped out many villages. Besides providing immediate assistance, PDA gave some consideration to how the villagers could avoid another, similar disaster. Most of the destroyed villages had been built on a flood plain. Why? Because it was the only land available to the poor people. Working through the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala, PDA provided funds for the villagers to purchase land in a better location. The villagers rebuilt in the new location,

Our church has a Christmas tradition of packaging and delivering packets filled with socks, toothbrushes and various toiletries to the homeless in our city. Three years ago my husband and I became part of a small group giving out these packets. As we did this, I began to notice something: I've never heard so many people tell me, "God bless you." With every hand I shook, in each pair of eyes I saw looking at me, I began to see God. In the past I had thought of mission work as an opportunity to teach others of God and his powerful love, but now I know sometimes it works the other way around.

Alisa Calvin, Austin, Texas, in *Presbyterians Today*, July/August 1999

with some labor donated by external agents, and then drew straws for the new homes. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance didn't think it sufficient to send tents and blankets, or even building materials, to rebuild in the same location. In a situation requiring immediate relief, PDA also took a long-term development look at ministry.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is supported by Presbyterian individuals and congregations who are quick to respond to disasters with an outpouring of checks. They can participate in this ministry of compassion knowing that PDA, as their emissary, will use the money appropriately and with an eye for development.

PLANTING SEEDS

Self-Development of People, funded through One Great Hour of Sharing, engages in ministries

of compassion with an emphasis on justice. Instead of immediate relief, Self-Development of People provides seed money to community-based groups to help them achieve their long-term development goals.

A COLLAGE OF COMPASSION

The following are examples¹² from the 1999 *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study* of the many ways congregations and presbyteries are engaged in ministries of compassion.

Through the Detroit presbytery's Two Cents a Meal Program, individual Presbyterians contribute two cents for each meal they eat, which raises thousands of dollars annually to support ministries to the hungry (January 14, p. 14).

Presbyterian Women from twenty-one of the congregations in the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley stitch quilts for the Buckhorn Children's Foundation facility, which serves as a residential treatment center for suffering and troubled children. "There's nothing like God's love and a good quilt to keep you warm" (January 22, p. 22).

"This is the good news: in times of great need, Christian show their faith through their caring." The people of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains know this well. Gifts of money, emergency supplies, blankets, children's toys, Christmas decorations, and school supplies poured in all summer following the worst flood in a five-hundred-year period in 1997 that decimated Grand Forks and the surrounding counties. Over 1,100 volunteers gave more than 10,000 hours to muck out flooded basements, carry off ruined possessions, rebuild walls and dikes, hold hands, wipe tears, and share stories. Over \$1,000,000 was received from congregations, individuals, and One Great Hour of Sharing (March 5, p. 65).

Ranchers throughout South Dakota will long reap the harvest of encouragement brought by fifteen people from the Synod of the Trinity who came as volunteers in mission to western Dakota following the devastating blizzards of 1997. The volunteers

helped repair fences, worked cattle and sheep, and did field work. The work they did was greatly appreciated, but one rancher summed it up well when he said, "I don't care so much about my fences, but it sure helped my heart" (March 9, p. 69).

The Marion Medical Mission to Malawi of the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois, in operation since 1985, has been instrumental in constructing shallow wells to provide safe water to thousands in northern Malawi (April 9, p. 100).

Grace Hope
Presbyterian Church
(Presbytery of
Louisville), located
in a high-crime area
of Louisville, has
established a
program for young
girls and women
that develops
Christian values,
self-esteem, and
respect for self and
others. An average
of thirty girls from
six to eighteen learn about health care, career
planning, and home living skills. An essential part
of the project is participation in Bible study and a
prayer partner program (April 16, p. 107).

*The good we secure for
ourselves is precarious
and uncertain . . . until
it is secured for all of us
and incorporated into
our common life.*

Jane Addams

Sixteen prisons are located in the bounds of Missouri Union Presbytery. The mission committee of the presbytery has begun a process to provide ministries to both those that are incarcerated and the families of those in prison (May 4, p. 125).

The Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay uses computers both for Sunday School classes as well as teaching typing and computer skills to women working to get off welfare. The program provides life-skill and job-skill training during which women study parenting, health issues, sewing, budgeting and finance, typing, word processing, and interview techniques. Church volunteers provide

transportation and assist with child care. A hot meal is served in the fellowship hall for the women, workers, and children. So far each graduate has secured full-time employment with benefits (October 14, p. 288).

In 1998, the Presbytery of Santa Barbara sent student and adult mission teams to Kenya and the Philippines for the sixth year. Members of the presbytery's Church in the World Committee host a quarterly mission network event, where churches present what they are doing to manifest Christ's love nearby and far away. Returning missionaries or local workers present their work and needs, and churches have a chance to brainstorm, share resources, and "stir each other up to love and good works" in Jesus' name. The enthusiasm generated by such a mission and evangelism focus is evident in the almost 500 new members added to the presbytery during the past year (November 13, p. 318).

East Liberty Family Health Care Center in the Pittsburgh Presbytery received a grant from the Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering that will enable it to open another medical center in the neighborhood. Another presbytery agency outreach, Lydia's Place, that aims to build self-worth, restore families, and help women become productive members of society, received a grant from the Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering (December 20, p.355).

The Presbytery of Pueblo is very involved in ecumenical projects through the San Luis Valley Christian Community Services. Ministries includes service to senior citizens, immigrants, and low-income homeowners, and supports cottage industry, farm marketing, advocacy, and service projects. Summer service projects draw youth groups and adults from around the country. They repair roofs, paint, build wheelchair ramps, and winterize homes for the elderly, disabled, and poor. The service projects are a two-way street: while the youth work to improve homes, they experience the joy of giving and serving, the basis of a different lifestyle. One youth said, "This has changed my

whole life. It made me realize what's important—love for one another, respect, justice, honesty, and hope—not clothes, cars, and money" (September 20, p. 264).

On the Scene Report: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program—Kosovo

God is very present here. The Evangelical churches are not establishing camps. Rather, they are supporting the camps through providing believers as volunteers, and then helping individual Albanian families to cope with the influx of refugees into their homes. Art Ware's (Presbyterian mission worker) driver, a poor man, has twenty-four refugees living in his home. This is the story repeated thousands of times.

This is the strangeness of this refugee crisis. The Kosovars are Albanians ethnically, but not Albanian nationally. But national identity gives way to ethnic/linguistic realities . . . to brotherhood and sisterhood. Albania, by far and away the "poorest man of Europe," is now coping with a refugee crisis unmatched since the end of WWII.

Only eternity will reveal the impact of the body of Christ, Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical sharing the love of Jesus Christ through their acts of kindness and mercy. "As you have done it for these, my sisters and brothers, you have done it for me."

Rev. Art Beals, reporting from Albania (April 1999), via the Internet

Questions for Reflection

We tend to desire "feel-good" stories of what can happen when we provide assistance to people or programs that seek to help others; we like to hear what positive changes can occur as a result of our giving. However, for some conditions for which we give help, there may not be "feel-good" stories, but rather continuing pain and poor quality of life. Take the example of hunger. The people fed today in the soup kitchen your congregation supports will be back tomorrow, hungry again. What must we do to see fewer people being hungry? What can we do to create "feel-good" stories, not just for ourselves, but also for the people we seek to help?

Who do you consider to be poor in your

community? What makes them so? What do people need to have so that they are not poor?

What does the Bible say about poverty and about being a good neighbor to those in need? How does the biblical message affect your attitudes and actions in responding to the poverty around you?

Why should you (or why should you not) be involved in ministries of compassion? What motivates you?

What is your response to this statement: "An American church must give assistance to communities of need globally if their vision of development assistance at home is to be complete"?

What questions should you ask before undertaking charitable ministries of development?

What scriptures provide principles of development for you? How have you applied these principles to your development efforts?

A Final Story

Yesterday I met with the Hospital Care and Compassion Committee about helping twenty-five families whose houses had collapsed due to landslides. Landslide collapses are worse than fires because the whole house just gets swept away. There isn't a structure left to rebuild. The committee has given out hundreds of dollars in these past six months in relief and the requests keep coming in. The team is at the end of its resources. The process of deciding who to help and how much to help makes for a long afternoon. Listening to the stories is overwhelming for those of us who cannot even come close to understanding the daily life of most Nepalese.

After the three-hour marathon meeting we went to Bimala's home for dinner (the girl who works for us). She lives a half-hour walk from us, and it was raining. The road was filled with mud from small landslides along the roadway. As I "daintily" stepped around the mud I suddenly squished into a mud pie and felt the mud ooze up between my toes. The rains came down, the mud came up and by the time I got to

Bimala's I needed a footbath! Before I could think what was happening they took a pitcher of water and proceeded to wash my feet! They had spent more than an hour carrying water for their family that day. This is a twice-a-day job, mind you, and here they were pouring their precious water on my feet!

As we entered the house, I was again struck by a way of life totally foreign to anything I could remotely imagine. No furniture, [only three rooms, and] mud floors and grass mats. Three plates shared by a family of seven; nine cups, one for every year her brother had passed in school; and two spoons for the foreigners when they come to visit. We sat on Bimala's bed, had lentil soup on top of rice with a little goat meat on the side. They kept saying how happy they were to have us, how long it had been since we last came and when would we come again.

As we left, Tad and I were both awestruck by the vast difference in our lives and in our ways of life. Everyday Bimala leaves her home and enters our world to help us. She comes clean and well-kept and participates in our lives as if nothing were different. If one owns three changes of clothes, three plates, and nine glasses and sleeps on a mud floor, you might be called "poor" in our terms! Yet Bimala comes to our home rejoicing in her Christian belief and in her life every day. Elizabeth Elliot says all we really need is something to do, someone to share it with (a friend), and a hope for tomorrow. Bimala has it all. In spite of her abject poverty, from our perspective, she is a rich woman. In comparison to those Nepalese we debated over at the Care and Compassion meeting earlier that day, she is wealthy—she has a home, a job, and a family that cares for her. We are humbled to observe it and be welcomed into the midst of it all.

Jane (and Tad) Gilmore, serving in Nepal as Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Diaconate Workers, Mission Connections Newsletter, December 1998

Notes

1. The first three paragraphs of this section are from G. Thompson Brown, *Presbyterians in World Mission: A Handbook for Congregations*, (Decatur, Ga. CTS Press, 1995), pp. 73–74.
2. James A. Gittings, *From Dream to Reality: A Contextual History of Twenty Years of the Presbyterian Self-Development Program* (Louisville, Ky.: Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1993), p. 79–80.
3. Much of this reflection on Matthew 25 is adapted from *Hope for a Global Future*, pp. 137–138.
4. *Hope for a Global Future*, pp. 139–140.
5. Lionel Derenoncourt, “Some Notes on ‘Community Organizing’ and ‘Community Development,’” Presbyterian Hunger Program, unpublished document, 1994.
6. This story is from Patricia Lane of Self-Development of People.
7. John R. Cheyne, *Incarnational Agents: A Guide to Developmental Ministry* (Birmingham, Ala. New Hope, 1996), p. xix.
8. Adapted from Luteri, *To Walk in Beauty*, p. 26
9. Steve Knisely, June 1998.
10. Much of this section is adapted from: Dearborn, *An Idea Whose Time Has Come*.
11. Information excerpted from Jo Ella Holman and Patricia Lloyd-Sidle, eds., *Congregations in Global Mission: New Models for a New Century—A Conference Report* (Louisville, Ky.: Office of Global Awareness and Involvement, Worldwide Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1998). p. 32. There were 409 responses to the survey.
12. Examples with date and page number taken from *Mission Interpretation and Promotion, 1999 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* (Louisville, Ky.: Congregational Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1999).

Development as Justice: Changing the Causes of Needs and Challenging the Structures—Partnering with Others

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other” (Zech. 7:9–10).

Introduction

Overview¹

As we engage in compassionate service, it becomes apparent that the basic problem of human suffering may not lie in the individual but in the structures of society. Take, for example, the problem of hunger. Compassion requires that we provide food for the starving in Rwanda or the Sudan and this we do. However, hunger keeps recurring. So more food is sent. But at some point we discover that we are dealing only with symptoms and not root causes. People may be hungry not because they are shiftless, lazy, or lack intelligence... but because they are victims of land exploitation, unjust taxes, greedy public officials, or a corrupt economy. In each case the problem stems from a structure of society, and if we are really serious about expressing our love for them “not in word but in deed,” then somehow we must deal with those structures.

Justice is the Christian’s response to the systemic problem of society. It is the recognition that sin has not only affected us as individuals, but that it has penetrated the structures of our economic, political, and social life. So we believe that the mission of the church must include bearing witness to the injustice, oppression, and exploitation of any society, and to point toward solutions and support efforts for improvement.

Some would equate compassion with justice or blur the distinction between the two. But there is a danger in this attitude because they are not the same. Exhortations to both in the Old and New Testaments use different words with different meanings. Micah 6:8 declares that God requires us to “do justice” and to “love kindness.” Jesus echoes these words when he appeals for “justice” and “mercy” as the “weightier matters of the law” (Matt. 23:23). Both must be included. . . .

There is nothing new in this emphasis on justice as a part of the mission enterprise of the church. William Carey worked to end the practice of suttee in India (the Hindu custom whereby a widow immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her husband); David Livingstone used all his influence to end the slave trade in Africa; Hampden DuBose worked all his life to end the opium trade in China; Samuel Moffett took the side of Korean patriots to end Japanese atrocities in Korea; William Sheppard and William Morrison began a political campaign which ended the exploitation of Congolese workers on the rubber plantations of King Leopold. . . . All these people and activities sought to bring about changes in the established order.

What is new today, and what makes justice issues more controversial, is that the issues now involve the structures of our own society. It is always easier to see the flaws in other systems than in our own. It is also more damaging to our own self-interest. Today’s justice issues which affect the global mission of the church include the practices of American businesses abroad, racial discrimination here at home, U.S. government support of totalitarian regimes, and human rights concerns.

Table 5 - Justice Model of Development Ministries

| Relational Elements | Development as: II. Justice | Relational Elements | Development as: II. Justice |
|--|--|--|---|
| Role and Experience of External Agent* | Partner / Advocate: pray; share resources, leadership and control with partners; identify injustice; reciprocal relationships | Common Assumptions of External Agents | Cooperatively, the poor and we may improve their lives and our understanding of their situation |
| The "Receiving" Community's Role and Experience | Initiate, design and implement projects; receive and provide personnel, receive funds; conditions of life improved, justice as major concern | Community Reactions to Assumptions of External Agents | Ensure our dignity in the partnership; do you trust us enough with resources? |
| Objective | Develop relationships with partner communities and with them identify and seek to overcome causes of needs and injustice | Common Questions by External Agents | What strengths can we both bring to improve your community? What can we learn and do together? |
| Relationship & Focus | Partner with others for quality of life change | Efforts Prompted by: | Bible reading Seeking to do justice, application of scripture |
| Decision-making & Accountability | Shared control and joint actions | Theological Basis | Zech. 7:9-10 administer true justice, show mercy; Matt 23: 1-39 Woe to the unjust Pharisees who don't practice what they preach |
| Type of Activities | Integrated, moderate-term | Constraint | Difficulty of unequal relationships and expectations; requires long term commitment of people and funds |

When the church engages in justice, it must recognize its own limitations. It must be careful not to go beyond its own expertise. There is not one, unambiguous "Christian" position. Our statements must be tempered with realism as to the results we hope to effect. Sometimes the church will be mistaken. It must speak from its own Christian principles and not allow itself to become a pawn of some secular movement. When it speaks, it must be sure of its facts. Discretion must be used in selecting those issues which are most flagrant and where injustice is most clearly at stake.

But speak out it must. Only in this way will the church be true to the scriptures and to its own tradition.

Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! (Amos 5:23-24).

Portrait of Justice

March 1999

Dear Fellow Missionaries:

I address you as such, because are we not all sent to tell of God's love? . . . I will begin by

telling a story that may give you some impression of life on the [Mexican] border.

The first week I went across the border with the co-ordinator of Laredos Unidos, Trel Lowe, for a routine visit to the poorer of the two colonias that we serve called Union de Recuerdo. I learned quickly that life lived on the edge is never routine. Every day is an adventure for us, but a literal battle for survival for many.

A neighbor who is a nurse met us with the urgent request for medical supplies needed by an elderly woman who was badly burned when her dress caught fire while she was cooking over an open fire. She had spent one night in the hospital but was sent home when she could not pay. Laredos Unidos operates a health clinic in the community, but it was closed for the day. Together with the pastor of our mission church, Mt. Zion, we called on the woman. She was lying in bed in obvious pain but in clean sheets, although the wounds were already somewhat infected.

The first thing we did was lay on hands (she was very hot with fever) and the pastor prayed for her recovery. The prayer was fervent to the point of being oppressive to my ears. He admonished her to have faith and to bear her pain with patience, insisting that she believe that

God was with her and would not abandon her. . . . Trel surveyed what was needed to treat her, and we made a quick trip (usually it takes an hour or so to cross the border) back and forth with the supplies.

The home was hardly a house—cardboard walls and a tin roof with no floor. One room with two beds and a TV with an attached lean-to that must serve as a kitchen-dining area. No running water or sewage. The yard was large and bare with about six or seven children, almost as bare, playing in it—part of the extended family that lives about the property.

The God of the Bible is a God of justice! As this biblical justice must condition our individual and community relationships, it must also affect those relationships which are economic, political and social. . . . Injustice springs from powerlessness, people living without the power to control their lives. Justice is empowering the poor, granting the means whereby they can gain control over their own destinies. With no power to control their lives, the poor will perpetuate the impoverishment and oppression of those social structures into which they were born. Once a culture of poverty comes into existence, it tends to perpetuate itself from one generation to the next because of its devastating impact upon the children of that culture.

Art Beals, *Beyond Hunger: A Biblical Mandate for Social Responsibility* (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1985), p. 145.

Many homes in the colonia are better situated than this one, as there is water, sewage, and electricity available if they can afford to connect to them. Colonias evolve as people arrive in the border cities looking for work in one of the many maquiladoras (factories built on the border to take advantage of cheap labor, lax environmental laws, and proximity to the U.S. market), or hoping to cross into the United States. They put up shacks on a piece of open land around the city, and when several hundred have done so, there develops a community.

