Christian Wholistic Development

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CONTENTS

Introduction .................................................. Page 3

Chapter One: Development and Dichotomies .......... Page 4

Chapter Two: Theology of Development ................. Page 12

Chapter Three: Shalom and The Kingdom of God .... Page 27

Chapter Four: Evangelism or Social Action ? ........ Page 36

Chapter Five: Goals of Christian Wholistic Development ........................................... Page 41

Chapter Six: Practicing Christian Wholistic Development ........................................... Page 45

Chapter Seven: Prayer and Spiritual Warfare ......... Page 62

Chapter Eight: The Role of the Church ................. Page 68

Conclusion .................................................... Page 80

Bibliography .................................................. Page 81

TABLES
TABLE 1: The Dichotomies of the Modern Worldview Page 8
TABLE 2: Christian Views of the Poor .................. Page 11
TABLE 3: Comparison Of Wholistic Development with other forms of Christian Development Page 35
TABLE 4: Priorities, Principles and Characteristics of Christian Development Page 49
TABLE 5: Women in the Old and New Testaments Page 55
TABLE 6: The Biblical View Of Gender ................ Page 56
TABLE 7: Ideas in How to be Wholistic in our Work Page 60
TABLE 8: Bible Study: Nehemiah, the Development Worker Page 65
TABLE 9: Lessons from the Good Samaritan .......... Page 70
TABLE 10: Jesus, the Development Worker ............ Page 74
TABLE 11: Attributes of a Christian Worker .......... Page 78
INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been written and produced as a result of two things. Firstly, it has come out of the work that CRUDAN has done in promoting Christian Wholistic Development over the past decade. Secondly it has come out of CRUDAN’s observations of the need for more and more of the church to see the mandate of God to be involved in their communities and in society and to consider some of the methodologies that are biblical, practical and proven. CRUDAN observed this need at their outset in 1990, but despite a lot of work, the same need is still as glaring.

All of what is written here is as a result of both research and practical experience. It is based as far as possible on the Bible and seeks to bring a different perspective to development, a thoroughly Christian and biblical perspective. Many Christians are afraid to get involved in development work because they are not sure if it is a Christian activity and they do not want to ‘compromise’ their faith. Even when people are involved it is often seen as a second priority. Here, we argue that it is a very Christian activity, and outline why that is so, suggest what is involved and how to become involved.

Our heart’s desire as CRUDAN is for the church to believe that Christian wholistic development is an imperative for them to be part of and to start to make an impact in the lives of the people, especially the poor, in their communities. CRUDAN offers its services of awareness raising, training and supporting (counselling) to any church that wants to take up this biblical mandate and make a difference in people’s lives for the glory of God.

Christian wholistic development is a broad concept, demonstrated by Robert Moffitt’s definition. He defines it as “every biblically based activity of the body of Christ, his church, that assists in bringing human beings towards the place of complete reconciliation with God and complete reconciliation with their fellows and their environment.” If you are interested in how we as Christians should relate to either God, others or the environment, then this book is for you!

Throughout this book, wholistic is spelt with a ‘w’ as opposed to spelling it without—i.e. holistic. This is deliberate even though both words mean the same thing—total, completeness. CRUDAN believes in spelling wholistic this way as it draws attention to the fact that wholism is about ‘wholeness’ and this conveys more of what is meant than the other way.
Chapter One:
DEVELOPMENT AND DICHOTOMIES

“If our Christian thinking does not change our way of life either as individuals or as nations, it could be accused of being something of a luxury”

Roy McCloughry

“Christians who affirm the lordship of Jesus with their minds and lips on Sunday and deny him on Monday. That is what an unbelieving world finds unbelievable.”

Tony Campolo

We live in a world that is polarised by wealth and poverty: two thirds of the world live in abject poverty, whilst the other third lives extravagantly. The comparison between the world today and the Rich man and Lazarus is a real one. Barrett wrote in 1983 “it is outrageous that 750 million affluent Christians can continue to allow 195 million brethren in Christ to exist in abject poverty year after year” (quoted in Elliston, 1989, p.60). Imagine what the figures would be today! In 1998 there were 66,650 people per doctor in Nigeria compared with 435 people per doctor in the U.K. The GNP per capita for Nigeria was $280 in 1998. In the U.S it was $25,860 for the same year. The rich/poor divide is not just one between nations but also within every nation and even every community. Poverty in our society is rife and the causes of it equally as prevalent including debt, landlessness, injustice, corruption and harsh economic systems. This reality of poverty is something that demands a response and both the church and the ‘world’ have tried to respond to the situation.

Development

Development can be defined or seen in many ways. As far as the world is concerned, development speaks in social and economic terms, using terms like GNP (Gross National Product), GDP (Gross Domestic Product), SAP (Structural Adjustment Programmes), socialism and capitalism. If we bring development to the micro level, then it can be defined more as a process enabling a community to provide for its own needs (beyond former levels), with dignity and justice. In this case the community’s capacity to meet its own needs has been increased. From this perspective development should be indigenous, comprehensive, long term and aimed at greater self-reliance. While Christians have been active in the field of development ever since missionary work began, the theory of development has been established with minimal input from
Christians, and unfortunately few Christians have seen the need to question them. This has led to Christian or church projects with no distinctive character. Therefore the general philosophy within development has strong Marxist and humanist values which have rarely been challenged by evangelical Christians. (Christian Perspectives in Disaster Management, 1992, p.131). This development has been taking place in Nigeria for many years now, perhaps 30 years. Yet what has been the impact on society and on the poor— the ones it is particularly supposed to benefit? We would argue by the level and extent of poverty that we see in Nigeria (and throughout Africa) that the impact has been very minimal and the methodologies are not up to the challenges that poverty presents.

As Christians it is blatantly clear that the prevailing economic development model is not sustainable, not just, and negates our role as caretakers of the earth. This model is based on Western science and technology and states that the ultimate goal is to increase production and economic growth, which will in turn raise the standard of living and provide a better life for as many as possible. However as we have seen throughout the whole world, increased growth does not necessarily mean a better life for the poor. It does not take place equally and ignores the more qualitative aspects to development.

**Development is about more than meeting economic needs.**

Underlying this approach to development is the assumption that progress is basically materialistic. It ignores the non-economic side of life and the human and cultural values that in some cases are much more advanced than in those countries where this model originates (e.g. caring for the weak, sharing, family loyalty, protecting the land). It assumes that the capitalist monetary system is the vehicle for all progress and ignores the traditional economic systems that have worked for centuries for billions of rural people. When an organisation makes loans to individuals only, rather than to co-operatives or extended families or community organisations, then it contributes to the western individualistic ideal, not the community ideal. Or when organisations running children’s programs sponsor only one child in a family, they demonstrate an acceptance of the western model of development. Sadly, some Christian agencies have assimilated these values and ways of working almost unconsciously. “Unless Christianity is able to separate itself from the western cultural economic milieu, it will continue to worship the false gods of production and prosperity and perpetuate inequitable and inhumane conditions of life for the poor, including poor Christians worldwide” (Elliston, 1989, p.61). Economic growth, modern medicine, agricultural and water development and technologies are good; they are tools and the provision of a good God. But they cannot save. They can enhance life and make people more productive, but they cannot bring about real eternal transformation. Our use of them must be sensitive and appropriate.
The Bible sees development clearly in terms of people and God’s creation. It involves the total person (body, soul, spirit) and the rest of God’s creation. To a Christian, who believes that the overall aim of our approach to men and women is to lead them into an experience of Christ’s saving grace, the model of western economic development sounds very strange indeed. Christian wholistic development has very different aims—ultimately Christians aim to glorify God and serve their fellow people. Development is by its very nature, an activity of the future, an expression of faith and hope. Development is about the future—the difference is the Christian’s, understanding of the future, encompassed in the kingdom of God and the fulfilment of that when Jesus returns again to judge all mankind.

We, as humans, are multi-dimensional—we have psychological (dignity, self-esteem, freedom, participation) needs and spiritual needs as well as physical needs—all need to be met if we are to be whole people.

**The Church and development**

While the church in Nigeria and Africa has been experiencing rapid growth numerically over the past years, there has also been an increase in injustice, oppression, corruption, mismanagement of resources, nepotism, ethnic conflicts and political instability within Nigeria and most other African countries. This had led to increasing levels of poverty affecting increasing numbers of people. Danladi Musa tells us what this means “in other words the church does not seem to be having a positive influence in the society”. (CRUDAN News, No. 29, 1999, p.1.)

However this is not the complete story of the church and its involvement in addressing poverty. For a greater understanding, we need to look at a little of the history behind this.

In the nineteenth century, in many countries and mission fields, wholistic development was practised by evangelical Christians, who saw social programs as a ‘natural outgrowth of the regenerated work of Christ and salvation’ (Smith in Elliston, 1989, p.26). However in the 1900-1930 period almost all social concern by Christians was eliminated. This resulted in what has been termed the ‘Great Reversal’. This was mainly attributed to the rise of the ‘social gospel’ and the increasing stigma in evangelical Christian circles to be associated with it and by inference theological liberalism.

The social gospel emphasised the Christian obligation to respond to people’s physical needs and oppression, with the priority being social action and establishing the kingdom of God on earth through human efforts. The social gospel overlooked sin and the need for repentance and salvation, while emphasising the role of doing good works (Smith in Elliston, 1989, p.26). The reaction to the social gospel was to go to the other extreme, with evangelicals and conservatives emphasising spiritual needs, evangelism and the future heavenly aspects of the kingdom of God. With the social gospel, the divinity of Christ came under attack. In attempting to preserve that divinity,
conservatives lost the balance between the human and divine natures of Jesus. By this point theological conservatives began to dichotomise, that is to rigidly divide, evangelism and social concern, word and deed, spirit and body.

This dichotomy expanded into the core beliefs of Christians and affected how they viewed all of life. For those that emphasised the spiritual side, their primary interest was the salvation of people’s souls. Salvation was viewed mainly in individualistic and personal terms. More emphasis was laid on personal sins than social sins (e.g. structural injustice, oppressive systems). Sin was viewed mainly in a vertical way and therefore an offence against God but hardly (on the horizontal level as) an offence against neighbour or God’s creation. They believed that society will change only when individuals have been converted and then in turn as they change, they will bring about change in the society (this is similar to the economic ‘trickle down’ theory).

For those who emphasised the physical side, the focus was to transform the social structures of society so that the world would be a better place to live in. Sin was perceived mainly as social injustice; personal sin was neglected. They believed that society would only change if it was restructured socially, politically and economically. There was little place for personal salvation or justification.

What has been presented are the two extremes, but the reality of such beliefs and practices is that even today, we all have a tendency towards some of these beliefs and we all lean towards one of the extremes.

The dichotomy was between the spiritual and the physical, and emphasised either Christ’s divinity or his humanity at the expense of the other.

The focus on the divinity of Christ led to inner piety and righteousness being valued the most highly. But in the process Jesus’ humanity was overlooked. Focusing on Christ’s divinity was good and important but unless accompanied by his humanity, his identification with human beings, his hunger, his pain, his compassion, it would remain very unbalanced. The church gets its motivation for humanitarian action and service to others from Christ and his humanness. If this is overlooked then meeting the physical needs of others becomes devalued. This is indeed what happened and we are still reaping the legacy of that today.