The government may choose to buy the land from the original owner and set up a system for the squatters to purchase their own plot of land. After the people own the land they begin to make improvements, one block at a time, as they get the money. Eventually the government adds infrastructures—utilities, school, and eventually roads (after fifteen years, Union de Recuerdo has no pavement or telephone). The dust when it is dry and the mud when wet are depressing and unhealthy.

The ability of the people to make a life in these conditions is impressive. Of course there are a lot of drugs, and other social problems caused by the many unemployed and mostly underemployed. The maquiladoras pay from 3 to 13 dollars a day. A few skilled workers may make \$100 for a 48 hour week. It is not enough to live on.

If both parents work they can make some progress, but then the children are on the street. Most women choose to stay at home because they see their main purpose is to raise and educate their children for a better life. Through a special donation from a large Texas church, Laredos Unidos offers scholarships to enable parents to pay for uniforms, books, and bus fare.

Betty and I are seen by the church communities as one part of their plan for training their people to get better paying jobs. They already take computer classes at the churches, and we are to offer English. We have been studying ESL [English as a second language] books in preparation to start classes as soon as

we are living in Mexico. . . . Betty has substituted in the nutrition program (kind of a headstart for four- and five-year-olds). . .

Are we glad we came? Not yet. Do we feel called to be here? Yes. Have we stopped getting butterflies crossing the border? No. Do we feel loved and supported by our Mexican brothers and sisters in Christ? Yes and yes. Do we feel needed? Yes. Do we feel capable of the challenge? No, but we are learning again that we are not alone. Not only is God a constant presence, but your prayer support is making a big difference.

Yesterday, a letter came from Steel Creek Presbyterian Church in Charlotte [North Carolina] . . . with an announcement of their financial support for our work here. While personally we have the money we need (of course the financial needs of the mission are never ending), the symbolism of being remembered by a church far from [here], and yet a part of the family of God, was an emotional high. We cherish all of your communications, love, and prayers.

Howard and Betty Boyd, former Mission Volunteers at the Presbyterian Border Ministries, Mission Connections Newsletter

Preparation for Development Ministries of Justice

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

Traditionally there has been a sense that justice (or perhaps more accurately “mercy”) means a redistribution of wealth, or at least sharing our excess with the less fortunate. For example, justice to some might mean organizing and financing the feeding of the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and performing other works of mercy for impoverished individuals. However, we need a deeper understanding of justice in order to genuinely “do justice.” This understanding acknowledges that certain social, political, and economic structures may be unjust and require fundamental change. It is these systems, and persons that perpetuate them, that marginalize other people, making them poor,

disadvantaged, and unable to live the abundant life that God desires for humanity.

Jesus came that we might experience abundant life in all its fullness. His life, action and words as recorded in the New Testament provide numerous examples where he sought to bring healing to people pauperized and marginalized by the unjust religious and social practices of his day. Jesus challenged and spoke against those powers that upheld the exploitive systems. The life and example that he lived is a call to us today to embody justice in our efforts of development ministries. Consider the following passage from Aaron Gast’s paper “Self-Development: A Christian Mandate,” delivered before the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Self-Development Committee on April 22, 1972.

Theologically, self-development² is the practical realization of the Incarnation. It is love-in-action. It is love taking risks. It is involvement in the hurts of people from the inside out. . . . We as a part of the body of Christ are involved in this self-development process because we believe that God, who sent His Son into the world because He loved it, . . . has called us to continue to incarnate and manifest His love to all creation. The concept of self-development involves a theological awareness that the Holy Spirit is operating in the structures of our society, that people no longer are willing to accept the form and structures that impose inferiority or

It is not enough that the church simply proclaim to the world; she must actually get down into the dirt and grime of history and participate in the task of remaking the world into God’s kingdom.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

poverty upon them. . .

The dilemma and challenge of development ministries is that there are no widely agreed solutions to the problems of injustice. However, as Christians in the Reformed tradition, we must engage in just and sustainable development from the basis of our faith in God and our understanding of biblical principles. There is no economic system so exploitive that Christ's promise of abundant life cannot change it. God's righteousness can transform corrupt political, economic, and social systems. Inequitable societal structures are not immune from the Holy Spirit's work of justice.

Below are two selected passages from the Gospels that address the issue of justice. What can we learn from them about our responsibility to "do justice" as well as to confront and redress unjust systems?

LUKE 4:18-19

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

This good news is a message of hope and healing, a message of deliverance from both physical need and from oppression and injustice in all its forms.

The gospel, rightly understood, is holistic. It addresses all the realms that people live in; it does not single out just spiritual or just physical needs. Christian development ministries begin with people transformed by the love of God, who then respond to God's call to share the gospel with others through evangelism, social action, economic development, and justice.

How is justice a part, implicitly or explicitly, of each of these expressions of good news?

Like Jesus, we are called to a radical activity of love, to a way of being in the world that deepens relation, embodies and extends community, passes on the gift of life.

Like Jesus, we must live out this calling in a place and time where the distortions of loveless power stand in conflict with the power of love.

We are called to confront, as Jesus did, that which thwarts the power of human personal and communal becoming, that which twists relationship, which denies human well-being, community, and human solidarity to so many in our world.⁴



At a school for the deaf in Gaza a young man learns vocational skills.

MATTHEW 23:1-39

Jesus, through his acts of mercy, teaching, and lifestyle, exposed injustices in the society around him and condemned the self-righteousness of its leaders. Evaluate the lively accusations Jesus made against the Pharisees in the emotional interchange recorded in Matt. 23:1-39. Jesus expressed seven "woes" against the Pharisees and other religious leaders. Consider what they mean in our cultural context, and how they instruct us to be vigilant and active against injustice today in the various structures that frame our social, economic, political, and religious lives.

Seven Woes

- "You shut the kingdom of heaven in [people's] faces" (v. 13). Do structures and practices of

state and church actually restrict religious freedom? How can we guard against religious intolerance? Is there a veneer of religiosity overlaying worldly aims and structures that seek to disempower the righteous?

- *“You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are”* (v. 15). Through Western education, economics, political theory, social morals, and culture, do we “remake” third-world people and culture in our image? How do paternalistic and Western religious bias enslave people of other cultures? How do we engage another society’s unjust social, political, economic and religious practices in constructive ways? What religious practices are essential (freeing), and what are enslaving?
- *“You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he or she is bound by the oath’ ”* (v. 16). Do social attitudes and traditions relativize truth and justice? Do all people receive similar treatment under judicial systems? Does the engraving on our coins and bills, “In God We trust,” truly reflect a common standard of behavior towards each other? What is the basis for truth and justice in a society? Do economic considerations mean more to us than the household of God does?
- *“You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness”* (v. 23). What principles inform the social, economic, and political

We are on the side of the poor only when we struggle alongside them against the poverty that has been unjustly created and forced on them.

Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff

transactions of a society? Do people practice justice and mercy in all relationships—in the home, in the place of employment, and in the market? Do our financial dealings with others provide for mercy and justice?

- *“You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence”* (v. 25). Do the policies and practices of the government, not-for-profit, and nongovernment organizations truly live up to the “public servant” role they espouse? Who are they accountable to? Are economic policies and systems fair to all, or actually creating conditions of poverty? Is the capitalistic economic system just? Does the so-called “democratic” system of a country provide for equality for all?
- *“You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead [people’s] bones and everything unclean”* (v. 27). Are religious, public, and financial institutions based on materialistic goals rather than on seeking the welfare of the people they are established to serve? Is the degradation and marginalizing of some sectors of a society tolerable because the majority benefit?
- *“You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous”* (v. 29). Does society really tolerate those who speak on behalf of the poor and marginalized, those who call into question the values and lifestyles of the rich and powerful? Why does a society celebrate those who challenged the status quo, but cannot abide present-day prophets who expose current injustices?

What insight have you gleaned from these verses that helps you understand the church’s role—and your role—in naming and confronting injustice wherever it may be found?

Objectives

Justice ministries include compassion (meeting needs) but also address what it is that causes the need. Authentic identification of the cause will

expose the injustice that underlies it. Ministries of justice require a partnership of “outsiders” and “insiders,” that is, external agents such as congregations who work alongside the members of the needy community. Both partners embrace a vision of mutuality. They share resources; they work together to identify problems and possibilities; and they have joint control over community development programs. The aim of this type of development ministry is fourfold:

1. Improve quality of life in the needy community in areas determined by both partners
2. Increase the capability of needy communities to initiate, design, and implement their own development efforts
3. Identify, challenge, and change the systems and structures which cause the need
4. Create relationships in which all participants can learn about conditions of need and justice, and work to build up the universal body of Christ

Process

Development in the context of justice ministries is a process of working jointly with others enabling them to understand the conditions of their lives, to identify the injustice that caused their needs, and then to take action to change the situation. The process assumes that people have innate skills and knowledge to take control of their lives, but could benefit from facilitation, additional knowledge, resources, and linkages to help accomplish their goals for improvement. Partners jointly identify causes of impoverishment. Partners then develop and implement activities to alleviate needs and to foster change in systems and structures that perpetuate injustice.

For example, an assistance-type of ministry provides a feeding program for individuals who do not have enough food. A justice-oriented development program feeds people who are hungry, but also includes activities to observe, listen, learn, and participate with them in order to identify and eliminate the reasons for their hunger. Bringing justice to a situation through enabling

people to help themselves allows men and women the dignity of analyzing and solving their own problems. Key tasks in the processes of just development include the following:

- Engage the community-of-need members in problem diagnosis so that those affected understand the cause of their situation, and are able to identify local resources available to them
- Dialogue in proactive and constructive ways with those responsible for (or those representing) the unjust structure
- Discuss, with community leaders and members, the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological implications and risks associated with alternative solutions to their needs
- Enable the community members to design and implement a plan to solve agreed-upon problems, emphasizing shared leadership, shared control, shared resources, and active citizen participation
- Watch vigilantly for any effort that is likely to affect the disadvantaged segments of the community adversely
- Develop leadership and organizational skills in the community

Presbyterian emphasis has been on helping people through ministries of compassion, such as food or recreation. We are organizing a church with the poor, not for them. We come to where they are. We sit side by side. We worship together.

Andrew Lee Stephens, organizing pastor of the PC(USA)'s Village Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Quoted in *Presbyterians Today*, March 1999, p. 9.

Assumptions⁵

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s *Hope for a Global Future* policy statement consistently focuses on the reduction and elimination of poverty as the essence of doing justice in the political, social, and economic arenas of our world. Because poverty in our time is both massive and unnecessary, it is scandalously unjust. As the Confession of 1967 declares, "The reconciliation of [humanity] through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation."⁶



Photo by Bob Eide

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance provided funds to help the people in Tecajate, Guatemala after Hurricane Mitch. There was a little money left over and the people used it to buy 200 chickens, starting a chicken project to supply the villagers with food.

Chapter 7 of *Hope for a Global Future*, which contains the General Assembly's policy statements and recommendations, begins by recognizing "sufficient production and consumption" as "foundational to all human development."⁷ It interprets justice in terms of sufficiency and participation, the participation by all people in sustenance sufficient for their basic needs.⁸ The concern for justice, rooted in the biblical understanding of God's special concern for those most vulnerable, permeates the document.

Repeatedly the policies make clear that justice for the poor lies at the heart of the development imperative: that effective development addresses the injustices that cause and sustain poverty.

He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous (Ps. 146:7-8).

The basis of partnerships in justice ministries is formed by the following assumptions:

- The provision of resources and funds by the "richer" partner to the "poorer" should not be the reason for establishing relationships. Rather, a partnership that seeks justice in order to improve the quality of life becomes the primary motivation.
- Justice depends upon the sharing of lives, time, insights, talents, and control over development activities. A mutual, sharing relationship recognizes the dignity of all members of the partnership, as each have strengths and knowledge to bring.
- Each partner must come to the relationship open to the needs and resources of the other, that each might be Christ to the other in some way. Partners must build the relationship on trust, with each willing to share resources and to be vulnerable to receive gifts.

Carrying Out Development Ministries of Justice

AREAS OF CAUTION

For those engaged in ministries of justice there are three areas of caution. They are summarized below.

Genuine peace comes when justice is served.

For as long as peasants remain landless,

For as long as laborers

do not receive just wages,

For as long as we are politically and

economically dominated by foreign nations,

For as long as we channel more money to the

*military than to basic social services,
For as long as the causes of social unrest
remain untouched,
There will be no peace.*

(Council of Bishops, United Church of Christ
in the Philippines (UCCP), August 1986)

*To those who have hunger, give bread. To
those who have bread, give a hunger for
justice.*

Latin American table prayer

TOKEN CHANGE

For some external agents involved in development projects, simply empowering impoverished communities so that they may improve the material quality of their lives often seems like a good enough goal. The underlying issues of injustice and inequality cannot be changed solely by building better houses, creating more jobs, or increasing food supplies. For true and deep change to occur, the hard work of rooting out and modifying the unjust structures of society must be undertaken. Beware of sugarcoating development; it takes the flavor of injustice away, but not the core ingredients.

Likewise, community development is not simply a technique you can learn. To use it effectively you must have a political and religious commitment to the liberation of poor and oppressed people. When community development is devoid of such commitments, as when it is used by governments, and sometimes by the church, to simply help people it generally ends up as a failed development project. Typically such projects promote "progress" but do not alter the local structures of injustice. Worse yet, the project may even contribute to reinforcing local oppression and exploitation. It is easy to pay lip service to the cause of the poor while in fact perpetuating mechanisms of oppression.⁹

WHOSE AGENDA?

There is a permanent danger of wanting to control and impart our own philanthropic agenda upon communities of poor and oppressed people. The attitude that "we know best" seldom is true. Our experiences rarely correspond to the experiences of oppressed people, so what we know best is probably irrelevant in their world. Western and "wealthy" partners of development activities need humbly and actively to learn alongside marginalized people in the struggles for justice. On the other hand, the "poorer" partner often has unrealistic expectations about what the "rich" partner can and must do. Therefore, "rich" Christians and members of marginalized communities often need to determine an intermediate relationship between what the former think they should do and what the latter would like them to do. Several areas of additional concern regarding "whose agenda" are summarized in the following questions:

- Does the form of the relationship take away decision-making responsibility from "beneficiaries"?
- Is there a difference between what the "donor" partner perceives are the needs of the "recipient" partner and the actual needs identified and articulated by the latter?
- Are both partners empowered through the relationship? Are there ways that the relationship could disempower a partner?
- Do activities and assistance result in dependency and loss of dignity of one partner due to only one-way contributions of finances and personnel? How can assistance and learning be shared both ways?
- There is "always a church that can provide and a church that can receive." While this statement can be perceived as an opportunity for exchange, North American congregations tend to excel in providing material things, but have little experience in receiving the richness of nonmaterial gifts from relationships with third-world partners. Why is it so hard for

North Americans to be recipients? How can your theology help you be receptive to receiving gifts?

If I go as a Hindu, I will meet a Muslim or a Christian. If I go as a socialist, I'll meet a capitalist. If I go as a brown man, I'll meet a black man or a white man. But if I go as a human being, I'll meet only human beings.

Satish Kumar

FINANCES

Partnerships between North Americans and communities both locally and in other parts of the world necessarily involve concerns about inequality, accountability, and control of monetary resources. Both partners must deal with the tension between the desire to share and receive financial resources and the danger of destroying the integrity of the receiving partner through the creation of fiscal dependency and loss of control. For most donors, there is a natural tendency to invest in activities that yield direct, observable results as opposed to funding projects that seem like dumping a bucket of water into the ocean.

Some people think North American control of the use and disbursement of funds for mission projects is appropriate and necessary. It keeps the work focused and receivers accountable.

Others with a different vision say, "We need to go to Malawi (for instance) and adopt the spirit of our African brothers and sisters. We need to go as the poor people in the partnership." This approach recognizes the giftedness of the church in Malawi. The partners in Malawi are then able to say, "You don't have to see us as a needy people who have nothing to offer to you." They no longer become an object of generosity, but rather a partner whose gifts can be received, and the partnership is enriched. As much as possible, relationships need

to be based on the mutuality of gifts that each partner can offer, rather than only on the financial contributions of one.

Implementation

PRACTICE

Authentic development challenges and changes social, political, and economic structures. It demands social justice, self-determination, and the chance to improve materially, morally, politically, and spiritually. The church has a particular interest in this wholeness of development for people. This is the mission and calling of the church in the world: to bring healing and wholeness to all people as children of God.

Improvement of impoverished and oppressive situations requires initiatives at two levels: the individual and the systemic. At the individual level, needs must be met. Take for instance again, hunger. When persons are chronically hungry, they need food. Perhaps they also need to learn about nutrition and to acquire skills in food provision and preparation. A food pantry where they come for meals or food may be an ideal place to provide educational and skill development opportunities. Other long-term needs that hungry individuals might have and that could be addressed include literacy, acquiring marketable skills, and parenting techniques. This assistance is provided directly to individuals in response to their expressed needs.

The systemic, or community level, includes the political, economic, and social systems that dictate patterns of living. It is the level where laws, terms of financial credit, and social service procedures are determined. Some of these "systems" must be changed and realigned in order to allow marginalized people the opportunities to enter into the quality of life enjoyed by the majority of society. Concerned people can confront and transform systemic situations by engaging in activities such as

- organizing community focus groups
- identifying issues
- naming the oppressors
- developing leadership

- educating
- implementing actions and strikes
- advocating

Development ministries is a partnership based on relationships and shared learning. We should not automatically reach for our wallets when mission is mentioned or turn away because we know money will ultimately be the subject. Rather, we need to be open to what we can learn and share with others in these relationships. In fact, we have much to learn from those we feel we have mostly thought of as needy.

G. Thompson Brown, *Presbyterians in World Mission: A Handbook for Congregations*

Such activities must be done in collaborative partnerships between powerless, marginalized people and mainstream people who have some understanding of how systems work.

Using the example of hunger, specific methods and areas where systemic change may be required include the following

- Approach, agitate, and educate local government and businesses to invest in economic enterprise and job creation programs in poor areas of the community
- Encourage the government to pass legislation and funding for better housing and financing for low-income families
- Persuade local banks to provide credit opportunities to resource-poor people to develop micro-credit opportunities
- Volunteer with nonprofit organizations that work on behalf of marginalized people through advocacy with local government and businesses

If true communities of need are not within our fellowship, we must go to where they are and sit down, and break bread, and talk with them, and become their partners.¹⁰

Working with People

RELATIONSHIPS

In development ministries of justice, partnership is a primary focus of the association of external and internal communities working together for improvement in quality of life.