The mentality of ‘preach the gospel, win the lost and then all social ills will gradually vanish as the number of believers in society increases’ distorts the gospel and as we have seen here in Africa, does not match the realities that we see. Some call this the ‘trickle down effect’, others have called it the ‘redemption and lift’ theology. It suggests that the answer to poverty lies in people just becoming Christians. We do not want to underestimate the effect of true conversions on society, but alone it cannot respond effectively to the degree of poverty that we face.
In addition to that, poverty is not just caused by individuals living irresponsibly; structural and institutional sin or evil are also a reality. Therefore not just individual effort is needed but responses on a more macro level (seeking to impact a much larger number of people) are necessary to address the structural issues. The gulf between poverty and a satisfactory standard of living for all is just too wide for individuals alone to bridge. Moreover, Christ teaches about both righteousness and justice, commitment to both the King and the Kingdom.

**Dichotomy**

Human beings are whole beings. They cannot be separated into compartments. Yet this is what we have done. These divisions or dichotomies are a major hindrance to finding a genuinely wholistic Christian approach to human transformation. They also explain other dichotomies including evangelism/social action; church/state and even faith/reason. (see Table 1) Richard Foster tells us that “the distinction between priest and psychologist and physician is of recent vintage. Before, the physician of the body, the mind and the spirit were the same person. The ancient Hebrews, in particular, saw persons as a unity, and for them it would be unthinkable to minister to the body without ministering to the spirit and vice-versa” (Foster, 1992, p. 217).

**TABLE 1: The Dichotomies of the modern worldview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revelation &amp; believing</td>
<td>Observation &amp; knowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private &amp; personal</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work for the church</td>
<td>My work for the organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical is a cornerstone of modernity and is deeply embedded in modern economics. Unfortunately it is also embedded in much of the church: at a Sunday service or during our own devotional lives we operate in the spiritual realm; the rest of the week, we operate in the physical realm - unless we have a programme at church of course! “Simply being a Christian does not heal our dichotomous understanding of our world” (Myers, 1999, p.5). The church has largely accepted this separation and yet the gospel suggests there is no separation.
The fact that the Word became flesh explodes the claim that the spiritual and physical can be separated.

If we accept the separation, then we become God-centred in our spiritual lives and human-centred when we think and act in the physical world. For our spiritual work, we turn to the church and to our Bibles; for our development work, we turn to the social sciences. To do so is surely to be no different than ‘secular’ organisations. To do so is not far from seeing money as the only solution to human wrongs. Accepting it means we declare that development is independent of religion. Most of us, if not all, do not believe this to be the case. If we accept it, the Bible can only be heard and be relevant to those things in the left hand column above.

This dichotomy or separation may well be a significant factor in why both the church and the ‘secular’ world have had such limited impact in addressing poverty, despite their efforts.

Poverty - a Christian understanding

Poverty is what both the church and the secular governments and agencies are trying to address and yet our understanding of poverty itself significantly affects the way we respond to it. As Christians we need to look at the Christian understanding of poverty.

According to Strong’s Dictionary of the Bible, there are two Hebrew words used to describe poverty or the poor. ‘Ebyon’ is used to refer to those in need, ‘destitute, lacking or a poor individual’. And ‘Ani’ meaning ‘afflicted, lowly, humble, low in status. ‘Ani’ can also be applied either to an inward feeling or to one who is outwardly afflicted or depressed.

If poverty were simply an economic problem, money would be the way to solve it. But poverty is not only material, it is also cultural, political, social and structural. People are not merely poor because they lack certain things, rather they are poor because of a complex combination of factors that often cannot be separated from each other. Poverty at its heart is relational; it is as a result of relationships that do not work, that are not harmonious, that are not just. Myers talks about it being the absence of shalom, the existence of relationships that work against well being, against life and life abundant (Myers, 1999, p.86).

Poverty from a biblical perspective is broken relationships: with God, with ourselves, with others, with our communities and with our environment. Myers adds another important theme-
at the centre of poverty is the idea of the poor not knowing who they are or the reason for which they were created.

When people believe that they are less than human or cannot contribute to their own well-being or that of others, then their understanding of who they are is marred. Similarly, when the poor believe that they do not have anything to contribute, or that they cannot be productive, their understanding of their vocation is distorted too. “With marred identities and distorted vocations, the poor cannot play their proper relational role in the world, either within themselves or with those around them” (Myers, 1999, p.87). If poverty at its heart is about flawed relationships (and this results in violence, conflict, greed, tribalism, racism and marginalisation), then the solution is to be found in restoring and transforming those relationships.

The Bible tells us that it is sin that distorts these relationships. Sin is the root cause of all distortions, deceptions and domination. If we put God on the sidelines, then we do not treat each other well. If we write God out of the story, then we cannot love God or our neighbour, we only work for the good of ourselves. Therefore, poverty is fundamentally spiritual and thus the solution must also be found in the transforming love, grace and power of God.

The results of poverty are many but fundamentally, it is that people who are poor no longer know who they are (being), nor do they believe that they have a vocation of any value (doing). They are unable to be or to do what they were created for. If we are not to dichotomise our response to poverty, then we must look to meet the needs of the whole person in an integrated way.

**Wholism**

We as human beings need wholism; we need a quality of human life that is total (i.e. includes physical, social and spiritual aspects). As Christian individuals and organisations we should be concerned with people’s total needs, aiming at wholism, promoting the whole person and the whole community. We should be seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially and spiritually. ‘Wholism’ is for the most part an attitude or a state of mind, it is a way of thinking, living and doing. It is an attitude that should permeate all that we are and we do. It is not just a middle ground (between the physical and the spiritual) it is more than that; it is about a radical change in understanding, in worldview and in values.