The term “partner” is derived from *parcener*, an old legal term denoting coheirship.¹¹ This concept suggests the biblical role we have with other Christian sisters and brothers as coheirs of the kingdom, fellow members of the body of Christ. Coheirship implies shared ownership, shared responsibility, and shared privilege. To be genuine partners is to experience qualities of mutuality and reciprocity.¹² Such a partnership represents an intimate relationship, more familial than businesslike, that seeks to know and understand the conditions of life in which each member lives.

“The move toward partnerships in mission is indeed both a biblical imperative, for we are the Body of Christ, and one of the most encouraging developments in the modern mission movement... Our capacity to work together joyously and fruitfully across vast cultural and ethnic differences is one of the most profound signs of the truth of the Gospel in our Balkanized, fragmented world.”¹³ Partnership is our service in the world with all brothers and sisters in the great work of establishing God’s kingdom.

A second type of role external agents play in ministries of justice is that of advocate. Besides seeking to empower marginalized communities to speak and act on their own behalf against unjust systems, outside partners act as advocates promoting systemic change for the benefit of their associates. Often, it is the external partners who initially have the resources to challenge the policies and the people that create the inequitable situations for their partners.

Partnering with, and advocating on behalf of, communities of need requires significant time, openness to learning, and commitment. In a relationship that grows out of an intentional partnership ministry the external partner gains a greater respect for the dignity of the “needy” partner. Systemic justice becomes not only a focus of development activities but also the foundation for the relationship. Each partner is recognized with dignity for the strengths and vision that each brings.



Photo by Bob Ellis

Presbyterians join the religious march on Washington to encourage decision makers to proclaim Jubilee and cancel the unpayable debts of the world's most impoverished countries.

Partnership

The obvious, but oftentimes amazing, nature of partnership is that such a relationship is an exchange, a two-way street. We give and we also receive. Through sharing in hope and frustration, hard work and rest, needs and fulfillment, sorrow and joy, all participants grow closer to each other and to the God who brought them together. Such experiences often transcend the original concerns of need and aid giving that created the partnership in the first place.

Another aspect of partnerships that seek developmental justice is that they create not only information-sharing opportunities, but also greater wisdom. This synergy permits more effective use of resources and efforts towards equipping communities to go forward with their own plans of participatory, sufficient, and sustainable

development. The aim of these alliances is not more handouts, but rather opportunities that enable people to

- determine and direct their own development
- be proactive in modifying the structures of their society
- become more self-reliant and able to care for their essential needs

Thinking Through Justice Exercises

A PIECE OF GLASS¹⁴

Jesse caught his foot under the dumpster and fell before he could zip up his pants. His right hand hit the broken vodka bottle and slashed his palm. The man in blue swung around the corner of the market, handcuffed Jesse with blood dripping from his elbow, and wrote out a ticket. Public urination was the charge. Before the trip to the jail, however, Jesse had to be taken to the hospital holding tank until a doctor cleaned and stitched his hand together again. There was too little time to fill the prescription before the police van took Jesse and two others—a thirteen year-old boy and an old woman—to the city jail. His hand hurt. He wondered why all of this had happened. There are no public toilets after all.

The next day the city judge was bemused. Following a few jokes about Jesse getting his hand caught in his zipper, the judge dismissed the charges.

Jesse's hand hurt. Little droplets of red blood oozed to the surface of the bright white gauze. He walked back to the public hospital to get his prescription filled. The pharmacist laughed and asked him if he had not learned of the new law: the “no charge” prescriptions for the indigent are now fifty cents. “This is to keep the welfare cheats away,” he instructed.

Jesse went outside to the Burger King next door to the hospital, stood just to the left of the main entrance, and begged for fifty cents. A man in blue arrested him for aggressive

panhandling. The officer called for the police van to take Jesse to the city jail. Small red marks were traveling up his bloody wrist.

What feelings does this story evoke? Could this situation happen in your community? How is it possible that it happened as described—what are the systemic reasons that allow such a situation to occur? What would be potential development ministries of justice that could ensure that such a situation could not occur?

WOMEN HOUSING PROJECT IN INDIA¹⁵

Shanti is a community health and development project, currently located in twenty-one slums in New Delhi, India. Dr. Bono, the director of the project, began the work in 1988 in Nehru Camp when she was invited by the community to help during a cholera epidemic. She quickly realized that to truly improve the health situation, water and sanitation had to be improved.

She worked with community women who approached the government en masse for more water taps and sanitation facilities. After the usual bureaucratic red tape, the government did install some hand pumps and provided community latrine and bathing facilities, drains, brick roads and a community activities center. The government then requested Dr. Bono to work in other slum areas. She agreed to with the understanding that the government would provide water and sanitation improvements. The municipal government agreed.

Gandhi Vihar is the second community to be taken up by the project. It is located not far from the first project area. Community leaders from Gandhi Vihar who had seen the changes that occurred in the first project area approached Dr. Bono and her team to work in Gandhi Vihar. Initial activities included a baseline survey for demographic, environmental, and medical information, discussions with community leaders and members, organization of the women, and

training of some women chosen by the community to become health volunteers.

A major concern expressed by the community was the poor quality of their housing. Most houses were small, approximately five feet square, housing about five people. The houses were constructed of waste materials, usually cardboard, and made somewhat watertight by plastic sheets. Ventilation was poor since there were no windows, and cooking was often done inside, using a kerosene stove. They were stifling in the hot season, and sopping wet during the monsoons. Diarrheal and respiratory diseases were major problems, in part a consequence of the poor-quality, overcrowded housing.

Community women were the most interested in pursuing ways to improve their housing and were encouraged to investigate various possibilities. With the assistance of Shanti staff, they approached the Slum Wing of the municipal government regarding the possibility of the land being given or long-term-leased to the community. The government provided engineers and architects to assess the feasibility of housing upgrades. They determined that the current population density of the slum would permit housing upgrade and they were willing to lease the land long-term, providing that an equitable distribution could be accomplished. The community formed a housing cooperative to work towards housing upgrade. The Board of the Housing Cooperative consisted of the pradhan (mayor), a woman from the community, two representatives from the municipal government, two interested people (a lawyer and an architect), and the director of Shanti.

One of the problems that the Housing Cooperative faced was how it was going to divide up the available area in an equitable fashion. Some people occupied plots of land that were bigger or located in prime areas. For example, ragpickers (trash recyclers) generally had lots of land, required for stacking various types of recyclables. Those

located on the edge of the slum, abutting the street, generally ran stores that benefited from their location. With community pressure on the reluctant holdouts, especially by the women, it was agreed that land distribution would be equitable, irrespective of previous status. Household units would decide who their five neighbors would be (each six households surrounded a small common courtyard). Then every six households would choose the location by lot. It was also decided the women would own the houses.

Each household was able to get a small, low-interest loan to buy building materials. The loans were procured from a bank that received tax benefits for extending low-interest loans to low-income people. A problem occurred when the bank expressed disinterest in collecting the monthly payments, since it got more tax benefits if the loans were not repaid.

What were the factors that helped make these development efforts successful? How was justice involved? Which systemic problems were addressed and how? What more could be done to further improve quality of life and who could implement such activities?

EXERCISE: YOU'RE IN CHARGE¹⁶

Suppose your group is presented with a check for one million dollars with the instructions to "do as much as possible to promote long-term, just, and sustainable development." Determine five to ten possible ways or projects to use the funds, either locally, overseas, or both. (Examples: send food relief to a crisis area; sponsor teachers to an impoverished nation; send a lobbyist to Washington, D.C.; buy corporate stock and influence corporate policies; open a local soup kitchen.)

Look over the list you have made and discuss which options would have more immediate effects, which would have more long-term effects, which address the roots of a problems, which are most feasible, which address issues of justice.



Photo by Bob Ellis

A woman proudly displays her potatoes grown as part of a village development project. The project is funded through a partnership that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has with the Scientific Technical Language Institute of Kyrgyzstan.

Strengths and Limitations

The following points represent possible strengths and weaknesses of development ministries of justice conducted through partnerships of "wealthy" external agents and "poor" communities.

STRENGTHS:

Partnerships involved in developmental ministries of justice

- are potential sources of resources and expertise for development activities
- provide deeper understanding of biblical injunctions to act justly and present opportunities for people to be involved in acts of justice
- complement ministries of compassion
- increase understanding of partner's needs and lives, and widen understanding of the world and the structures that frame it through intentional relationships and short-term visits

- often bring other churches together in partnerships to do jointly what they cannot do separately.
- encourage shared responsibility and control over activities and resources
- strengthen the universal body of Christ
- enrich both partners through greater multicultural and social interchange of customs, ideas, and perspectives
- change people's lives

LIMITATIONS:

Partnerships involved in developmental ministries of justice:

- may have difficulty sustaining interest and relationships if ministries are done at a distance
- may not have high partner commitment or expertise for seriously addressing justice issues, resulting in well-intentioned but ineffective projects
- may find the relationship controlled by the donor church, despite good intentions, as the donor determines length of commitment and terms
- often need dynamic leaders and participants to keep the ministries alive and active
- need to work at cultural understanding and relationship building, and perhaps learning a new language as well, all of which require long-term commitment
- focus on projects or personnel rather than on an entire community and systemic concerns.
- require high cost, personnel, and time to maintain relationships
- may integrate only a few people in the projects and partnerships rather than the whole of the community
- demand patience, learning, and conflict resolution skills as partners work through differences in culture, expectations, priorities, agendas, language, lifestyles, and wealth

Evaluating Effectiveness

If you intend to become involved in a development ministry of justice project, find out as much as you can about it and see if it really is a ministry of justice. How dependent is the poor community on the resources and skills of external agents? How involved is the community in decision making, issues identification, and priority setting? How is partnership proclaimed and played out?

When you are engaged in a ministry of justice evaluate the effectiveness of the project at regular intervals. What examples of partnership have you seen? What root causes is the project trying to change? How and why were they selected? What progress have you seen? How are members of the two communities involved? What needs to be done differently in order for the project to increase its effectiveness?

Go to the poor.

Live among the poor.

Learn from the poor.

Work with the poor.

Start with what the poor have and build upon what the poor possess.

Teach by showing; learn by doing.

Not a showcase, but a pattern;

Not odds and ends, but a system.

Not piecemeal, but integrated;

Not to conform, but to transform;

Not relief, but release.

Principles for the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction in the Philippines, adapted by

Dr. Y. C. Yan

Opportunities for Partnering in Ministries of Justice

PARTNERING PROFILE

A profile of congregations involved as mutual partners in local and global development ministries includes the following attributes:¹⁷

- involvement in local development outside the congregation's front door, with an awareness of the global community and church, and a perception of global issues of justice and development
- awareness of what marginalizes people and a conscious effort to encourage hands-on participation of its own members and the receiving congregation's members
- reception of members of the global community as God's missionary agents and acceptance of their spiritual and other gifts
- participation in the global church's struggle with development and an openness to continually be nurtured and transformed by messages, values, and practices learned from sisters and brothers

Such a church resembles an expanding circle with a permeable boundary, allowing the Holy Spirit to breathe in and people to come and go to serve and to be transformed with new stories of justice and development.

PREPARING FOR PARTNERING

Engaging others with the intention of partnering with them for development ministries requires education, sensitivity, and understanding of issues. Activities that can help people and congregations prepare for ministries of partnership include the following:

- interviewing "experts," mission workers, scientists, farmers, scholars, homeless people, foreign students, and so forth
- reading government reports, missionary letters, books, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) documents and reports, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Mission Yearbook*

- viewing videos and documentaries on the subject and country
- taking study tours and attending workshops on related topics
- talking with other organizations that have done similar activities

If you are about to establish a partnership with marginalized people, especially in another country, you need to be able to answer the following questions.¹⁸

- How would you feel if you didn't speak the local language and someone came into your kitchen and took over?
- What are the local taboos, dress, money, cultural expectations?
- What are the customs regarding gifts? What should you expect to be given as a guest? What should you offer as a guest?
- What can you learn ahead of time?
- What American mannerisms and behavior are offensive?
- What are the eating customs?
- What do you expect to receive from a cross-cultural experience? What do your hosts hope to gain from the encounter? How will you answer (diplomatically?) people who expect to receive something from you that is unrealistic and unhealthy for the relationship?
- What are the worship customs?
- What expectations are there for maintaining contact with individuals after the initial contact is over? Will people expect "stuff"? How might you create unreasonable expectations and dependency? How will you avoid doing that?

INVOLVING THE WHOLE CONGREGATION IN DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES

The following are critical elements of effectively including all congregational members in partnerships for justice ministries.¹⁹

- Development ministries of a congregation and the national church should be a theme of and

integrated into all of the congregation's life: remembered in worship and preaching; studied in Sunday school; highlighted at camps and conferences; supported through offerings; and related to the special seasons during the liturgical year.

- All members of a congregation, rather than only mission-minded members, should be involved in development ministries. Opportunities to bring on board more congregational members into development ministries must be a continuous effort.
- Avoid person-specific focuses, such as "our" missionary working with "our" partner church in a community in a country of Africa. It is too easy to want a particular and easy focus through one person for a relationship when the whole of two communities, your church community and the partner community, needs the relationship.
- Mission involvement abroad should be related to local commitments. There are many possible areas and linkages of common concerns between overseas and local development activities.
- Mission ventures overseas should not be used to avoid local responsibilities closer to home where more people can have active involvement.
- Ensure that everyone has opportunities to learn about the issues behind the development ministries and how they relate to the mission support.
- Determine specific goals for each year and for a long-term commitment. Goals could include setting particular amounts of financial support for one or more projects, studying a development issue to understand it more fully, or supporting missionaries.
- Explore resources available from the General Assembly Council and its divisions to facilitate your development ministries and the involvement of congregational members.
- Support the efforts of the General Assembly's

many mission programs. They offer a great variety of opportunities to join in the work of these development ministries.

A COLLAGE OF JUSTICE MINISTRIES

The following represent a snapshot of various justice related ministries with which congregations are involved:²⁰

An emphasis of the Presbytery of Western Colorado is the promotion of social righteousness through partial funding of many social justice programs.

Habitat for Humanity, Manna Soup Kitchen, and the Durango Homeless Shelter were all funded by the presbytery and individual churches, as were three organizations dealing with abuse of women and children, a prison ministry, alcohol recovery programs, subsidized counseling, and teen pregnancy support programs (September 24, p. 268).

Maumee Valley Presbytery mission funds support Toledoans United for Social Action, whose emphases include educational reform. Through their Public Education Committee they promote and receive support for a five-school pilot program to use Direct Instruction in the Toledo public schools. They also work to find alternatives to out-of-school suspensions (January 30, p. 20).

One Great Hour of Sharing made a lasting difference in Barrow, Alaska. In 1971 the Arctic Slope Native Association received \$95,000 from the Self-Development of People Program. Within three years, the group made a gift of the same amount to SDOP, stating, "The long struggle for title to our aboriginal lands and the dignity of making our own decisions was helped immeasurably by a grant from SDOP. We want to prove that this trust was well given." Today, Arctic Slope is a \$100 million corporation, a mainstay in

*We are guests in
our mission work,
not Santa Claus.*

Gwen Crawley

its community's economy, employing 2,500 people in peak season (April 4, p. 95).

The Presbytery of Whitewater Valley's partnership in mission with the Synod of Northern Kasai, Democratic Republic of Congo, brought four synod representatives to the presbytery in 1997 and a youth to the National Youth Triennium. One work team went to the Congo in 1998, and future teams are planned to help at schools and hospitals. In 1999 four Congolese were itinerating evangelists to the presbytery, while the presbytery funded mission personnel for training synod leaders (April 12, p. 103).

The Presbytery of St. Andrew has been blessed by its relationship with Ntem Presbytery, Cameroon. Projects—including sustainable agriculture, pure water systems, expanded medical services, and church construction—have involved local doctors, nurses, educators, farmers, builders. People from Mississippi give their time, money, and skills to go to Cameroon and witness for Christ. When members of Ntem visited Mississippi, the presbytery was blessed again to hear of their faith (April 23, p. 114).

Churches in the Presbytery of Shenango endeavor to overcome racism in their communities or nearby communities through the building of relationships and by giving encouragement. Just as the Presbytery of Shenango has a partnership with the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church 8,000 miles away, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Sharon, is developing an intercity ministry in partnership with the Southeast Gardens Economic Development Corporation nearby. This corporation is a grassroots organization working to establish quality housing, to promote community-based programs, and to advocate for justice on behalf of the black community. Together the parallel communities have sponsored two Undoing Racism workshops. Also, Covenant Church has participated in two pulpit exchanges with African American churches (December 22, p. 357).

When Western Presbyterian Church (National

Capital Presbytery) relocated in 1994 to a different part of Washington, D.C., some of their new neighbors opposed Western's ten-year-old feeding ministry for the homeless. The neighbors took their objections to the D.C. zoning board, which ruled that feeding the hungry is an activity "inconsistent with the operation of a church." The city prohibited Western from operating its homeless ministry in the new location.

Stunned, the congregation fought back. After praying for God's guidance, the session voted to ignore the threats of arrest and continued feeding the hungry as commanded by scripture. In addition, members asked the U.S. federal court to protect their First Amendment right of free exercise of religious belief. Galvanizing Washington's religious community, the struggle became a national media story.

Fortunately, in April 1994 a U.S. federal judge enjoined the D.C. government and neighbors from interfering with the operation of the homeless ministry. Since that time, the congregation has run its feeding program with growing support from the neighbors. In addition, Western has experienced significant growth in membership as people have been attracted by the church's commitment to care and stand up for the least of God's children (July 9, p. 191).

A partnership between Pahl 5 Nan of the Church of Christ in Thailand and the Presbytery of Huntingdon was formalized in 1988, growing out of the mission vision of fraternal workers. Recently, two volunteers began a four-month partnership visit in Bangkok at the headquarters of the Church of Christ in Thailand, then traveled to Pahl 5 Nan in northern Thailand. The two volunteers worked in close association with pastors and church members in Pahl 5 Nan. They visited sixteen of the eighteen churches, shared their faith through interpreters, learned about the strong faith and dedication to Christ of the Thai Christians, and built new friendships. They learned what it means to be Christians in a Buddhist culture, and observed that their Thai partners cooperate and support each other to an impressive extent. For

Huntingdon Presbytery members, the partnership has truly been a means of enriching their own spiritual development and has broadened their worldview and their participation in the global church (December 11, p. 346).

Questions for Reflection

What situations of injustice, and which structures supporting them, can you identify in your community?

Who benefits by keeping people poor? How do they benefit?

What does the word “partnership” evoke in you? How did Christ use partnership in his ministries of healing? In his work against injustice?

How do we in North America generally express the Christian message for poor and oppressed people? What message do the oppressors receive? What should the Christian message be for poor people? How are we a part of the message?

Discuss the pros and cons of devoting your energies to social, economic, and political justice activities. Should you be involved in such activities? What would it take for you to become involved in these activities?

What structures of injustice in your community need changing? How can they be changed? What personal and congregational changes and commitment would it entail?

A Final Story

HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE POLITICAL²¹

At the recent Presbyterian Redevelopment Conference in Los Angeles, the Rev. Dr. Curtis Jones, a Presbyterian pastor from Baltimore, outlined in an opening plenary his vision of a “healthy church.” Included in his concept of a vibrant, alive, and active church are local congregations that are politically effective in their communities. This means active involvement in solving such problems as lack of affordable housing and child care, low wages, and racial inequities. Dr. Jones stressed that for a local church to grow and be vital, it must first embrace all aspects of being healthy, including politics.

Dr. Jones’s congregation is extensively involved in direct mission service to needy residents of Baltimore. Based on that experience, the church has become an advocate of change before those in authority, “speaking truth to power.” His congregation has been involved in successful advocacy to persuade local authorities to build affordable housing in the Baltimore area with federal assistance. It has also helped organize local labor to advocate an increase in the minimum wage. The minimum wage in Baltimore is now over \$7.00 an hour, a level more in line with the cost of living in that area than the national minimum wage of \$5.15.

Notes

- 1 This complete section is excerpted from Brown, *Presbyterians in World Mission*, pp.74–76.
2. The term “self-development” as used here and taken from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Self-Development of People program mission statement means “a ministry that affirms God’s concern for humankind [undertaken by] Presbyterians and ecumenical partners dissatisfied with poverty and oppression, united in faith and action through sharing, confronting, and enabling. We participate in the empowerment of poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people, seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression, and injustice.”
3. As quoted in James A. Gittings, *From Dream to Reality: A Contextual History of Twenty Years of the Presbyterian Self-Development Program* (Louisville, Ky.: Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, 1993, p. 61).
4. Beverly Wildung Harrison, “The Power of Anger in the Work of Love: Christian Ethic for Women and Other Strangers” in *Making Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, Carol S. Robb, ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).
5. The first two paragraphs of this section are adapted from “The Obstacles to Changing Course: ‘Hope for a Global Future’ Raises Critical, Inescapable Questions. How Will We Respond?” by William E. Gibson, in *Church & Society* 87, no. 3, (1997).
6. *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part I, *The Book of Confessions* (Louisville, Ky. Office of the General Assembly, 1983), 9, 46.
7. *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 96.
8. *Hope for a Global Future*, pp. 97–98.
9. Derenoncourt, “Some Notes on ‘Community Organizing’”
10. Frederic Walls, speaking of the mandate for Self-Development of People and quoted in *From Dream to Reality*, p.178.
11. Warren, Max, *Partnership* (Valley Forge, Pa.: SCM Press, 1956) p. 11.
12. Dearborn, *An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, p. 9.
13. Dearborn, *An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, p. 10.
14. Ed Loring, partner of the Open Door Community and evangelist on the streets of Atlanta for the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, as found in the reading for November 7 in the *1999 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*, p. 312.
15. As told by Beverly E. Booth, a Presbyterian mission co-worker formerly in India, now serving in Nepal.
- 16 Luteri, *To Walk in Beauty*, p. 32.
17. Adapted from a message given by Sherron K. George as recorded in *Congregations in Global Mission*, p. 12.
18. Personal interview with Gwen Crawley, former director of Worldwide Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), February 1999.
19. Loosely adapted from Brown, *Presbyterians in World Mission*, pp. 110–114.
20. Examples with date and page number taken from the *1999 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*.
21. Excerpted from Douglas G. Grace, *Washington Report to Presbyterians* 21, no. 1 (January/February 1999).

Development As Transformation: Acting Justly, Loving Mercy, and Walking Humbly with God—Solidarity with Others

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? (Isa. 58:6–7).

Introduction

Overview

Transformation as a focus of development is a relatively new concept as far as the church's role is concerned. In the context of this material, development as transformation embraces Micah 6:8. “. . . to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” It means to provide assistance to the poor; to partner with the poor for justice in all aspects of the society in which we live; and, together with the poor, to be open to God's transformation of our lifestyles and lives so that all of us might fully share in the abundant life God envisions for everyone.

CUTTING EDGE THEOLOGICAL ISSUES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY¹

In the past, Presbyterians have been on the cutting edge in experimenting with new ways of being in mission with partner churches around the world, for example: Mission to the U.S.A., two-way and three-way mission personnel service; international presbytery partnerships; ecumenical partnerships; young adult volunteers; global interns; diaconal workers; and funding of mission personnel from multiple sources.

In this new century, Presbyterians are challenged, prayerfully and scripturally, to consider what our present cutting edge in mission is. Sherron George proposes there will be seven theological themes holding us on the cutting edge in this new century: mutuality; solidarity; servanthood; cultural and ethnic diversity; economic globalization; evangelism; and the gospel.

Increasingly, as we wend our way through the twenty-first century, congregations will be engaged in local-global mission. We engage in local-global mission because we believe that

- God sends us into the world
- We must cross barriers or frontiers of different kinds as we engage in mission
- God's mission is always done in partnership with God and one another
- The congregation is missional and is the most important missionary agency

Our present cutting edge in mission led the Presbyterian Church to become mutual companions in local-global mission. The challenge for us now is to be open to the transformation in our lives and our society that is both required for, and a result of, our mission enterprise.

Table 6 - Transformation Model of Development Ministries

| Relational Elements | Development as: III. Transformation | Relational Elements | Development as: III. Transformation |
|--|---|--|--|
| Role and Experience of External Agent* | Companion in Solidarity: pray, reflect, receive, spiritual growth; just use of resources; lifestyle change; long-term relationships | Common Assumptions of External Agents | We all need to change and have justice in our lives and systems; we need each other to fully be God's people |
| The "Receiving" Community's Role and Experience | Individual renewal, full community development, spiritual and quality of life growth, just systems and dignity of life: cross-cultural, long-term relationships | Community Reactions to Assumptions of External Agents | Are you truly open to change |
| Objective | In solidarity with partner communities and members seek humane community development and just structures and systems | Common Questions by External Agents | What is our vision for a just world? How can we together accomplish it? How must we and our communities change? |
| Relationship & Focus | Stand in solidarity with others for structural and personal justice and change | Efforts Prompted by: | Desire to be present with and enriched by the 'poor;' deep reading of scriptures |
| Decision-making & Accountability | Mutuality and collaborative actions | Theological Basis | Is. 58:1-12 God desires a change of heart to produce justice, love and mercy; Lk 10:25-37 Love your neighbor as yourself |
| Type of Activities | Holistic, long term | Constraint | Requires personal and corporate lifestyle and world view change; long term commitment of engagement and reflection |

* "Agent" could be replaced by materially rich organization, congregation, or individuals

Primary Tasks of the Church Involved in Development Ministries of Transformation

When congregations engage in local-global mission they face six mission opportunities. For congregations to make the most of each opportunity the congregation and its members must be open to the personal and corporate change that will occur in the process of undertaking development ministries.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSION

1. Seek greater awareness of needs in your community and actively participate in building relationships with those in need.
2. Initiate interaction with people from all over the world. Build relationships with people; be part of the global community. Invite people from other parts of the world to visit as God's missionary agents to you. Welcome them; accept their ministry and gifts. Visit and live with them as companions in their communities.

3. Assess and understand how we and our economic and political systems contribute directly and indirectly to the marginalization of people in our own culture and those in other societies.
4. Advocate on behalf of globally marginalized communities, speaking out against policies and systems that may be supported by North American culture, politics, and economics but that contribute to marginalization and oppression.
5. Adapt your lifestyle in order to be in solidarity and more "present" with people in need and work for the change of unjust structures that keep people poor.
6. Intentionally experience the Christian messages, values, lives, and practices of our sisters and brothers from the global church. Be nurtured, challenged, and transformed by God through them.

Acting on these opportunities is both possible and imperative. We know that God offers new and changed life in Jesus Christ. In our new life the Holy Spirit leads us to a renewed responsiveness to

God's contemporary word, which points us to the agonies and the opportunities of this extraordinary time. Through scripture God encourages us to seek justice, community, and sustainability as the priorities of our personal and congregational social witness and action. All our concerns about human development should be focused and directed by these priorities that press us to wrestle with complexities and controversies, and push us to change our assumptions, policies, and ways of living and relating to others. The changes will not come easily.²

ACCOMPANIMENT

An essential component of development ministries of transformation is the act of accompaniment or solidarity. Accompaniment turns on the belief that all people in the world are God's people and that our work in the world is to do the will of God. The will of God has much to do with our living alongside others and helping each other become all that God intends for us to be. If this is the case then not only do we help others be transformed, but we too must be open to the transformational process and our own changing. This relational process is not always natural or simple. It leads us into situations in which we share the anguish of poor, disadvantaged, and oppressed people. Most of us go out of our way to avoid such people; we don't want to be caught up in their turmoil and hurt. But the prophets of the Bible show us how our lives and our well-being are inextricably tied to the lives and well-being of those who are poor.

Portrait of Transformation

In these days of neoliberal economics, where invisible, impersonal market forces instantly determine prices and decree feast or famine for millions around the globe, some people would say that a missiology of partnership³ is far too cumbersome.

Working in partnership takes too much time; rather than "doing mission" immediately, partnership forces us to involve ourselves in the

difficult, laborious, and sometimes messy task of being in relationship: first understanding, then valuing, and then trusting the insights of our neighbor. "We appreciated getting to know folks from the local church," summarized one work team member, "but our group could have gotten the health clinic built in four days if we didn't have to wait for them to contribute the bricks. . . ."

Partnership makes us dependent on other members of the Body of Christ—their schedules, their priorities, their organizational weak points, their values. In the international context of PC(USA) mission relationships, partnership often pushes us into relationship with poor and oppressed members of the body of Christ—and that is a feeling I do not enjoy.

Embracing my insurance policies, second helpings at mealtime, and comfortable home, I prefer not to be reminded that many of my partners (read: "brothers and sisters") are experiencing, even today, the sharp ache of hunger, another night of homelessness, or the long wait for refugee processing. And yet this intentional binding of ourselves to particular members of the body of Christ is proving to be a vehicle of God's saving grace to our [denomination]—a church considered one of the wealthiest in the world partnered with some of the materially poorest partners, a church of declining membership partnered with some of the fastest growing churches in the world, a church rent by theological divisions partnered with some churches that have discovered



Photo by Ruth Welch

Three girls enjoy solidarity.

We are saying we want to be connected in diverse mission partnerships with each other in this country and with brothers and sisters in Christ elsewhere. We are seeking relationships of greater mutuality and understanding that will help transform us, and bless our many mission endeavors, for the sake of God's reign.

Marian McClure, from her "Dichotomy Busters" speech given at the "PC(USA) Congregations in Global Mission: New Models for a New Century" conference, in St. Louis, November 1997.

remarkable unity around issues of mission, service, liberation, and evangelization.

To work in partnership is to bind oneself to persons who may know much more than we do about what it means to share sacrificially, to rest fully in God's provision, and to persevere in faith through suffering. On a personal note, I think it's fair to say that I've very rarely been "out-given" in my relationship with partner Christians in the "Two-Thirds World." I am almost always given the best seat, the first choice, the biggest say, and the largest portion. On more than one occasion I have eaten a feast prepared with the last chicken or measure of corn flour that the hosting community had left. And while I often calculate exactly how much I should put in my local church's offering plate (so as not to create unhealthy "dependency" on my contribution), I am daily confronted with extremely poor Christians who, like the widow of Luke 21:1ff, give out of their own poverty with what seems to me to be sheer reckless abandon. This sense of abandonment into God's hands is not a natural, but rather, a learned response.

Two weeks ago, I took a trip to Ayacucho, a region in Peru's Andean highlands characterized

by extreme poverty, 42 percent illiteracy, and deep and festering wounds from the fifteen years of political violence that raged between the Peruvian government and the Shining Path Liberation Movement. In the town of Callqui (Quechua for "rocky, unproductive soil"), I had a long and intense evening conversation with a group of mothers, many of them single or widowed, who are deeply concerned about helping their children live a more abundant life than they themselves have experienced.

I am learning not to seek these kinds of meetings unless I am prepared for deep and painful personal transformation. Perhaps it was in order not to hear fully the pain that these women had experienced from the years of dehumanizing poverty at the hands of both government soldiers and terrorists that I busied my mind with the details of development planning—what a quality children's education or water well project might look like, how much it would cost, which donor agencies we might contact for support, etc. As the meeting ended late that night, an older woman with long braids who had slipped out at the end of the meeting came up to me with tears in her tired eyes: "Thank you for coming," she said simply, and gave me a carefully wrapped package. A local friend later explained to me that Ana's husband had been murdered twelve years ago when Peruvian government troops, acting on an erroneous tip-off, arrived suddenly during a worship service of the Callqui Presbyterian Church and rounded up and shot seven men. They were accused of terrorism, but no charges were made or proven. No questions were asked. Ana's husband, a farmer and long-time Presbyterian elder, was among those executed. She now makes her living by embroidering and selling three or four white cotton tablecloths each month.

Ana's gift to us was a beautiful white tablecloth with the words "His Love Makes Us Whole" embroidered on it in bright red, blue, and yellow thread. And though her gift represented perhaps a fourth of her monthly

income, she arose from a late night meeting and walked all the way home to bring to me a gift from the heart. A token of gratitude for the past and hope for the future. I later learned that Ana has been a pillar of support in that grieving community, organizing the widows, encouraging single mothers, even cajoling the Presbyterian session into action to help the children of the rocky, yet now productive soil.

Ana represents to me a kind of person that I have met often on my own path of discipleship with Jesus Christ. A person who knows what really matters in this incredibly complex, yet remarkably simple world of ours and can give out of her own poverty because all she is giving is love, which miraculously multiplies when given freely. Ana has learned, as a more faithful follower of Calvin than perhaps I will ever be, to rest fully in her faith in God's providence and provision. She knows what it means to persevere in her faith, even when human wisdom can offer no reason to continue to believe.

Perhaps Ana is one of the reasons that brought me to work in Peru—because by God's grace, I have become aware of the hole in my own soul that is being filled daily by God's love and forgiveness and grace extended to me through the ministry of persons living in extreme poverty of possessions but extreme wealth of the spirit. Persons whose love, together with Christ's, makes me whole. Persons I am privileged to consider as partners on this road toward personal and societal transformation.

Hunter and Ruth Farrell, PC(USA) Mission Co-workers in Peru; Mission Connections Newsletter, February 1999.

If you have come to help me you can go home again. But if you see my struggle as part of your own survival then perhaps we can work together.

Australian Aborigine Woman

Preparation for Development Ministries of Transformation

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

Therefore, I urge you, brothers [and sisters], in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom. 12:1–2).

Transformation as a theme of the Bible is woven throughout scriptures. Consider the insights of transformation highlighted in the following excerpts.⁴

The theological/ethical lines of the Hebrew Bible take their cues from the character and presence of God. This God, unlike many others in the god-rich world of the Ancient Near East, was not recognized as simply a power or force in the universe that transcended human powers and suffused all nature with its energy. Rather, this sacred power was a moral force that rejected the inevitability of oppression and injustice and commanded and made possible transformation of the world on the terms of community. Community and social justice were the focus of biblical faith at the very outset.

Hebrew conviction about this godly power included a very strong ethical component: we are morally responsible before God for the condition of the world. In the ancient world, where forces outside and beyond the control of human beings bore down from all sides, this was an extraordinary affirmation of human agency and freedom. It was the claim, set down near the beginnings of the recorded human adventure itself, that coparticipation with God in creation is the human vocation. . . .

That the God of the Hebrews was power for transformation toward a moral order in which humans played an important role was grounded in the people's own transformation. The God who "knew" the suffering of slaves and heard their cries was the God whose power was experienced as the power for peoplehood and freedom. . . .

This same God, these ex-slaves came to believe, held this new people responsible for the shape and condition of the community and world that was theirs. Their vocation as a "redeemed" and "saved" people was to give concrete social form to the ways of the God who rescued and redeemed them, and they were to do so in ways that made this God's own ways of justice and mercy their own . . . What began with Moses and the first recorded slave rebellion soon becomes, in the biblical account, a paradigm of liberation and transformation as a way of life. "A way of life" . . . [that includes] the conviction that with this God, ordinary people—indeed, the apparently powerless—can subvert deeply entrenched powers and help effect a new world . . .

Jesus and his movement maintained the outrageously hopeful Jewish conviction that with this God new creation can happen at the waiting hands of a small number of very common, even hesitant, but emboldened and Spirit-filled people. . . .

The salient matter, however, is that these biblical themes weave a single strand: the power that created the universe and sustains it from day to day is the same power that champions the powerless and creates the demand for a moral universe infused with justice and compassion.⁵

ISA. 58:1–11—"TRUE FASTING"

This passage from the prophet Isaiah speaks of need for a transformation in the social, economic, and religious behavior of the listeners. Isaiah's hard words describe the hypocrisy of the people who claim to seek after God's ways, to do what is right,

to receive just decisions and to humble themselves before God. They fast, but their actions towards each other belie their true nature, which exploits their workers and creates strife, all of it ending "in striking each other with wicked fists" (v. 4).