Wholistic Christians believe that people, collectively and individually, have a vertical relationship with God and that this is best demonstrated in their relationship with each other. They agree that the love of God is inseparable from the love of one’s neighbour. They see sin as both personal and social and the kingdom of God as both here now and yet to come.
The salvation of all souls and bodies is the ultimate aim of wholistic development

Many people have thought that they were being biblical and wholistic by having evangelism or other Christian activities as part of their work. This misses the point of true wholism - it is not about having one programme that addresses people’s spiritual needs and another one that addresses physical needs. We can have a water programme here and a Bible teaching programme here, but the two may never meet. Wholism is about one area (e.g. water) being transformed so that all broken relationships are mended. This means not just enabling a community to have access to water so that they can have life and life abundantly, but also helping the community to see where the water came from, that the source (God) should be thanked and worshipped, and how the water and God’s provision need to be valued, treasured, shared and not wasted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View of the poor</th>
<th>Theological frame</th>
<th>Key biblical texts</th>
<th>Expressions</th>
<th>Why the poor are poor</th>
<th>Christian response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor made in the image of God</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Genesis 1-2</td>
<td>Poor as creative. Poor as a work of art. See God’s hidden glory</td>
<td>The poor lack skills, knowledge &amp; opportunity.</td>
<td>Enable the poor to be fruitful and productive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor as people in rebellion</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Genesis 3 Proverbs</td>
<td>Poor as lazy. Poor make bad choices. God helps those who help themselves.</td>
<td>The poor are in rebellion and their culture keeps them poor.</td>
<td>Challenge the poor with the gospel and encourage them to make better choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor as Christ incarnate</td>
<td>Incarnation</td>
<td>Gospels</td>
<td>Christ in the distressing guise of the poor. What you did for the least of these...</td>
<td>The poor lack love.</td>
<td>Accompany the poor and relieve suffering as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor as God’s favourites</td>
<td>Prophetic</td>
<td>Exodus Prophets</td>
<td>Blessed are the poor for theirs will be the kingdom. Liberation theology</td>
<td>The poor are oppressed by the non-poor. Poverty is structural</td>
<td>Work for justice. Help the poor find their voice and place in socio-political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor as lost souls</td>
<td>Salvation Soteriological</td>
<td>Matthew 28 Acts</td>
<td>The better future lies in eternity. Save as many as we can. The poor will always be with you.</td>
<td>The poor are lost from God, and the kingdom is coming soon</td>
<td>Proclaim the gospel and encourage the poor to respond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Myers, 1999, p.60
Chapter Two: 
THEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

“What if Christians were to believe that the land was for the good of all people alike? Is it possible that this group alone could unleash resources that would amputate starvation from the face of the earth?”

Richard Foster

CREATION

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1) Out of what? Out of nothing (v.2). It is only God who creates something out of nothing. God created the heavens and the earth and then in Genesis 2:7 created mankind. By the second chapter of Genesis God was not just referred to as ‘God’, but as ‘the Lord God’. This describes the relationship he had with all he had just created; He was the Lord.

God ruled over all he had created by being the Lord.
Each side of the triangle is a dimension of Lordship.

At Creation, God also established relationships, which set the norms for the relations between God, people and the earth. All the relationships were designed to glorify the creator (Psalm 19:1).

1 All diagrams from ‘Where God, People and Deeds Connect’, John Steward, 1990 unless stated.
God owns the earth and its resources (physical aspect), God is in relationship with the people (spiritual aspect) and God entrusted the management of the earth (stewardship) to the people (social aspect).

At Creation, God established the foundations for his Kingdom—there were relationships between all he created, there was harmony between all that was created and there was concern for all human needs—spiritual, physical and social. The relationship between God and people was as it should be—perfect. There was constant dialogue between God and the people. God owned the land and put mankind in the Garden of Eden to till and take care of it. Adam and Eve were to be stewards of the land and other resources that God had blessed them with.

God was and is vitally concerned with the well-being of everything that he has created. “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). God assessed or evaluated his creation and saw that the world was suited for the purpose for which it was created. Within God’s creation, each individual being and creature was assigned a place and a purpose, so that all fitted together and gave meaning to the whole. The world was created for everyone, for all—not just a select few. However, the present situation we find ourselves in (whether at a national or global level) where a small percentage of people control and consume the majority of the wealth and resources, is a great distortion of God’s plan.

**Made in the image of God**

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him”, (Genesis 1:27). As human beings we were created in God’s image. We are spiritual beings (1:27) just like God is; we are social beings (2:18-25) just like God is and we are physical beings (2:15-16) like Jesus was.

Being made in God’s image confers on us certain qualities of God including loving, caring for and having authority over the creation, as God does. Also it means by nature that we are spiritual as well as physical beings—unlike the animals who we are told were made by God (2:19) but not in his image. Because we are made in God’s image, our individual beings can never be apart from God himself, or with other human beings. We were made to be in communion with both God and others.
As bearers of God’s image, we are intentionally placed in a system of relationships with God, with self, with community, with others and with our environment. Our identity is to be in those relationships. God not only created us, but he gave us a purpose. At Creation we see that we are to be fruitful, productive stewards of God’s creation (Genesis 2:15); we are to make a contribution that adds value to God’s world. The whole account of creation gives every human being identity (made in the image of God and in good relationships) and a vocation (stewards of God’s creation). Thus as human beings we enjoy dignity and worth— but the source of that dignity is not found in us, it comes from our createdness in God’s image.

We are to respect the position of each person under God and not to think of them as worthless (Romans 12:3-5). This means recognising individual’s talents and gifts as being of intrinsic value and being equal before God. Human value is not to be based on wealth, social status or educational achievement. James (2:1-9) tells us if we do so, we sin.

The Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1979) provides a good summary for us. Question: What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

Answer: It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason and to live in harmony with creation and with God.

Question: What does this mean about our place in the universe?