Isaiah goes on to describe "true fasting" as relationships with the needy and the oppressed of society, relationships grounded in charity, justice, and transformation. This description turns on its head the idea of fasting as a religious exercise in which one appears humble before God, an exercise that some thought they could substitute for fulfilling the commands of God. The fasting that God requires is not personal, but communal in nature. True fasting means: loosening the chains of injustice; setting the oppressed free; sharing food with the hungry; providing the wanderer with shelter, and the naked with clothing. Not only is God interested in justice and mercy, but instructs us that the well-being of the rich and powerful is connected to the fulfillment of the needs of the poor and the breaking of the bonds of oppression.

We cannot live for ourselves. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.

Herman Melville

EXERCISES

- How do we and the church promote such social transformation? How can we be involved in "social justice fasting"?
- What transformation is needed in our lives and in our spiritual disciplines that would result in "true fasting"?
- Identify each of the kinds of fasting mentioned in verses 6–10, and give examples for each type of how you might undertake that fast today? For instance, what would it

mean to loose the chains of injustice in your community?

GEN. 12:1-2—THE CALLING OF ABRAM

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing."

The story of Abram being called out of his familiar home and country represents both a physical and spiritual journey into the unknown with several important purposes. One purpose was to be a blessing to others. Another was to experience opportunities he would never have had at home. These new experiences enabled Abram to become more fully what God intended him to be. A third purpose was to challenge and refine Abram's faith. In the context of development ministries of transformation these verses illustrate important principles.

Abram began his journey with only a vague road map. He was already an old man (seventy-five years old) and no doubt comfortable in his customary home and traditions. But he responded to God's call to venture out, leaving behind his country, his people, his household, and familiar concepts of the spiritual and social world. His journeying led him into discomfort, danger, and dilemmas. But these difficulties and Abram's responses to them also resulted in his growing faith, which God "credited . . . to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

Our embarking on ministries of development in accompaniment with the poor and marginalized represents a similar calling out. We are all called to "go" into unfamiliar country, both spiritually and physically, in order to be a blessing to others and to be transformed in the process. In this endeavor of being a stranger in "foreign" lands, we also provide opportunities for others to be hosts to us, to provide blessings to us. As we accompany each other on our faith journeys we grow spiritually, we build up the body of Christ, and we draw on the

If we want to experience the riches of life in Christ and be faithful disciples, we must find concrete ways of sharing in the lives of broken people. This includes living in communion with their religious experience and learning from it. We must be open to being transformed by them, to re-reading the Scriptures and church history, and to being surprised by discoveries of how the Holy Spirit works when an old order is breaking down and a new order has not yet emerged.

Richard Shaull, "Renewed by the Spirit," in *The Other Side*, Nov./Dec. 1998, p. 20-24.

various gifts of the people of God to transform the world, to turn it upside down.

There is risk in responding to God's call; we must give up certain things. Comfort, for one. We'd much rather play it safe and remain in familiar physical and social conditions of comfort than experience the likely discomfort of unknown situations. However, our comfort may be the cause of great uncomfortableness for others. We might need to be unsettled for a variety of reasons. In the unsettling we risk change and challenge to our perceptions of the world and ourselves. But we also gain a great opportunity to expand our understanding of the planet and its social, economic, and political workings. We risk loss of personal space and security as we experience greater dependency on others. However, being vulnerable to new relationships allows for deeper spiritual and personal growth.

In responding to the call to go and be involved in the lives of "strangers," we are transformed. In the process of engaging other cultures, people, ideas, and traditions, we change. Often, we go with the expectation of improving the conditions of the

poor and marginalized through our ministries of outreach. But in the process of building relationships as the foundation for change, we experience perhaps the greater transformation in our own understanding and faith. Through building relationships with marginalized brothers and sisters in Christ (those we formerly called “strangers”), who bring their own gifts from God to these new friendships, we are blessed and challenged. Without encountering and entering into relationships with groups of poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people, our faith cannot fully develop, nor can our God-given gifts be fully utilized. Risk and opportunity, difficulty and possibility, change and transformation await those who undertake ministry with those in need.

LUKE 10:25–37—LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

Jesus told this parable in response to an expert in the law who sought to justify his own righteousness and to test Jesus. Jesus’ answer to the question “Who is my neighbor?” illustrated that anyone in need is a neighbor, but extended the traditional concept of neighbor beyond only those whom we typically include in “our” group.

EXERCISES

- How does this story of the Good Samaritan speak to you about ministries of development?
- What principles can be drawn from the story that relate to compassion, justice, and transformation?
- Why should this parable be a primary reference for people involved in development as transformation? What does this parable have to say about solidarity with the poor?
- As the second of the two greatest commandments, how should “loving one’s neighbor” in the sense of transformation be personally relevant? For example, if you really put loving your neighbor into practice, what changes would occur in your life?

Objectives

Development ministries of transformation range from meeting immediate needs of people to the long-term transformation of the social, political, and economic systems in which we all participate. A means for achieving these multifaceted goals is through developing relationships—companionship—with marginalized communities and people. Sharing our lives, resources, and faith with others on the journey requires that all participants move to new positions of living out compassion, justice, and the expression of faith.



Photo by Bob Ellis

Phillip Inrow with the PC (USA), right, works with men from a village south of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to install a wind generator on top of a mountain. The generator will provide light for their community center.

Process

The process of transformation includes aspects of compassion and justice as described in the preceding chapters. Oftentimes when we meet the immediate needs of a community, we are forming a foundation for a later and deeper relationship with them. In actual practice, we cannot simply decide to live in another community for the purpose of transformation, especially not in a community and culture that is quite foreign to our experience. Rather, being open to God’s transforming power begins with building sincere relationships that evolve beyond “them” and “us,” progress through partnerships for quality of life improvement, and finally arrive at the place where partners identify with each other as companions on a journey

toward mutual discovery and faithfulness.

In this process of relationship building, a primary goal is enabling all participants to grow fully into the state of wholeness intended by God. Transformation therefore includes a holistic approach to development—a variety of activities utilized to seek fullness and justice in all aspects of life. Building on the previous development ministries of compassion and justice, transformation entails moving from the generally “secular” meeting of essential material needs and improving quality of life to spiritual and social transformation, utilizing processes that are so integrated and implemented as to deal with the whole life of individuals and communities.⁶

Through an integrated process of development, companion communities—concerned with each other’s physical, social, economic, political, and spiritual lives—enter into full communion with each other. The commitment needed for personal and community transformation is immense and cannot be made lightly. In fact, there are few examples of transformation ministries actually being lived out today, but there are many congregations and individuals who seek solidarity with others and have begun such a process of companionship.

Assumptions

Development ministries of transformation are informed by the following assumptions:

- Undertaking activities of transformation requires new thinking and new ways of living. Transformation in development is not putting new wine into old wineskins, or overlaying old concepts and patterns with new ideas. Transformation is radical change, both in our lives and the lives of those with whom we are in solidarity.
- Our transformation begins initially as a physical journey with “poor” people. Our “rich” lives, too often insulated by things and comforts that much of the world lacks, are challenged by the basic needs of our new companions. This sets the stage for spiritual

Go to the people

Live among them

Learn from them

Love them.

Start with what they know

Build on what they have

But of their best leader

When their task is accomplished

Their work is done

The people will remark,

“We have done it ourselves.”

Lou Zu

transformation, as we are open to what God can teach us through the lives of the poor. We materially “rich” folks need to know about the spiritual experience of our materially “poor” brethren to understand the fullness and richness of the abundance of God.

- Living in community with other believers where spiritual gifts and material resources are shared is a biblical pattern of livelihood (see Acts 2:43–47 and 4:32–35). In such communities all needs are met and members empowered to live out and witness to the power of God.
- Real transformation occurs in all realms of life; it is a holistic change. Development ministries undertaken for transformation include a variety of activities and relationships that correlate to the social, economic, political, spiritual, and material world of all those involved.
- Transformational ministries recognize and build on an understanding that marginalized individuals and communities have a capacity to achieve an acceptable quality of life. Within

this capacity is God-given freedom, power, and privilege to give expression to the greatest potential within each person and community.

- We and our Western societies generally assume that development does not apply to us. Our societies and lifestyles are, however, in need of God's transformation in many areas if more people are to come into a state of life that allows for all of God's abundance to be shared.

Transformation in Telal Zeinoh⁷

In the shadow of Cairo's Great Citadel lies Telal Zeinoh, a squatter community. Built on three levels down the slope from the Citadel, with broken-down houses of wood, concrete or construction scraps, it holds none of the lavish wealth symbolized by the castle that towers above it. But slowly, with the help of the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), the community of Telal Zeinoh is claiming the heritage of the citadel, a heritage of empowerment and dignity.

Isis Mehany is one of the CEOSS community participation staff members assisting the residents of Telal Zeinoh to improve their community. When she joined CEOSS five years ago with a degree in social services, she equated working with the poor with charitable giving. But through CEOSS, Isis learned that the best way to foster change in a community is to encourage empowerment by introducing decision-making skills and problem-solving techniques.

Empowerment is transforming Telal Zeinoh. Where once there was only one public toilet per street, now almost every family has running water and its own toilet. With the help of CEOSS, community members combated the illegal resale of electricity by facilitating the introduction of electric lines to every house, and they implemented programs in health and nutrition, cultural awareness and literacy.

Empowerment is also transforming

individuals. One individual who embodies the change that can happen when people are given a chance is Gad. When CEOSS began its work in the community, Gad was a troublemaker in Telal Zeinoh, socially isolated because of a handicapped foot and because of his irritable personality. Isis says that CEOSS staff recognized potential in him, noting that "these are the people we have come to work with."

They approached Gad about the idea of joining CEOSS's Enterprise Based Training program. He accepted immediately, and under a local craftsman, was soon learning to repair upholstery. He completed the apprenticeship course in half the time expected. Because of the quality of his work, the speed with which he took to the craft,

The focal point of early Christian self-understanding was not a holy book or cultic rite, not mystic experience and magic invocation, but a set of relationships: the experience of God's presence among one another and through one another. God's presence is found in "the midst of us" (Luke 17:21). Christian spirituality means eating together, sharing together, drinking together, talking with each other, receiving each other, experiencing God's presence through each other, and in doing so, proclaiming the gospel as God's alternative vision for everyone . . . especially for those who are poor, outcast, and battered.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*,
New York: Crossroad, 1984.

and his enthusiasm, he was offered a permanent position at the workshop for 250 pounds per month. He refused the position to look for a better salary. The workshop owner then offered him 600 pounds per month, which he accepted.

Gad is using his new confidence to improve his circumstances and to share in the development of the community. His outlook has changed, and with the help of CEOSS he has invested in a motorcycle so he can get around better with his handicap. He is also investing his time in the community, participating in youth sports programs, development committee meetings, and home visits. He has earned the respect and admiration of the community:

Isis says that her experience with CEOSS has transformed her too. It has taught her how to think creatively about problems. The successes at Telal Zeinhom have given her an optimism to expect changes, to see problems as opportunities, and to see herself as part of the solution. And this is how CEOSS measures the success of community participation: through the transformation and empowerment of staff members like Isis, community residents like Gad, and whole communities like Telal Zeinhom.

Carrying Out Development Ministries of Transformation

AREAS OF CAUTION

Obviously, transformation and living in solidarity with communities of marginalized people is not easy, nor is it a common practice of most church communities. Such lifestyles and spiritual commitments are difficult and full of risk, as well as being potential adventures full of hope and promise. There are several issues related to transformation that you need to comprehend and avoid.

MODIFYING CIRCUMSTANCES

Simply changing circumstances of need—a superficial improvement of a situation, but not a modification of underlying systems or ethical behavior—is not transformation. Providing education to women but not changing the social practices that prohibit their putting the knowledge to productive use is not transformation. Even well-intended assistance and partnerships can create or engender further dependency and marginalization of the people they are supposed to help. Transformation requires people and systems transformed through relationships of solidarity.



Photo by Bob Ellis

Villagers welcome visitors into a circle of discussion and worship.

THE LOCAL UNDERMINED BY THE GLOBAL

Unfortunately, groups who have embarked on the creation of alternative local development and economies often find their efforts undermined by governments, the global economy, and traditional social welfare agencies that remain strongly committed to the failed trickle-down, export-led model of economic growth. Those involved in local and international development who wish to pay more than lip service to sustainability and the elimination of poverty must seek to transform destructive macro, economic-growth-based models (an example would be seeking debt relief for the world's poorest nations). Development agendas need to focus on humane systems that embrace women, food, sustainable livelihoods, health services, education, and the environment within local and global contexts.

MATERIAL RICHNESS AND SPIRITUAL LEANNESS

The disparities between wealthy and poor people affect instability and unsustainability of lifestyle for the poor and spiritual poverty for the rich. We know this to be true, but we refuse to believe that we represent the wealthy in this equation. We do not see that our economic system is in need of transformation. Furthermore, our economic affluence has rendered a spiritual paucity.

We need to shake ourselves in two ways: first, we must reassess the kind of [lifestyles] we are [enjoying] and developing; second, we must experience anew the situation of the poor. Jim Wallis expressed the basic fact of industrialized life as 'Our overconsumption is theft from the poor.' Since we do not share any common experience with those we steal from, we cannot begin to understand how our [lifestyles] must change.⁸

"US" AND "THEM"

In the context of solidarity, there is no distinction of "us" and "them." If those designations remain in our vocabulary, there will be little transformation. These terms are not only derogatory as grammatical expressions of a relationship, but also convey judgments of quality and importance. In relationships of solidarity and transformation, all relationships are in terms of "we" and "us."

As you come to know the seriousness of our situation—the war, the racism, the poverty in the world—you come to realize it is not going to be changed just by words or demonstrations. It's a question of risking your life. It's a question of living your life in drastically different ways.

Dorothy Day

Implementation

PRACTICE

It cannot be stressed enough that the key concept in transformational ministries is that people from both economically rich and economically poor communities must identify with and live among the members of each other's communities. We cannot effectively facilitate community or societal transformation without being in the midst of and understanding the conditions of need. Transformational ministries meet people in the context of their local circumstances and need.

The practice of transformation requires

1. Integrity
2. Leadership
3. Resource and information sharing.⁹

These are essential for true social justice and change to occur.

(1) *Integrity, or trust of persons living in community.* This includes the just use of resources and accountability to each other for accomplishing community development programs. Trust grows as relationships and common experiences build over time. Recognizing the spiritual gifts and dignity of each other as members of God's family also builds integrity of relationships. Being honest and open to personal change is foundational for transformation.

(2) *Leadership, or the ability to step out in faith and commitment to address the need for transformation and justice, and the ability to develop new models of how both can come about.* Transformation requires leadership because it does not happen without inspired people. The church in relationship with communities of need is in a unique situation to cultivate and raise up leaders who can advance transformation processes.

(3) *Sharing, or a habit of regarding resources, visions, information, and ideas as gifts of the community for the use of the community.* Such is the biblical design of community. Without shared visions, reflection, benefits, and material wealth change is not possible. It is in the appreciation of diversity and the sharing of different gifts that we mature as humans as well as into the body of Christ.

Working with People

RELATIONSHIPS

Solidarity is the key concept in ministries of transformation. It means in a physical sense standing alongside another, typically those who have been victimized by society or government, not trying to strategize on their behalf, not proposing solutions for their problems, but simply being present in the midst of their life and struggle. Solidarity also reflects a spirituality of accompaniment; of walking together with marginalized people, recognizing in them the family-of-God likeness, recognizing that our destinies as persons and communities are bound together. Such a stance of solidarity requires that we stake a moral claim, that we become accountable for our part in the justice and injustice in this world, that we strive to share God's abundance with our companions. Solidarity with others changes our lives and worldview, as well as the conditions in which our companions struggle.

Quality and depth are hallmarks of solidarity in relationships of transformation. The following principles underlying relationships of solidarity reflect this premise. Solidarity in relationships recognizes that

- People are complex creatures living in interwoven societies. Positive change and relationships therefore must be holistic and integrated so that entire communities and social systems are involved and transformed.
- Entering into ministries of transformation necessitates intentionality and discipline of reflection, prayer, and long-term relationships built on an understanding of mutual responsibility for bringing about change in the world.
- Relationships are not built on the transfer of money and resources, but rather on an exchange of hopes, fears, and life stories.
- The intentional development of relationships with others, while being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and vulnerable to personal

For God has called a people, not "them and us." "Them and us" are unable to gather around, for at a roundtable there are no sides. And ALL are invited to wholeness and to food. . . . Roundtabling means no preferred seating, no first and last, no better, and no corners for "the least of these." Roundtabling means being with, a part of, together, and one. It means room for the spirit and gifts and disturbing profound peace for all.

Chuck Lathrop

change, is what will transform the world and bring justice.

- Solidarity is a spiritual commitment and journey. We not only become more effective messengers of the gospel we in turn are ministered to by the richness of God already present in the lives of those with whom we are in relationship.
- By living in communities of need, we will understand more clearly the real problems they face and our complicity in creating such need. The solving of these obstacles to living then becomes our own urgent agenda.

A policy statement of how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to be in relationship with the universal church seeks solidarity, and further describes the principles of such associations.

Therefore the 208th General Assembly (1996) reaffirms the norm of solidarity, together with the norms of justice and sustainability, adopted by the 202nd General Assembly as affirmations of the oneness and interdependence of the human family, the essential place of community in human

fulfillment, and the validity of human claims upon one another for mutual support in the struggle for justice and sustainability.¹⁰



Photo by Bob Ellis

New friends, one from Guatemala, one from the United States, exchange information.

Thinking through Transformation

WATER¹¹

In one African country, the national church initiated development work in communities where refugees were returning in large numbers. Among several such communities a young PC(USA) missionary with strong vision began evangelism training and development work.

RJ made periodic and lengthy trips to three adjacent communities to which refugees had returned. During that time he lived in the villagers' homes and shared their lives. In the mornings church leadership gathered for Bible study to examine issues of evangelism and holistic outreach. In the afternoons, to model a role of the church caring for the whole person and community, RJ assembled both church members and neighbors to begin community mapping and discussions of needs and resources. Church and unchurched people had equal voice as they considered the future of their community.

What quickly became clear is that years of living in a refugee camp where they could only receive goods and not work had created a sense among the people that they could do nothing for themselves. RJ writes, "As we sat on chairs that the people had made, in the shelter of the church they had built, they insisted that they could do nothing for themselves."

The big issue before the communities was the need for water wells. After much discussion the villages realized that RJ did not (or would not) provide money to drill "Western wells" for them. They then had to come together to find a way to provide for themselves. The result? Three wells were built using their own ideas and materials, two pick axes, and six bags of cement. Total budget provided by the missionary was \$100. One western-style well would have cost \$5,000. The real winners? The community that came together, worked together, and learned that they could solve problems together without expensive outside help.

How did RJ proclaim the gospel and engage in development?

- He lived with the people to know and understand their reality before opening his mouth.
- He modeled inclusiveness, that all people matter to God, when he invited both church and unchurched to work together for the common good.
- He lifted up an understanding of people made in the image of God, made with imagination, and skill. He modeled a life-affirming, God-honoring vision that made people more receptive to the gospel lived out in the faith community.
- He supported people as they found a way to provide clean water for themselves in a manner that could be sustained for years to come.
- He did not "bring" ideas but worked with the community as they surfaced their own ideas and solutions to problems.

SOME LEARNINGS

- "Real robbery took place when these people were taught that they could do nothing for themselves, that they were unable to change their communities or their lives" (RJ, reflecting on the people's refugee experience).
- Large, sudden sums of money provided to people who have been living in poverty can

provide strong temptation to look after one's own needs and deny community needs.

- As outsiders we seldom have the answers but often can raise good questions and share observations.

EXERCISES

In regard to principles of transformation, how would you answer the following?

- How might the history of church mission work impact our contemporary mission and our approach to development?
- What is the absolute, first step in approaching any community?
- Can the "church" and the "community" be treated as separate spheres?
- When is it appropriate to provide financial support for an initiative?

RESPONDING TO NEEDS WITH A VISION OF TRANSFORMATION¹²

I have observed an interesting phenomenon again and again as I've worked with new Christians in the third world. Unspoiled by the excesses and affluence of our rich Western cultures, these . . . believers seem to respond naturally to the needs of their own families and communities as a direct response to their newly discovered relationship with God. A level of poverty that was once considered appropriate is no longer acceptable. Hear their voices:

"Help us make our lives a little better . . ."

"We want our children to have an education . . ."

"Can you open a clinic to help us when we are sick?"

"We want to build a little chapel where we can meet together for worship, but we have no money. Can you help us?"

Are these crass requests for handouts? Not at all. When a person enters into a special

relationship with God, his expectations for life increase. And with the increased expectations comes an increased eagerness to "do something" about making life better, more ordered, less oppressive.

EXERCISES

- What transformation took place in the communities mentioned above? How could you build upon what has already changed in order to effect further transformation in the other spheres of life, i.e., social, political, and economic?

We read the gospel as if we had no money, and we spend our money as if we know nothing of the Gospel.

John Haughey S.J.

- How could models of compassionate ministries, responding to the requests made above, easily lead to dependency instead of transformation for both the local community and the "donor" community?
- What role in terms of transformation and solidarity could a congregation play in responding to the needs of a community such as one of the above?
- What opportunities would there be for personal and corporate transformation of a congregation that takes on a relationship of solidarity with such a community described above?

Strengths and Limitations

The following points represent positive and difficult aspects of development ministries with a focus on transformation.

STRENGTHS—OF COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY

- There are more resources and the capacity for change and development is greater than in individuals.
- All members of companioning communities potentially engage in development and share accountability and responsibility for the results and benefits.
- The combination and impact of resources and commitment of all companions is greater than the sum of them individually.
- A living vision of God's kingdom on earth can be created in communities.

LIMITATIONS—OR DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRIES

- Long-term commitment and continual vigilance for justice and integrity may be hard to sustain.

So beautiful, yet so sad; illiteracy and poverty shackle the minds and lives of the majority of the people in this province. Injustice that is institutionalized or "just happens" is accepted as the will of Allah by many but bitterly resented by others. The Church in Indonesia quietly goes about its mission of "bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to the captives, new sight to the blind, setting the downtrodden free, proclaiming the Lord's year of favor" (Luke 4:18).

Jack and Moneta Prince, PC(USA) Mission Connection Newsletter, September 1998

- Some companioning members may be unable or unwilling to invest time or risk in the relationship.
- Necessary strong leaders and facilitators may be hard to find.
- Intentional openness to personal lifestyle change will be threatening to some.

Evaluating Effectiveness

If you are considering participation in a development ministry of transformation, you must first assess the program or project to determine if it does indeed have transformative aspects. What opportunities are there for living among those in another community? How involved is the other community in the project? How do they contribute to it? What opportunities are there for demonstrating solidarity? How vulnerable and open to change are you?

When you have been living and working in a ministry of transformation, evaluating the situation on a regular basis, how have you demonstrated solidarity? How have you felt others in solidarity with you? How has the project tackled systemic problems? What changes have you seen? What transformations have you seen in others' lives? What transformation has occurred in your life? What steps need to be taken to transform the project?

Opportunities for Solidarity through Ministries of Transformation

To be involved in cross-cultural relationships and ministries of transformation with partner churches, organizations or communities, congregations need to be aware of the following:¹³

- Transformation requires long-term relations built over time between whole communities.
- Relationships should build up the body of Christ in both places.
- Activities and relationships must be holistic, addressing the entire life fabric of both communities and all members and resulting in overall community transformation.

- Likewise, true solidarity requires that members of one congregation or community join the companion community in missionary and development efforts.
- Commitments that all members of both communities can carry out on behalf of the other include prayer, study, advocacy, correspondence, and visits.
- In instances where a relationship is based on one or only a few persons rather than whole communities of people, there will be limitations. The involvement becomes a person-focused relationship; the work is limited to how much only those persons can do, and the commitment of the congregation is more to the person(s) rather than the larger work and companionship envisaged.
- There are opportunities to work together with other congregations or organizations in collaboration when one congregation is too small to carry the whole weight of a relationship.

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS MINISTRIES OF TRANSFORMATION

Do you want your life to be changed?

1. Undertake a church study/work trip.
2. Invite a Christian from another country to live with and minister to your congregation through the Mission to the USA program.
3. Develop a Presbyterian partnership through the International Presbytery Partnership Program or through the Presbyterian Hunger Program's "Joining Hands Against Hunger" initiative.

Potentially you will

- build long-term mission relationships with partners
- expand your worldviews
- develop personal friendships across cultural, racial, national, and economic barriers
- become excited about the world, its people, and the mission of the church

You will face challenges and learn to

- be patient with differences
- be flexible when plans don't work out, or situations are not what you expected
- understand that sometimes the gifts you give are those you need to give rather than those needed in the hosting community
- receive gifts from a poor community even when you feel you need to be the giver and not the receiver
- not be defensive when the assumptions you bring are challenged or "corrected" by the receiving community

Questions for Reflection

What does the word *solidarity* mean to you? What feelings does it evoke? Does your image of solidarity resemble what you think the role of the church should be with the poor of the world?

What keeps us from listening to and learning from our Christian sisters and brothers and from social and economic cultures not our own?

Discuss the differences between these two phrases: (a) to work with poor people, and (b) to work for poor people. How would one or the other personally impact your life?

What does it mean to be "on the side of the poor"?

The scriptures can be read to show that God has a "preferential option for the poor." What is most challenging to you about such a perspective? What does it mean for you as a member of God's family?

Can there be a relationship of solidarity without an exchange of financial resources or even without a specific project to undertake?

In order to be truly "generous" in relationships of transformation, what transformation must occur in us as traditional "givers"?

A Final Story

SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

Parakal Mission is an evangelistic effort of the central Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India, which was founded in 1930s. Today, Parakal is a growing town with a large Christian population in the Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh. However, in the the 1930s it was a poverty-stricken area with few signs of civilization. The majority of people in the area were illiterate, poor, and landless. They lived in religious superstition and as bonded laborers of rich landlords.

Using the story of a humble woman who worked among them, we will try to understand an indigenous evangelistic mission that transformed all aspects of a peoples' life.

Sister Mary Thomas' last words to her colleagues were to manifest God's love, not in words but in action. She *was* love in action. She died on May 22, 1993. Sister Mary Thomas was born on March 1, 1917, in a remote village in Kerala. Her miraculous recovery from a debilitating heart ailment led her to commit herself to full-time Christian ministry, and she joined the Bethel Ashram Thiruvalla in 1935.

One day during her ministry in Bethel, as she was fasting and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, verse 8 of Psalm 2 ("Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, the ends of the earth your possession") came to her with compelling force and poignancy. In obedience to this vision, she set out to Parakal in Andhra Pradesh, the mission field of the Central Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India, to spread the good news of God's love to a people who lived in deprivation, ignorance, and bondage. She worked alongside the pioneering missionaries Mrs. Eapen, the Rev. K. E. Eapen, and Sister Mary John, and established the Bethel Ashram Parakal and subsequently the orphanage, the Home of Love for girls in response to the felt need of the time.

Sister Mary Thomas proclaimed the gospel through a life of solidarity with the community of

impoverished people she lived among. She and her colleagues lived as a community in an ashram. First and foremost they were a worshipping community, which attracted many neighbors to their cottage. They spoke to the neighbors about Jesus and the love God extended to them through him. They prayed with the dying and gave shelter to the orphaned and destitute. They visited the neighboring villages as all good neighbors would do to learn of their suffering and to share in it. They extended whatever help they could with the meager resources raised through indigenous sources. As they encountered childhood mortality, women's sufferings, health issues, poverty, and hunger, they were led to extend their evangelistic efforts to areas of service in health, education, and caring for the destitute. A gradual awakening of the people about their human dignity helped them throw away the yoke of their bonded labor status and assert their freedom as children of God and find their rightful place in their community.

After retirement from active service as the mother of Bethel Ashram, Sister Mary Thomas moved to a remote village twenty kilometers away from Parakal and lived in a thatched shed that soon became a place of worship, an orphanage, and a school. The situation of the farmers in that area was appalling; people lived in utter poverty, ill health, illiteracy, and virtual economic slavery to landowners. Pained by their situations, Sister Mary Thomas launched a development project that undertook social welfare and a development program with particular focus on women and female children. Activities involved providing loans, fertilizers, and irrigation facilities to small farmers; providing health education and immunization programs; organizing adult literacy classes; organizing occupational training, and crèche, and day care programs.

Since Sister Mary Thomas' death, the project continues under other women with few worldly resources. What they rely on is their abundant faith in God's resources to sustain them.¹⁴

Notes

1. Adapted summary of address given by the Rev. Sherron K. George at the PC(USA) "Congregations in Global Mission: New Models for a New Century" conference, in St. Louis, Mo., November 1997.
2. This and the following paragraph are adapted from *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 150.
3. Partnership as described in this portrait could also be read as "companionship."
4. Excerpted from Larry Rasmussen, "Moral Norms for Just and Sustainable Development," *Church & Society*, 87, no. 3 (1997):32-34.
5. Michael Lerner, "Jewish Liberation Theology," in *Religion and Economic Justice*, Michael Zweig, ed., (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 131.
6. John R. Chyene, *Incarnational Agents: A Guide to Developmental Ministry* (Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1996) p. 27.
7. Nancy Collins, CEOSS International Relations Coordinator and PC(USA) Mission Co-worker, Mission Correspondence Program letter, November 1998.
8. David P. Young, *What to Do When You Get Home: A Primer on What to Do after a Travel/Study Seminar* (Louisville, Ky.: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1994), p. 200.
9. Chyene, *Incarnational Agents*, p. 227.
10. *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 123.
11. Author and date unknown.
12. Beals, *Beyond Hunger*, pp. 97-98.
13. Personal interview with Tim Dearborn, January 1999.
14. Author and date unknown.

Final Reflections¹

Sustaining the “Good Life”?

The 208th General Assembly (1996), in its report Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development, asks “Presbyterians and other Christians to lead the way to a basic reconception of the ‘good life,’ one that, in accordance with our Christian and Reformation heritage, is less materialistic and more frugal.”² Furthermore, the report sets forth standards to which development should conform if it is to be supported by people of faith. The subtitle of the report discloses the standards: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development.

Justice, sustainability, and humanity claim paramount importance as we engage in development work. We cannot subordinate these standards to any economic model or any ideology that ignores or undermines their significance. Our insistence on justice, sustainability, and humanity does not reject growth and globalization per se. But the roles that growth and globalization play in development have to be shaped and evaluated by their service to its proper ends: justice, sustainability, and human fulfillment.

However, if we consider the track record of the prevailing “sustainable development” approach that has been used throughout the world based on an economic process of change, we must confess that there has been little improvement in the general “good life” of the poor, or in more frugal Western lifestyles. Measured against any of the visions of development as posed in this book, recent development accomplishments are best described as inequitable, unsustainable, and destructive of community life. To be fair, some development projects have lifted some people out of poverty; some projects have improved literacy, sanitation, primary health care, and life expectancy for many others. These achievements, partly a consequence of international assistance, are impressive and promising for the future. But they have not, by and large, established a pattern of change that assures equitable, sustainable, human participatory development.

Recent economic development practices, for example, have brought affluence to only one-fifth of the world’s people and stranded another fifth in chronic and desperate poverty. They have inflicted enormous damage on biological systems such as forests, grasslands, fisheries, and croplands that supply the world’s food and many of its raw materials. And they have undermined many of the basic social systems that anchor community life by promoting individualistic economic values and the widest possible exposure to the risks and rewards of market competition.³

Should we be concerned about this situation, that eight of ten people on the planet are living in either absolute poverty or relative poverty? Of course we would wish that our neighbors have a higher standard of living. But to what level?

Is it possible that all people could become as affluent as most North Americans? Could the environment support the production of goods and services necessary to provide all people with a middle-class American lifestyle? What lifestyle would be appropriate for everyone on the planet to share in order that all might partake of the fruits of the earth? What level of living can the earth provide without undermining its natural systems and resources? Is there a different way that we can define a “good life” other than by our income level

and by the amount that we can purchase and consume? Could we come to view wealth as having those things that make life worth living? Instead of giving value to material things could we value qualities of life such as relationships, health, dignity, knowledge, and justice?

If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world, and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.

E. B. White

Responsibility for making development sustainable should be shared by all members of the global community, not least the citizens of the United States whose institutions often have contributed to the destruction of biotic life and human communities in the poorest economies. Yet this is a responsibility that is unlikely to be accepted easily or without resistance, for acceptance will imply fundamental shifts in the social, economic, and moral character of our society.

Can the church assist in overcoming such resistance? By every possible means! The Presbyterian Brief Statement of Faith declares:

The Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples. . . , to unmask idolatries. . . , to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. [Book of Confessions, 10.4, lines 66–71]

Movement toward a lasting society, here as elsewhere, cannot occur without a transformation of individual priorities and values. It is the church that can best assist the

citizens of the United States to understand and embrace the values making sustainability possible.”⁴



Art by Kelly Clark

God provides an abundance, plenty for everyone, with the proviso that we share.

Innumerable passages of scripture recognize that the satisfaction of basic needs is essential to life. The apostle Paul assures the Corinthian church that “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8). Having “enough of everything” frees a person and a community for the “good work” of ministering to the needs of others.

The modern debate about limits to economic growth is not about stifling or restricting human development but about sustaining both human development and ecological integrity. It is more than an empirical debate about the biophysical limits of the planet. It is a moral debate about the material conditions necessary for full human development. It is a debate about the moral limits to production and consumption. It is not a theoretical debate that we engage in for the mere sake of argument. It is a practical, urgent debate spurred by the global human and environmental condition in which we find ourselves and prodded by our sense of responsibility to the global community, to future generations and to the other species that cohabit this planet with us.

The economic goal of human development is not “prosperity” or maximum production and consumption, but a sustainable material sufficiency that will allow for the comprehensive fulfillment of

life for all species. For the affluent, the challenge is to find meaning in the idea of sufficiency and to seek alternatives to a pursuit of growth that destroys communities—human or otherwise—and violates environmental values.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks just and sustainable human development because the church believes that God wills the fullness of life for all people. Yet the conditions necessary for such fullness are lacking today for a large part of the human family. Just and sustainable human development requires policies and efforts undertaken intentionally to achieve these conditions.

Jesus came that all people might “have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). The good news of God’s kingdom preached by Jesus is meant to be good news of abundant life for all nations, all people. As followers of Jesus Christ who live in relative affluence, we must consider the possibility that God places a responsibility upon each of us to use all the means available to us to see that just and sustainable human development becomes a reality for the whole human family in harmony with all of God’s creation.

Most of the luxuries, many of the so-called comforts, of life are not only indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind.

Henry David Thoreau

Exercises—“Rich and Poor”

- What’s the difference between rich and poor? Make a list. If you are rich, write down the things that are essential for you. If you are not rich, make a list of things you wish you had.

Mr. and Mrs. Average and their family represent 80 percent of the earth’s population. They have five living children; two others died before their first birthday from illnesses

related to malnutrition. The Average family lives in a small home with two rooms, without electricity or plumbing. Each family member has one change of clothing, except for Pappa’s suit and Mamma’s embroidered wedding dress. The family vehicle is a bicycle, and information comes through the battery-operated radio. Pappa and Mamma have shoes; the three children who attend school have sandals. When a letter arrives, Mamma must ask Pappa to read it to her, but she is proud their daughter attends school as well as their sons. When the baby had a terrible fever, Pappa lost a day of work to take him to the nurse at the clinic three miles away. There is a hospital on the other side of the city, but they can hardly afford the bus fare, let alone doctors and medicine. In the Average neighborhood there is no pharmacy, no dentist, no playground or park, no garbage collection or street lights. Nobody there has medical or life insurance. Although Pappa and Mamma Average both work long hours, together they earn less than \$800 each year. They have no investments, but they are saving so their eldest son can go to the good secondary school in the city.⁵

- Make a new list describing the rich in a global context.
- Read the following. Ask the question “What does God require of us?” What answers do the texts give you?

Deuteronomy 24:17–22

Deuteronomy 15:1–11

Jeremiah 22:13–16

Luke 16:19–31

- Consider Jeremiah 22:13–16. What does it mean to know God?
- If you were Mr. or Mrs. Average, what would each of the four scripture passages mean to you?
- How is your thinking about prosperity (or adversity) influenced by your own country, your social class, your neighbors, and co-workers?