Answer: It means that the world belongs to its creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and care for it in accordance with God’s purposes.

Stewardship

Stewardship is the biblical term for management. Within the term it also assumes there is a relationship with God and a recognition of God’s ownership of all creation.

Everything we have and handle belongs to God, there are no exceptions

God has placed so many gifts at our disposal in order that we can better serve and please him. These are reasons that should compel us to look after all he has given us properly.

The environment and the land belong to God, not us. In the Old Testament, land was the most important commodity, it was the means by which people provided for their material needs. Within the nation of Israel the land was distributed in more or less equal lots to each tribe and to the family units within that tribe. But the land did not belong to the occupier, it belonged to God (Leviticus 25: 23). The occupier did not have the power to permanently dispose of the land - if necessary they could dispose of it for a limited period.
but in the 50th year, the land was to be returned to the original occupants. By establishing this system for Israel, God not only ensured that all family units would have the means to provide for their material needs but it reminded them that God was still the owner. The land was not to be sold outright ‘because the land is mine’ says God (Leviticus 25: 23). This principle of Jubilee was a masterstroke by God. In one law he underlined the protection and revitalisation of the land, care for the poor, freedom of the oppressed debtor and restoration of relationships.

The situation of Israel is very similar to many rural areas in Africa. If rural people are landless, they are usually weak and can be exploited by big farmers. God does not want a few people to acquire hoards of land or property to the detriment of others, “woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left” (Isaiah 5: 8). The importance of land cannot be underestimated. Our livelihood and our well-being depends on it. Yet we have a doministic and extractive approach to it. We see ourselves as the masters and the owners and thus extract from the environment without replacing. (The United States, which has 6% of the world’s population, uses 30% of the world’s mineral resources each year and consumes 5.7 times the annual per capita energy consumption of the entire developing world. (Elliston, 1989, p.55). Self interest has overtaken stewardship. Christopher Wright in his book ‘Living as the people of God’ points out that

the land and economic issues related to the land were so important that they were actually an indicator of the spirituality of God’s people.

If this is so, what does that mean for us today? Neither should we forget that the people as well as the land belong to God (Leviticus 25: 55) and should therefore be treated accordingly and not exploited or undervalued.

One of the words used to express our stewardship of the earth is that of a caretaker. Yet this can be seen as an inadequate description. Adam and Eve were to take care of and bring order into the whole of creation, to increase and fill the earth. They were to not only watch over creation but to take a more active role, almost to be co-creators. Adam’s first job was to name all the animals and birds, he was continuing the process of creation. “Creation is a continuing process in which humans have a key participation, especially after the disorder and violence that resulted from the rebellion” (Elliston, 1989, p.54). If we viewed ourselves more as co-creators, perhaps we would act more responsibly? God has given us a wonderful and resource rich creation— it is for our use and benefit and we should not be shy to enjoy and benefit from it; but we must do so in an attitude of stewardship and sustainability for all of humanity, which respects and preserves the diversity of life. Too often, human beings think like masters and act as exploiters; the result is destruction.
As human beings, we have been given the ability to reason, to use our imaginations for creativity, all so that we can manage the environment and shape community life. Since the whole of creation is God’s and we, as stewards and co-workers, have been given the custody to use the resources and give account to the owner; there is a lot of responsibility on us which we must ensure we do not abuse or avoid. We have a responsibility to work for the good of the whole human community. Part of the stewardship of our lives is not to be striving for the best and the highest level attainable. To be less is to be unfaithful stewards of the lives entrusted to us. If we can be good faithful stewards, we can help bring harmony, healing and sustainability to many parts of life.

In summary Christopher Wright develops 4 ethical principles from our role as stewards:

- **Sharing of resources** (the resources are gifts to all of humankind, not just to a few).

- **Responsibility to work** (God is productive and therefore it is in our nature to be so too. Work is one of our responsibilities and also to enable others to work so that they can fulfil their purpose too).

- **Expectation of growth** (we are to be fruitful and increase. This applies to the number of people and the means to support them. God has given us the ingenuity and adaptability necessary to make this possible).

- **Shared produce** (we are to enjoy the end product of our work. We are as responsible to God for what we do with what we produce as we are for what he has given us).  
  (Wright, 1983, p.69-70)

Finally, since the earth was given to all, the access to and use of its resources were meant to be shared by all, not a privileged few.
THE FALL

Humankind has chosen, by and large, “to listen to something created rather than to the Creator himself” (Romans 1:25). We have decided not to follow God’s plans, purposes or his ways. The fall which was brought about by disobedience to God’s order, resulted in the breaking of the relationship between God and people and also brought about disharmony in the agricultural and ecological environment—i.e. the land. The Bible makes no distinction between the sins of social injustice and personal immorality (Amos 2: 7). Sin is sin and the condition of our world can only be explained by sin having permeated all aspects of life—economics, politics, culture, families, individuals and even the church as an institution.

When sin came into the world, John Steward tells us 3 ‘ships’ sank—ownership, relationship and stewardship. All 3 relationships that God established at creation were broken.

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, he questioned the right of God to establish the ‘terms of use’ of the world. God’s ownership was questioned. The moment that Adam and Eve became willing to disobey God’s command, the relationship between God and people had been broken. Then when Eve ate the apple, the stewardship relationship was broken—no longer was the earth being managed for the glory of God but for the selfish purposes of mankind.

The effects of the fall are gigantic and still evolving now. Land and resources have become the single greatest cause of strife and war; work has become toilsome (Genesis 3:19) and used as a tool of oppression and a weapon of greed (Ecclesiastes 2: 4-11, 18-23; 4: 4); to some prosperity has become an end in itself (Deuteronomy 8: 12-14; Ecclesiastes 5: 10-17) and then there is
exploitation, discrimination, misunderstanding, debt and disease. Man took control of creation for his own gain and ever since then, the creation has been groaning and waiting to be freed (Romans 8:18-23).

The curse of the fall was that work would be ‘by the sweat of your brow’ (i.e. the results would not be proportionate to the labour put in). Despite all the advances in modern agriculture, the ground still produces weeds, thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17-19). With sin came corruption, suffering and death. Human suffering is directly related to the curse that came upon the earth as the result of sin.

The effect of sin is catastrophic, every part of life has been affected. Godlessness (against God), sensuousness (against our own bodies- 1 Cor. 6:12-20), and selfishness (against others and the environment) are rife as a result. Sin has brought division and struggles between individuals, families and nations. The socio-economic and political problems can be attributed to the curse. Sin is not just individualistic but is connected and runs through nations, tribes, races, families and clans and is lodged in social customs, traditions and institutions. Nothing and nowhere has escaped the curse of the fall. Sin’s effect has pervaded all aspects of human life—spiritually (the relationship between people and God), socially (the relationship between people and nation to nation) and physically (the relationship between people and the environment).

The origin for sinful forms of economic growth is the 10th commandment, the greed of human hearts. Covetousness has replaced contentment; there is never enough; we have become obsessed by growth, production and more. “The effect of the fall was that the desire for growth became excessive for some at the expense of others, and the means of growth became filled with greed, exploitation and injustice.” (Wright, 1983, p. 81). As development workers Proverbs 30: 8-9 should be our daily guide:

“Keep falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say ‘who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal And so dishonour the name of my God”.
RESTORATION

The fall had catastrophic effects but the story of God’s work with the human race is a story of redemption and restoration. To restore means to bring back to an original condition. However, restoration in the Bible was more than bringing back, it also involved increasing, multiplying or improving on the original condition. When Job was restored, he received more than he had at the beginning of his trials. God’s rule and restoration extends to all areas of life—physical, social, spiritual; wherever sin has penetrated, God’s restoration and redemption is needed, and is available. The restoration includes Messianic promises and expectations of eternal salvation where the Messiah has the final victory over the kingdom of darkness.

The restoration work of God can be seen throughout the scriptures, starting in the Old Testament with the flood. God deemed it necessary to destroy the whole human race and start all over with the single family of Noah. This was followed by the covenant with Abram, through whom God intended to establish his Kingdom rule on earth and through him the entire world was to be blessed (Genesis 12: 1-3). When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and out of religious, political and economic bondage, God continued his work of restoration.

God had redeemed and restored a people, a nation and had called them to be a model—the nation of Israel. Israel was to be different, it had its own special origin (Exodus 19: 5-6) and it was to be distinctive religiously and its worship was to be centred on God’s ethics (Exodus 23: 24; Isaiah 1: 13-17). Israel’s society was different to that of Canaan. Pre-Israelite Canaan was a feudal structure, all the land was owned by the king, the power was in the hands of the elite and the subjects worked as virtual slaves. In contrast, Israel had a tribal structure, based on extended family, land owning households. The land was divided as widely as possible into multiple ownership by extended families. This system was based more on equality than hierarchy, demonstrating God’s values.

Israel was to be a model demonstrating God’s holiness through its social life in the redeemed community.

However despite its privileges and God’s provision, Israel was rebellious and stubborn to God’s plan. Instead of following God’s ways they made futile attempts at self-restoration—they wanted to do it themselves. The result was idolatry, corruption, injustice and oppression of the poor.

God gave Israel a multitude of laws and rules to be found throughout Deuteronomy and Leviticus. They were God’s gift of love to help his people understand how to live in the land as a community. The laws were to help them. We tell our children ‘don’t touch the pan on the fire’ not because we are legalists, but because the principle behind the rule is very helpful to life—
hot pans burn! The laws were meant to maintain shalom in the community of Israel and to open up their land to their brothers, the poor and the needy (Deuteronomy 15: 11). The laws were intended to establish and preserve religious, social, political and economic well being. Included in these laws were ones to preserve the environment, and also a safeguard against disasters so that all families would not be deprived of the resources to provide for themselves in future generations (Leviticus 25). Israel had just been redeemed from their exploitation in Egypt (the most prosperous, powerful and ‘scientific’ nation of that day) and the laws were to prevent that exploitation happening again and to keep them from impersonating Egypt by exploiting others or even themselves. Many of the laws were based on the principle of not taking advantage of others (Leviticus 25: 17).

The laws had special concern for the poor. They sought to ensure equity through redistribution of wealth and land (Deuteronomy 14: 28-15: 11), not accumulating land, a structured mechanism to promote justice (Leviticus 25), and self-help and development of individuals (Leviticus 19: 9-10).

Behind each of the laws God established for Israel, lay practical principles of stewardship. They called the people into action based on a relationship with God, while reminding them of his ownership over all that they had. The laws can be divided into 3 different types:

- **Theological** - laws showing God’s call and character
- **Social** - laws showing how to be a nation that is both blessed and a blessing
- **Physical** - laws showing what it meant to be God’s people.

(Steward, 1990, p. 6).

The well-known verse of Micah 6: 8 “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”, draws out these principles:

- Acting justly is recognising God’s ownership
- Loving mercy is practicing stewardship
- Walking humbly with God is living in a right relationship with God.

God’s laws focused on the person in relationship to the community. Sin was not just an offence against God but also an offence against each other and the community.

Israel was different but didn’t like being different—Israel was self sufficient with strong family ties, they had no king and no need of a king but the surrounding nations all had kings. So the people clamoured for a king during Samuel’s time. God granted them a king but with a warning of what would happen. The Monarchy was ushered in. During the monarchy the powerful used their offices to get what they could for themselves, the kings bought land
(against Mosaic stipulations), people then had to borrow money to buy land, high interest was charged and debt became common place. Corruption was rampant and landowners exploited the poor by paying them low wages and selling food to them at inflated prices. There may have been a strong government and a sound economic system but the shalom was broken, man had attempted to establish a better system than God's.