Devil's Advocate:

It is not fair to compare our North American living standards with those of peasants in Africa or Indonesia or elsewhere. Those people are used to living that way and it is the way they like it. It's their culture. When my father came to Canada from the old country, he worked day and night to make a better life for my mother and me. And I worked my way through school, pulled myself up by my own bootstraps. No one gave us a handout, and I resent the church and the government saying that we should give handouts to these do-nothings overseas who never tried to better themselves the way we did. Actually, I believe that Western Europe and North America enjoy a high standard of living because we believe in Jesus Christ. Prosperity is the result of our Christian ethics and culture, whereas poverty is the result of heathen practices and a lack of morality.

As quoted in To Walk in Beauty: Sustainable Development, by Starr Luteri, p. 28-29.

- How would it change things if you thought of prosperity and adversity in terms of the whole planet?

End Story⁶

In the course of a Self-Development of People meeting, Sam Appel related the following story, attributed to a Jesuit priest, Anthony de Mello.

A gentleman knocks upon his son's door. "Jamie," he says, "Wake up!"

Jamie answers, "Don't want to get up, Papa."

The father shouts, "Get up! You have to go to school."

Jamie says, "I don't want to go to school."

"Why not?" asks the father.

"Three reasons," says Jamie. "First, because it's so dull; second, the kids tease me; and third, I hate school."

And the father says, "Well, son, I am going to give you three reasons why you must go to school. First, because it is your duty; second, because you are forty-five years old; and third, because you are the headmaster."

Sam continued, "The story is applicable. We Presbyterians are no longer children, either as a church or as individuals. If not headmasters most of us are at least people of modest resources and influence. And the call has never been more urgent than it is today for our segment of the people of God to wake up and 'smell the coffee'—to wake up and remember who we are and what we are called to be and do in the world. Richard Shaun best describes the urgency and our role. Writes Shaun, 'Only as we enter into the depth of the human struggle of our time as the Reformers did in theirs, and there find ourselves addressed by God as we read the Bible, can we hope to experience once again the power of the Word. For us at this time this means living in solidarity with the poor and marginalized and reading the Bible with them as we join in their struggle for life.'

... I bear witness, and the experience of the National Committee and its members bears witness, that to share in the lives of the poor, and to help bring reality to their visions for self-development, is to experience joy and fulfillment as Christians and as men and women of conscience. Our message is, 'Wake up. Get involved through self-development in the work of the kingdom. And

smell the coffee, the clean, fresh and hope-inspiring aroma of creative, self-developing engagement with the poor and disadvantaged. It's good!

A Future and a Hope—Isa. 65:17–25

*Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered, nor will they
come to mind.*

*But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a
joy.*

*I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my
people:
the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no
more.*

*Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a
few days,*

*or an old man who does not live out his years;
he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth;
he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered
accursed.*

*They will build houses and dwell in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
No longer will they build houses and others live in them,
or plant and others eat.*

*For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people;
my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.*

*They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to
misfortune;*

*for they will be a people blessed by the Lord,
they and their descendants with them.*

*Before they call I will answer, while they are still speaking
I will hear.*

*The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
but dust will be the serpent's food.*

*They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy
mountain," says the Lord.*

Notes

1. Much of this chapter excerpted from *Hope for a Global Future*, pp. 96-101.
2. *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 5.
3. Gordon K. Douglass, "Introduction—Hope for a Global Future," *Church & Society* 87, no. 3 (1997) : pp. 1–2.
4. Excerpted from Douglass, "Hope for a Global Future," pp. 9–10.
5. Excerpted from Luteri, *To Walk in Beauty*, p. 29.
6. This section adapted from Gittings, *From Dream to Reality*, pp. 245–247.

Appendix 1—Terms and Issues of Development Ministries

Attitude and Understanding—Our attitude toward and understanding of a local situation and problem for which we seek improvement affects the way we tackle the problem as well as conveys our preconceptions. This is particularly true in undertaking development activities, because these attitudes and understanding toward the work and people involved impact the success or failure of efforts. What do you actually know and assume about the community where you seek to conduct development activities? How much research and understanding of the local language, values, relationships, and power structures do you have?

To limit the impact of inappropriate attitudes about and poor understanding of development ministries, the following areas need attention:

- understanding of basic development concepts
- appreciation and awareness of the importance of community participation
- skills in listening to and respecting the ideas of others, especially when not in one's home environment
- understanding and using skills of facilitation

The potential results of open attitudes and enhanced understanding are

- new knowledge of other places, people and reasons for why things are like they are
- ability to ask questions and not just make assumptions
- new friendships and common concerns
- ability to listen more closely

The attitude and understanding of members of marginalized and needy communities about their place in the world are also extremely important in regard to the success or failure of development ministries. Their attitude or perception of self in the world is probably the most important aspect of development. It is on the basis of one's attitude that development takes place, and attitude plays a large role in determining the extent of development. Attitude affects a person's and a community's sense of self-awareness, self-worth, self-confidence, and therefore affects people's ability to become self-reliant.¹

However, the heart of development is how people view themselves, the world, and change. Therefore, an evolution of attitude toward self-reliance must be enabled. How does a Christian worldview relate to attitudes of self-reliance, self-worth, and self-confidence?

Capacity Development—This term as used in development literature represents the concept that the "capacity" or capability and power of disadvantaged and poor people needs improvement. The term recognizes that marginalized people have knowledge, resources, and skills, but they are limited by their social, economic, and political situation. To develop the capacity of such disadvantaged people to break out of their handicapped situations they need additional education and awareness of their condition, possibilities for advancement and improvement of skills. The issue of capacity development includes assumptions that require thorough reflection if this objective is sought when undertaking development ministries. These assumptions include the following:

- People in communities of need generally know what is best for themselves. They can discern whether it is feasible and to their benefit to expend their limited energies and time in capacity development activities provided by outsiders.

- Outsiders have limited understanding of the context in which people of need live. Therefore, although outsiders mean well, they can only provide limited guidance and control of capacity development activities.
- The agenda of what poor people want for themselves is usually very different from what outsiders think they need. Often the best that outsiders can do is provide education, skill training, and resources the communities of need identify as helpful.
- Often the most important outside help is aiding communities of need to analyze their situation and organizing them to do something about it.

Community—Central to the goal of development ministries, in terms of holistic human fulfillment, is the concept of community. Although hard to define precisely, the theme is human relationships, within a locality or area, involving plentiful face-to-face interaction, in which people are mutually supportive, responsible, and cooperatively engaged in seeking the common good and in ensuring that each member participates in the “good” of this community. The sense of mutual concern and responsibility then gets extended beyond the locality or area to larger components of humanity and finally to all the people of God’s world.

Defining “community” in relation to community development is necessary in conversations with members of a needy community because it often has different meanings for different people. Projects, policies, and programs often fail because outside agents and community members did not reconcile their different perspectives. Each community is different; there are different experiences, values, relationships, power structures, and needs. Processes and activities of development ministries must be adapted to each new community.

Control—Who controls the development ministries? There is a wide spectrum of means of control, from total “outsider” control, through supporting local ownership, to promoting mutual accountability between external agents and local participants. Control provides order and a

predetermined plan of action, sometimes at the expense of a relationship. Supporting local ownership of development activities provides a framework for community planning and responsibility. Local ownership builds up skills and knowledge for future development programs.

What is the appropriate method of control concerning development ministries in relationship with other congregations or communities? The American individualistic, “in charge” characteristic and our “can-do” attitude are counter to supportive and open-ended development processes. How should development be conducted? Do we empower people to solve their own problems, and promote self-reliance? Or do we ensure that the development work agreed to is accomplished by strict control and accountability by benefactors?

The problems of the rural poor, in the final instance, cannot be solved by anyone but themselves and all solidarity efforts must be aimed at strengthening their own capacity for independent action.

H. Sethi

Cultural values—In any development undertaking our own cultural baggage of values and assumptions carry over into activities and relationships. Whether intentional or not, much goes on in the name of development that results in the imposition of one set of cultural values on another. There is no such thing as cultural-less or value-neutral development. Equally ingenuous is any moral or religious relativism that regards all cultural values as ethically equal or neutral. It is impossible to address issues of population, the subordination of women, or human rights, and it is impossible to introduce new medicines and technologies, or provide universal education without dramatically changing cultural structures and values. Projects designed and implemented

from outside often have imposed norms of progress, prosperity, property, and propriety on other societies. Such projects and programs reflect modern-day cultural imperialism and insensitivity. Cultural values such as materialism, modernization, sexual orientation, moral relativism, and so forth often carry over into development activities by external agents who are not sensitive to the assumptions underlying their efforts. Such beliefs and values imposed on others, even through well-intentioned, may work against local sets of cultural values. This is not to say that certain cultural practices in some societies do not require mitigation. Where more humanitarian treatment of certain oppressed sectors of a society (e.g., women denied rights of education and medical treatment) is a matter of justice and compassion, constructive interventions should be undertaken. How can development ministries avoid cultural colonization and imposition of foreign values on partners and partner communities? Do the scriptures have anything to say regarding this issue?

Dependency—Dependent relationships are seldom sought in development ministry partnerships, but often are formed unintentionally. Giving and receiving can become habit forming and an easy foundation of relationships. However, such dependency is shallow and does not result in self-reliance or the dignity of either partner. For the recipient, the habit of dependence is notoriously disabling. It makes you think you can't manage on your own, and because most help has strings attached, it can prevent you from making decisions that are genuinely your own. You become downgraded in your own eyes by being permanently beholden to somebody else for whom you can do nothing. On the other hand, the donor is encouraged in his view of himself as the competent, the one who is there only for others, who is morally superior as well as being the richer in having something to give.⁷² How can we avoid creating situations of dependency in our Christian desire to help needy people?

For an obvious and brief example of dependency consider the role of government programs in a developing country. The government provides technical, financial, and infrastructure support on a broad scale across the country seeking to benefit the poorer communities. This approach of giving, but not creating local accountability or capacity, is seen by the beneficiaries as “put your hand out and the government will fill it.” The government program continues to expand and becomes less efficient. A dependency on the government for everything grows and stifles local initiative. Capacity for local problem solving and resourcing was probably there, but as the government takes responsibility and ownership, local ability declines.

You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

Abraham Lincoln

Likewise, bringing in too much technology and knowledge from the outside breeds dependency. Big projects also are not able to be “owned” by local people. What are other ways that dependency can be created when development is the objective?

It is important to understand that the antidote to dependency is not independence, although that condition is necessary for self-determination and being self-reliant. Independence is a desired circumstance in many areas of life, but truly human and humane communities entail interdependence and interconnectedness. Do we need each other? Has God created us to be interconnected? How should development activities incorporate interdependence?

Education—Educational opportunities are an indicator of just and sustainable human

development when they are relevant to the real-life situation of a community. New knowledge and skill acquisition through both formal and informal learning leads to individual and community empowerment and liberation. The importance of appropriate education can hardly be overstated. It is key to employment opportunities, population stabilization, the exercise of human rights, effective public participation, disease prevention, health care, environmental conservation, economic productivity, agricultural sustainability, and cultural and spiritual development. Thus it is indispensable for increasing both the quantity of goods and the quality of lives.³

A component of education is “awareness raising.” This is a process that leads people toward increased consciousness of their particular situation, its inherent problems, resources, and need for change. Development projects should encourage such a reflection process through which individuals and communities become aware of their rights and responsibilities, and develop self-confidence as agents for their own change.

True education also flows two ways. We from the “North” and rich communities have much to learn from our brothers and sisters of the “South” and communities of poverty around us. Their cultural, social, and spiritual experience and view of the world greatly differ from but also potentially complement ours. Learning from them is the great benefit and adventure derived through partnership and solidarity arrangements with them.

A few principles of adult learning may be of importance when planning educational activities as part of development ministries.

- Adults are voluntary learners. They learn best when they have decided to attend educational opportunities for a particular reason that is directly relevant to their own lives and experiences.
- If the motivation of adults has to learn is not supported, they likely will find other, more important tasks to do.
- Adults have much good experience and can help each other learn through a facilitated environment of sharing.

- People learn best when they are actively involved.

Empowerment—It’s relatively easy to provide people fish to satisfy their hunger, or a fishing pole to provide an income. But that kind of assistance doesn’t change the reasons that put them in that situation. In fact, that kind of help might just make them more likely to remain poor.

Empowerment and salvation are really two distinct ways of talking about liberation. In the former, it is a liberation of society. And in the latter, it is spiritual liberation.

Robert C. Linthicum

Empowerment is a process through which people gain greater control and decision-making power over the political, social, religious, and economic systems affecting their lives. Empowerment transforms people into agents of change over the larger context that governs the way they do things. How are people empowered? What are examples of people being empowered? Are there people in your own communities who are disempowered?

One of the challenges often encountered in processes of empowerment is that those who have power over others don’t want to give it up, and sometimes those who don’t have power may not want it. What does the Bible have to say about empowerment? Did Jesus empower people? How?

Equity—An important difference exists between “equity” and “equal” or “equality.” Certainly, fairness in development ministries, where everyone can say that they enjoy equal treatment and benefit, would be an agreeable objective. However, there are situations where equity is more important than “equality.” For instance, affirmative action programs seek to create opportunities for minorities who have been previously disadvantaged in their efforts at gaining entrance to universities

and businesses. Poorer members of a community may not be able to access community services that are “equally” available to all but out of their reach because they do not have a car or money to get to the services. Ensuring that all members of a community participate in development activities and benefits may mean discriminating positively on behalf of poorer members so that they can equitably access resources. This concept embraces the idea of “each according to his or her need.”

To ensure equity, a community must proactively determine how all members will “enjoy” both responsibilities and benefits of development. This preference for the poor intentionally seeks to bring them into a full partnership of development and enables the “richer” members of a community to be more fully joint heirs of the kingdom of God.

Evangelism—How does evangelism fit into development ministries? Although this guide focuses on development, it recognizes that holistic ministries of development necessarily encompass the spiritual realm. Evangelism and development ministries, or what sometimes has been called “social responsibility” or “action” in the past, are inseparable “fruits” of the gospel and basic to the mission of the church. Evangelism and social action belong to each other, like the two blades of a scissors or the two wings of a bird. There often is a creative tension between evangelism and development ministries: good news for both the spirit and body.

Which comes first, evangelism or development? In many countries, culture and the political context only allow Christian workers to be involved in development activities. This restriction actually provides the church with a unique opportunity to be genuine, to minister to the many needs of brothers and sisters in places where there may not be communities of believers. In such a setting it is difficult to deny the workers their expression of the Christian motivation that brought them there to share the “good news” of medical treatment or improved agricultural practices with those who ask. In this case physical development can be a bridge to evangelism.

On the other hand, social action often is the consequence of evangelism. As people grow in their understanding of God’s love for them and others, they usually are moved to change the conditions that have hindered their communities’ development. As people discover their true worth in the eyes of God, they begin to desire that their neighbors and surroundings also reflect dignity and self-worth, out of which social action and development activities arise.

So always, development ministries must be the partner of evangelism. “Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person.”⁴ In this sense, seeking community improvement, either from a development or evangelistic perspective, the most important concern should be that people are treated with dignity and respect rather than objects to receive outside help.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have
1 Pet. 3:15b

Expectations—In any endeavor, but particularly with regard to development activities, expectations of what should be done, how it should be done, who controls the doing and the benefits, and the anticipated outcomes greatly vary among participants. This is especially true and possible when people from diverse cultural, economic, social, and spiritual backgrounds share in the development work. Whose agenda is being served while undertaking the development activities? Does everyone involved have similar expectations? Are the expectations realistic and possible to fulfill? What might religious expectations be?

Facilitation—There are many approaches as to how development ministries are implemented. They can be conducted, managed, directed, led, or facilitated, to name major methods. A presently preferred and particularly effective style of

conducting development activities is a facilitation. This term reflects a methodology of “leading from behind” where “outsiders” guide those actually doing the development work to take ownership and responsibility for the activities and results. This approach is important where outsiders could potentially play principle roles in the development activities, but take a backseat position so that local participants achieve greater empowerment and control over their own development.

Skills of facilitation are not natural to many people, and the methods of facilitation often need to be learned. Some of the qualities of an effective intercultural facilitator include patience, high respect for people, cultural sensitivity, good balance, flexibility, imagination, innovation, integrity, selflessness, perseverance, honesty, and tolerance of ambiguity.³ How would you describe facilitation? How and why is it an important method of development? Are there examples in Jesus’ ministry of his using a facilitative approach?

Gender—The issue of men’s and women’s participation in development should be of major concern when designing and implementing activities. This concern should address such issues as men’s and women’s educational levels; differences in the social and economic position of men and women; women’s roles in and perspectives of development; understanding each other’s unique contributions; need for equity in benefit allocation; and the gap between contribution of effort and decision-making opportunity.

Women are often described in development plans as “recipients” of benefits. In this situation women are merely the subjects of development and not active participants in identifying their own developmental needs and designing their own improvements. Certainly women’s gender-specific contributions and concerns regarding development have been historically ignored. More attention needs to be given to women’s agenda and leadership, but how can it be done in an empowering way?

In many cultures, society gives women very little freedom and consequently few opportunities to engage in activities that may make significant

differences in their lives. This situation makes planning development ministries complicated and challenging, but not impossible. For example, how could the issues of women’s need for development be addressed in communities that are male dominated? How will a particular development project impact the historic, social, and cultural roles of women and men in a community? How should cultures of inequitable gender relationships be approached when requesting development assistance? What insights into gender issues do Jesus’ interactions with men and women provide?

Holistic—God expresses a concern for the total person, including all aspects of human existence. Reflecting this interest, development ministries must be holistic in their approach to change and transformation. This means that the whole person and community, and the related social, political, economic, and spiritual aspects of life, must be the focus of integrated change and improvement. Wherever there are constraints or resources for people to become more whole, these become part of the change process of development. A holistic model of development requires a connectedness between the various realms of life. The aim of such holistic development or transformation is the restoration of humanity and all of creation to a state of well-being in all their dimensions.

From the “donor” position, if we are to hope for holistic change, we cannot act, or even be perceived, as only rich and benevolent suppliers of handouts for the needy. We must seek to be authentic representatives of Christ, open to change in our own lives, while seeking to enable others to be all that they are capable of becoming in Christ. This is the foundation of both holistic and transformational development.

When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Deut. 24:21

Marginalized—A reoccurring theme in the scriptures is God’s particular concern for the aliens, widows, orphans, and poor. Likewise, development

ministries seek primarily to address such people most at need, those at the bottom of societies' social and economic scale. These are the marginalized. Most development programs describe themselves as "activities for the purpose of meeting the needs of oppressed, *marginalized*, and poor communities." But what does it mean to be "marginalized"? It is a relative term and indicates a condition of people living on the edge, left out, and bypassed from power, resources, rights, and control over their own lives. Some people are so marginalized that community development programs can't help them. Only social welfare programs can.