The prophets condemned the Monarchy for taking the land that God had promised to the people for their own use. They accused the people of breaking God’s covenant, which ensured shalom. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Micah extensively condemned the new system revealing just how bad and oppressive things had become. The only hope the prophets saw was if Israel lived up to the principles established by God. The alternative was another exile - where they would (and did) become slaves to a people who did not even know God. The prophets could see that Israel lacked the will and power to be loyal to God and so started to anticipate the one who would bring true and eternal restoration (Isaiah 61, Ezekiel 37). The coming Messiah, the Prince of Shalom would restore Israel and would reverse the curse of the fall and restore relationships - this was to be the true restoration.

Steward sums up the ethics of the Old Testament by returning to the creation triangle depicting God, the people (Israel) and the land. He talks of 3 interrelated factors.

The ethics are:

: **related to God**, they reflect his character, his will, his actions and purposes

: **primarily community orientated** - God called a whole society to be his people. The social emphasis of Israel’s call was to be a pattern and a model of redemption

: **expressed in the daily life of the people**, especially in the economic issues of the division, tenure and use of the land. Economics cannot be separated from the theology of the land.

(Steward, 1990, p. 44)
JESUS

Through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross, the curse is reversed as he took the curse himself in order to redeem the whole human race. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the bruised relationships are healed and all barriers removed (Isaiah 61: 1-3). Christ’s redemption is complete and total, but we will not see the full consummation of this redemption until the Second Coming. Colossians 1: 20 tells us that Christ came “to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven”. ‘Christ brought a cosmic salvation, not an individualistic redemption of souls nor just a reconciliation of enemies’ (Elliston, 1989, p. 68).

Jesus preached the kingdom of God and demonstrated it through good works, healing and casting out of demons to show that it had arrived. Jesus is the embodiment of God’s kingdom.

“Jesus is the Kingdom of God taking sandals and walking” (Jones, 1972, p.34).

During his time on earth Jesus continued to affirm the relationships established by God at creation. Jesus when conquering demons, healing the sick or stilling the storm was showing his authority over creation (ownership). When calling the rich to leave their wealth or give it to the poor, or when calling his disciples to pay taxes, was focusing on their management of entrusted possessions (stewardship). And when Jesus spoke of praying in the Father’s name, not living by bread alone, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit or of repentance, he was talking of the connection we have with God (relationship).

Jesus’ ministry began with the declaration in the Nazareth synagogue quoting from Isaiah 61: 1-2, proclaiming freedom for the prisoners, the oppressed and recovery of sight for the blind. This passage has been spiritualised by many to mean giving sight to those who are spiritually blind and liberating those in bondage to evil. However, this interpretation does not consider the Old Testament background of the year of Jubilee - the year that slaves were to be freed, debts cancelled and the land returned to its owners. The declaration in Nazareth was of spiritual, social and physical good news. Jesus was not primarily a teacher, a healer or an evangelist. He did all these and more, often at the same time. He did not concentrate on meeting the needs of just one aspect of life and leave the others. He met the needs of the whole person. He had a wholistic approach and attitude.

Paul Rees tells us there was nothing stereotyped in the way Jesus healed people. “He would heal without mention of forgiveness of sins. Or he would heal and forgive. Or he would forgive and heal. There was no set format. Always his concern was the person, the whole person. Given such a concern, healing a body can be as spiritual as forgiveness of sins. Forgiving sins can be as practical as healing a body” (Steward, 1990, p.1). Jesus started with
people’s needs, he did not start by talking about what he perceived to be the problem. Jesus responded to people on the basis of what they disclosed about their own condition or situation. He was flexible in his approach and targeted his response, be it nurture, teaching or healing, to the point of people’s needs (for example: the Samaritan woman at the well). He was flexible, yet he always responded out of who he was and what he represented. In Luke 5: 17-26, Jesus healed a paralysed man. Everyone there was expecting Jesus to cure his body but instead he went to the heart of another problem - his spiritual illness, his sin. For Jesus both body and spirit are important and there is no distinction between them.

Not only were Jesus’ healings wholistic, but so was his teaching and preaching. He emphasised the fact that our lifestyle must be consistent with our inner disposition. His teaching was also contextual, relevant to the culture of the people of the day. He was relevant, yet when the culture was contrary to his teaching he confronted it. Jesus’ healings and even his miracles usually have a pastoral point to them. The miracle was not normally the end in itself, it usually just provided an impulse towards something more eternal - this is wholism. In the healing at the Bethesda pool, Jesus in his healing of the disabled man addressed the issues of the Sabbath, remission of sin and inner change as well as physical healing (John 5: 1-14).

In his parables (the Rich Farmer- Luke 12; the Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16; the Rich Ruler - Luke 19), Jesus made it clear that the people have betrayed their stewardship through the neglect of the poor and the abuse of power over the lives of fellow human beings. The parables convey Kingdom values including giving back hope and dignity to those who have lost it especially the poor, women and the spiritually outcast.

Richard Foster describes Jesus as a social revolutionary. “When he healed the sick he did more than cure diseases: he healed the sickness in a society that would cast these people aside. When he pronounced his beatitudes upon the people, he was taking up those classes and categories that society deemed to be unblessed and unblessable” (Foster, 1992, p. 265).
NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament the relationship between God, the people and the earth changes a little. Instead of God having a relationship with Israel, God now has a relationship with his church - the fellowship of believers worldwide. The church -the people of God are the New Testament equivalent of Israel - the Old Testament people of God.