For this reason it is important to understand what the constraints are that disable people from participating in development programs. Often, it may be a lack of time, or transportation, or poor understanding of the options available, or economic obligations to other people, and so forth. These constraints or marginalizing factors must be the focus of part of the development activities or

The most effective agent to act as helper is a person who strongly identifies with the community, and who develops a relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

John R. Cheyne

else improvement will have little chance of success. Can you identify marginalized groups of people in your own community? How are they marginalized? Are you marginalized in any way from exercising full control over your own life?

Money—Contributing funds to development ministries provides one of the most obvious and convenient methods of participating in development. Traditionally, American churches have provided huge amounts of cash for worthy projects around the world. As a result, less-developed countries almost expect Americans to hand out money. However, this wealth and its

contributors often create a controlling influence on how the money is used. For this reason the most often mentioned and the most contentious aspect of development ministries is the use and management of money. Funds both provide the means to accomplish good works as well as potentially to sow the seeds for destroying hoped-for progress. Those supplying the finances naturally seek to see that money is spent well and desire accountability from the receivers. Those utilizing contributions realize there is responsibility involved, but may feel that there should not be strings attached if the relationship is really a partnership. The effective use of money is one of the biggest challenges in development ministries; and therefore, if at all possible, relationships should depend on money as little as possible. Are there examples where the contributions of American churches might actually impoverish the intended beneficiaries? How do the following relate to money matters in the context of development: transparency, accountability, control, and expectations?

Additionally, North Americans must learn that, though we are rich financially, we are poor in many other ways—ways in which non-Western churches and societies can minister to us. It is in partnerships with others that we truly become rich. We must work together to discover the common and individual wealth and riches we have in Christ.

Ownership and Accountability—Development experience primarily records donors designing, implementing, and evaluating programs on behalf of others. Donors control the development process because they are the experts and provide the resources. This pattern has been challenged because many such projects often end in failure. Why? Because the beneficiaries never "owned" the project; it was done for them. When something fails later on, after the project's completion, the beneficiaries cannot or will not take responsibility because they lack the resources, knowledge, and sense of ownership.

When development activities are planned it is necessary to know who initiated the need and idea; who will own the work and resources; who will

undertake and manage the activities; and who will be accountable for the results, risks, maintenance, and any problems that will arise. Note that people are the focus of these questions, which emphasize the relational aspect of the development activities. Encouraging use of local labor, materials, and funding for the activities also promotes a sense of ownership by local people or organizations. The

role of outside organizations is to encourage local leadership and management of the project.

Releasing control over and active involvement in specific development ministries represents a difficult area for Americans, who characteristically like to take charge and see projects through to completion. Our natural predisposition is to take control over what we create and to which we

Table 7
Participation Framework

| Mode of Participation by Locals | Part Played by Local People | Outsider Control | Local Control | Mode of Action in Relation to Participants |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------|---------------|--|
| Co-option Passive | Token representatives chosen; project decision making top-down, in the name of the "community." People participate by being told what is going to happen or has happened. Unilateral action by an administration or project management without listening to people's responses. | high | none | Action done "on" or "for" recipients |
| Compliance | Tasks are assigned with incentives, outsiders decide agenda and direct the process; some potential for tactical subversion at community level. People participate by conveying information. | high | very little | For |
| Consultation | Opinions are asked of local people, often through male leaders but also of different interest groups. Outsiders analyze and decide on the appropriate course of action. | high | little | For / With |
| Cooperation | Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities; responsibility for decision making on action remains with outsiders who direct the process. | medium high | medium | With |
| Co-learning | Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understandings and work together toward action. Responsibility is shared, with roles for outsiders as facilitators and catalysts. | little | high | With / By |
| Collective Action | Local people set their own agenda and mobilize to carry it out; outsiders may act as initial catalysts, but the process proceeds in their absence. | very little | high | By |

contribute. However, local ownership and mutual accountability of development programs undertaken by companion churches or organizations is required for successful partnerships.

Participation—Participation in development activities seeks to insure that all voices in a community are included in decision making, responsibility and risk sharing, and benefit allocation. It is a process of engaging people in the understanding of and search for solutions to their own problems, a process leading to their empowerment. Consensus seeking through group deliberation and reflection is central to effective community development. Through the process of dialogue people participate in their own development and take ownership over the process of decision making and change. The foundation of this process is that people are informed and understand how and by whom decisions are made. This allows for transparency. In this way, participation encourages the development of trust, which fosters the development of democratic structures.

The table on page 92 outlines the general types of participation and related roles local people play. The inclusion of this table intends to demonstrate that there are various levels of participation, and it is not enough just to say that local people participated in a development project. How much they take part and with how much responsibility and control is also of concern.

Proactive and Reactive—Historically, Presbyterians have been eager and quick to provide aid in situations of natural disasters and human-caused crisis. Likewise, initiatives of missionary doctors, teachers, lay people, and pastors, both here in the United States and overseas, have resulted in many relevant and helpful institutions and programs that help the disadvantaged of the world. These two types of activities (relief and crisis intervention, and human development) can be differentiated as being reactive in the former sense and proactive in the latter. There are certainly situations where being proactive or reactive is more obvious. However, in terms of

being proactive, there is certainly much that congregations engaged in development ministries can do—for example, establishing relationships with local and foreign communities in need; developing programs that help a group of people solve a problem that has marginalized them in some way; taking a trip to a new place to see and learn what needs there are; or joining an advocacy movement that seeks to change laws or systems that prevent people from becoming the full people that God intends them to be. Why is it important to be proactive in development activities? Are there examples in the Bible of Jesus' responding in proactive and reactive ways?

Roles—What kind of role is suitable and appropriate for the outsider to play in development ministries? Many types and associated concepts are used in development literature. The most commonly promoted role for the outsider is that of “facilitator,” or “enabler,” or “catalyst.” Each of these suggests that control is in the hands of the focus community and that the outsider is there as a resource person to provide input at appropriate times and help move the development process along. Some other roles people assume (or try to) in development ministries and related cautions include the following:

- *Servant*—This kind of role seeks to minister to, rather than being ministered unto; to be last, rather than first; and to be subservient to local leadership. In practice this sounds very religious and appropriate, but in reality it is extremely hard to live out. The term “servant” has different meanings in different cultures, and it is hardly a concept that North Americans adequately understand.
- *Catalyst*—By the very nature of being a foreigner in another community or country we often are a catalyst for change simply due to our presence, different understanding, lifestyle and perspective. But positively affecting change through catalytic action requires practice and understanding of local cultural context and values.
- *Resource person*—To communities of need, outsiders potentially bring a wealth of

knowledge, experience, skills, and material. These resources may provide alternatives and needed assistance to development planned or in progress. It is important to remember, however, that as the resources come out of a different cultural and social environment their "fit" into the local context may not be appropriate without adaptation, or may not even be possible at all. Additionally, providing outside resources should never be at the expense of utilizing local knowledge, skills, and materials.

- *Fraternal worker*—This term was an earlier name for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission personnel and conveyed a sense of working alongside, rather than over, in a partnerlike arrangement with national colleagues in other countries. It also recognized that the person was a guest invited by a partner church or institution. The level of influence and involvement of such a person is usually determined by the manner in which they conduct themselves and their understanding of the local culture and language.

In summary, as to the roles of outsiders, as John Cheyne says, no person plays any of the above or other characters authentically unless they are in relationships built on mutual trust and understanding. It is too easy for local community members to exhibit what they think the outside development representatives want to hear and see when there is no depth to the relationship. These roles are only effective as they are established on mutuality and partnership.

Self-Reliance—A major objective of development ministries is to promote this attribute. Many people of need lack confidence, experience, and opportunities to make changes that enable them to be more self-reliant. To achieve self-reliance, projects must intentionally transfer operational responsibilities to the local people and institutions, and give priority to the use of indigenous material, resources, and knowledge. Accompanying this process may be the need for leadership, literacy, and accountancy, as well as skill upgrading and

training. Self-reliance as a primary objective of development recognizes the capacity of people of need to take control over their own lives, that all people have some knowledge and experience on which they can base self-reliance, and that self-

The message of the gospel is inseparable from the messenger's life. Proclaiming the Gospel is not an activity but a lifestyle articulated by words and action.

C. René Padilla

reliance provides dignity and self-worth.

Status Quo—People involved with development, at whatever level, should give some thought to how development affects the status quo. That is, does the assistance offered to people or developed with people, affect the social, economic, and political conditions, both where the aid is given as well as in the community from which it is given? This issue concerns some people because they would not want their own livelihood threatened by the programs they support or the potential negative fallout their charity may generate. How, then, can they provide future gifts? On the other hand, some people point out that the only way to solve problems is to change the status quo that created the problem in the first place.

Sustainability—In almost any discussion of development, it is preceded by the adjective "sustainable". However,

... although it is usually assumed that the two terms "sustainable" and "development" are compatible, this is not self-evident. Sustainability calls for limits on consumption and resource use. But development, as conventionally understood, requires continued economic growth, which may render sustainability impossible by further depleting nonrenewable resources and polluting the biosphere. One cannot decide whether development is sustainable until two

prior questions are satisfactorily answered:
What is genuine wealth? and What is
authentic development?⁶

Sustainable development also confronts us with ambiguity about the meaning of sustainability in terms of values: what values are important to sustain for the future, and for whom should they be sustained? Should economic or cultural or ecological values be emphasized when it comes time to choose between conflicting values? Moreover, "sustainable" is not a sufficient qualifier of "development." It is an indispensable norm, to be sure, expressing a trusteeship for future generations. But it must be accompanied by other norms of comparable value, such as distributive justice, human-orientation, and democracy.⁷

Sustainable development must be relative and related to a local context and community of need. It must also be consistent with the local culture, institutions, and traditions. This means that elements of sustainable development will differ from place to place and from people to people.⁸

Will sustainable development relieve poverty? Poverty has been quite sustainable in our society and is not based directly on resource use or the physical environment, but rather on the social, political, and economic systems that govern our culture. The problem is basically a rich culture's problem: our standard of living is not sustainable. Environmentally sustainable development is not possible while a few nations demand affluent lifestyles; sustainability demands simple living, where consumption is limited. Is this true? Is it just? Is it realistic?

Technology Transfer—It is sometimes easy to think that the introduction of a new machine or method of agricultural production is simply a matter of slight technical adaptation and education. This is especially true for the establishment of technologies that may have been useful in another region and society, and where the introduction would appear to be uncomplicated and even inexpensive.

However, before such transfer occurs, it is important to ask if the level of technology or machinery is maintainable and sustainable by those

whose cultural role would call them to employ it. Adaptation of local existing technology may offer a more appropriate improvement. Some of the most tragic development failures have come from efforts to increase production in an impoverished area by forcing on the local situation technologies that ignored the realities of resource availability and local culture and custom. Superstition, cultural incompatibility, failure to understand the principle behind the concept, or lack of resources to maintain the technology are reasons for lack of success. Therefore, while considering outside sources of technology and equipment as contributions to the development process, careful questioning and discussion must occur to avoid misapplication.

Notes

1. Roy Schafer, "Community-based Health Development," in *A New Agenda for Medical Mission*, D. Merrill Ewert, MAP International Monograph (Brunswick, Ga.: MAP International, 1993).
2. Gillian Patterson, *Whose Ministry? A Ministry of Health Care for the Year 2000*, Risk Book Series (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993).
3. *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 109.
4. As quoted from "Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and social Responsibility," in Art Beals, *Beyond Hunger*, p. 145.
5. D. Merrill Ewert, Thomas G. Yaccino, and Delores M. Yaccino, "Cultural Diversity and Self-Sustaining Development: The Effective Facilitator," *Journal of the Community Development Society* 25, no. 1 (1994).
6. Denis Goulet, "Authentic Development: Is It Sustainable?" in *Church and Society* 87, no. 3, (January/February 1997): 20–21.
7. *Hope for a Global Future*, p. 77.
8. Douglass, "Hope for a Global Future," in *Church and Society* 83, no. 3, (January/February 1997).

Appendix 2—Principles of Community Development¹

1. Never do for people what they can do for themselves, else a pattern of dependency will be quickly established.
2. Do things with people, not for them. An appropriate role is to help people learn things about themselves as a community, as well as developing technical skills and exploring new options.
3. Let people do things in their own way. The people must have ownership in the project for it to survive; it has to be “their” project. Let them develop their own leaders; this is part of the learning experience.
4. Think long range. Can the project be sustained over the long run by the community itself? Can it adapt to changing political and economic situations? What happens when you leave?
5. Develop community, not programs or institutions. People grow and build trust by working together. Activities should be learning experiences and build a sense of community.
6. Keep it simple. Many projects fail because they expect too much too quickly. Be realistic in your expectations; after all, this is a new experience for the community, and the things which they learn from the experience may be more important than the outcome of the project itself.
7. Start small. As the community and staff build expertise they can handle larger responsibilities and more complexity. Many programs fail because they overwhelm staff and demand more than they can give.
8. Keep projects low risk so there is a greater probability of success. Failures should be seen as learning opportunities and not as disasters. Don’t expect perfection in people.
9. Model the behaviors and activities that you seek to transfer. Stay away from high-tech methods if simpler, less expensive solutions are available. Use appropriate levels of technology.
10. The ideal role is to be a consultant, helping the community and staff develop a vision, obtain resources (locally, to the extent possible), and implement the program.
11. Be positive. Reinforce the successes and celebrate the accomplishments. Admit the shortcomings and failures, but don’t focus on them.
12. Be patient. Integration of knowledge and the building of skills take time. Encourage change, but don’t push people too much.

Note

1. This list was developed by the International Health Ministries and other development-related staff of the PC(USA), circa 1994. These principles relate to projects undertaken by PC(USA) mission staff in partnership with members of a community (somewhat compatible with justice model), but also have application for the development ministry models of compassion and transformation.

Appendix 3—Principles for Just and Sustainable Human Development

Excerpts from

*“Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development”*¹

Just and sustainable human development is the comprehensive enhancement of the quality of life for all, present and future; it necessarily involves the integration of economic, social, political, cultural, ecological, and spiritual dimensions of being.

With this definition of “just and sustainable human development,” this policy statement addresses international issues in the economic structure. It is based on a biblical theology and the Christian assumption of the mutual responsibility and equality of human beings in God’s sight, stating that equitable distribution of goods and ecological constraints put moral limits on economic activity for the sake of human well-being, future generations, and nonhuman life. It calls for a renewed emphasis on the Reformed norm of frugality and lifts up the norm of sufficiency so that all may participate in the “good life,” calling for abundant living in caring communities in a way that is less materialistic and more frugal (p. 1).

A SUFFICIENT PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION The satisfaction of basic needs is indispensable for human development. Sufficiency for all requires that poverty be eradicated and that the affluent live more frugally (p. 96).

B FULL RESPECT FOR ALL HUMAN RIGHTS Human rights are essential to the expression of human dignity and are fundamental to the quest for human development. These rights include satisfaction of basic biophysical needs, physical security, moral and spiritual autonomy, mental and cultural development, social participation in defining and shaping the common good, due process, environmental protections, and the common good itself (p. 100).

Women’s rights—to a secure livelihood, to freedom from oppressive domination, to education, and to safe contraception within broadly available health care—are an essential component of just and sustainable development (p. 102).

Public participation of all persons in the decisions that affect their lives and well-being is a fundamental human right (p. 104).

C JUST AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE Commitment to human development requires a commitment to effective governance capable of encouraging order, assuring justice, and promoting the common good (p. 106).

D UNIVERSAL AND ADEQUATE EDUCATION Education is a basic human right and is essential to human development because it enhances human capacities, improves opportunities, and widens the range of choices (p. 109). Education “liberates and empowers people, economically, socially, culturally, and spiritually” (pp. 5–6).

E POPULATION STABILITY Overpopulation is neither just nor sustainable. Procreation is a deeply felt human right that must be balanced with the responsibility to preserve environmental quality and long-term sustainability and to make sufficient sustenance available to all (pp. 111–112).

F ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND FOOD SUFFICIENCY Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained (p. 115).

Environmental sustainability requires agricultural sustainability, which is necessary for human survival and well-being, now and in the long-term future (p. 117).

G ETHICAL UNIVERSALITY WITH CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY Authentic human development does not come in a single, fixed pattern. There are differences in cultural and worship

practices that express the same universal values of justice, integrity of the person, solidarity, and sustainability (p. 120).

H DISMANTLING WARFARE AND BUILDING PEACE Peacemaking is essential for human development and for the church's faithfulness to Christ. It requires actions to reduce militarization and to address the unmet needs that aggravate tensions (p. 124).

I EQUITABLE DEBT RELIEF The repayment of debts and interest at the expense of the basics of life raises serious questions of justice. The burden of debts must be shared equitably in ways that reduce poverty, protect the environment, and avoid perverse incentives in the future (p. 128).

J JUST AND SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL TRADE In an interdependent world, no nation can be fully independent of other nations, and no nation should be overly dependent on other nations. This means that the international trading system must incorporate the basic norms of social justice and environmental sustainability rather than depend solely on the norms and outcomes of free trade (p. 128).

K MORE AND BETTER DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE The purpose of development assistance is to equip people and communities through financial and technical means to implement their own plans for just and sustainable development (p. 131).

Note

1. Approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

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STEPHEN KNISELY served as a Peace Corps volunteer teacher at the Sunyani Technical Forestry School in Ghana, West Africa, then as a district forester with the Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico. In 1984, he and his wife were appointed mission co-workers by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to serve in Nepal with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). For the next six years, while living in a rural village area, he coordinated a soil and forestry conservation program. After earning a graduate degree at Cornell University in international agriculture and rural development, he, his wife, and their five-year-old son returned to Nepal with the PC(USA) to continue work with the UMN. Living in Kathmandu, Stephen provided forestry and community development support to UMN's rural development projects. Concluding twelve years of mission service in Nepal in 1998, the family returned to the United States and spent nine months as missionaries-in-residence at the PC(USA) Center offices in Louisville. Stephen, his wife, son, and daughter presently live in Chester, Vermont.



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