Land is not referred to with theological significance in the New Testament. Land as a holy place ceases to have relevance, instead koinonia takes its place. Koinonia can perhaps be better described as fellowship with an emphasis on sharing. It includes the idea of cost, as well as people interacting. The cost is giving up the right of personal ownership, so that whoever has need may benefit. Koinonia words, used in the New Testament relate predominantly to social and economic relationships between Christians – it is a practical and often costly sharing. This fellowship in the New Testament sense fulfils the theological and ethical functions for the Christian that possession of land did for the Israelites. This koinonia or fellowship “are shared experiences calling for unselfishness with the same concern for the poor and needy, and the same ideal of equality among God’s people.” (Steward, 1990, p. 37).

The Christian church is the spiritual heir and continuation of Old Testament Israel. The 3 dimensions (spiritual, social and physical) remain:

Spiritually, God gives birth to the church through the work of Christ in salvation.
Socially, the church is the messianic community and a continuation of God’s Old Testament people.
Physically, it is no longer the land that is significant. Instead, Christ makes holy any place where believers are, especially when they share in meeting needs.

(Steward, 1990, p. 8)
At the fall 3 ships sank, through the redemption of Jesus, those 3 ships have been restored and are continuing to shape the lives of God’s people.

Ownership (step 1): When we come into a relationship with God through faith in Jesus, God gives us the creation to enjoy and use. When we forget that he is the owner of everything, we start to believe that we gain our possessions by our own effort. This is very dangerous and should be guarded against.

Stewardship (step 2): As we respect and are grateful to God, we are unselfish in our resources. He has entrusted some of them to us to meet the needs of others, as well as our own. We are called to be unselfish, to share, to give away, to offer whatever and whenever others lack.

Relationship (step 3): We thank God for his grace and provision and listen to what he has to say to us. We can hear him because we are not fighting amongst ourselves and no one is preoccupied because they lack anything.
GOD AND THE POOR

There is a biblical mandate for assisting the poor and vulnerable in society. This comes from God’s special provision to protect the weak in the Law given to Moses (Deuteronomy 27: 19), the outcry of the prophets and the teachings of Jesus Christ. This concern for the poor can be traced throughout the Bible. God made it clear that he is on the side of the defenceless poor and will defend them (Psalm 82: 3-4), he condemned the leaders and elders for plundering the poor (Isaiah 3: 14-15) and for extortion and robbery (Ezekiel 18: 12) and he spoke through Amos accusing Israel of oppressing the poor and of injustice. In Mary’s Magnificat, (Luke 1: 46-53), she sees the role of the Messiah as one which will exalt the lowly, feed the hungry and correct injustices perpetrated by the rich. Integrated into God’s concern for the poor is his love for justice. The Lord maintains the cause of the afflicted and executes justice for the needy (Psalm 140: 12). God is pained by the sight of those who suffer malnutrition and starvation. He is pained by the suffering of those whose neck is under the oppressors boot. He is pained by the suffering of foreigners and widows and orphans deprived of protection by the law. “God loves the 99 along with the 1, but he suffers over the plight of that one” (Wolterstorff, 1986, p. 23).

The early church followed Christ in re-affirming the concern for the poor found in the Old Testament. Peter and Paul differed in their opinion on many issues, but on this issue they were in agreement (Galatians 2: 10). James continued by teaching respect to the poor (James 2:1-7) and practical help (James 2: 14-17) and to care for widows and orphans (1: 27). “No story in which the poor are forgotten, ignored or left to their own devices is consistent with the biblical story. If the poor are forgotten, God will be forgotten too. Loving God and loving neighbour are twin injunctions of the same command” (Myers, 1999, p.55).

The poor are neither condemned nor praised for their situation. In all cases the Bible commands equal treatment of both the poor and the rich (Leviticus 19: 15). Deuteronomy 15: 11 tells us ‘there will always be poor people in the land’ and this has sometimes been used as an excuse by Christians for inaction. Obedience to God and his commands would eliminate all poverty; however Moses foresaw that the Israelites (and every nation since) would fail to obey God and therefore declared that ‘the poor would always be with you’. The poor themselves are not to be lazy (Proverbs 10: 4,5); the rich should neither oppress them but instead be merciful (Proverbs 14: 20-31), because the Lord made both the rich and the poor (Proverbs 22: 2). God’s identification with the poor can be summed up in Proverbs 14: 31

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God”.
Chapter Three:
SHALOM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33

The Kingdom of God, also called the Kingdom of Heaven, means the ‘reign of God’ or God’s sovereign rule in the entire universe.

Shalom

The Kingdom of God is best described by the word ‘Shalom’ in the Old Testament. Shalom has various meanings and does not merely mean peace in terms of the absence of strife or conflict. Its meanings include: wholeness, without injury, undividedness, well-being, a satisfactory condition, bodily health, peace, justice, social harmony equity, human dignity, mutuality and fulfilment. Wolterstorff describes shalom with the word ‘flourishing’, that being what God desires for his human creatures. (Wolterstorff, 1986, p. 23).

Jakonda sees shalom in terms of freedom, ‘it is freedom from fear, harm (injustice, disorders, oppression), freedom from want’. Fundamentally, shalom is about just, peaceful, harmonious and enjoyable relationships with each other, ourselves, our environment and God. Shalom is only possible if there is a 3-way relationship of a person/community to God, each other and the environment. Therefore, Wolterstorff defines shalom as ‘the human dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature’. He then cites Isaiah 11: 6-8 where the wolf dwells with the lamb as a sample of shalom. ‘To dwell in shalom is to enjoy living with one’s fellows, to enjoy living with oneself’ (quoted in Elliston, 1989, p. 67).

Shalom is personal in that it seeks to bring life in all its fullness to each individual but it is also communal, recognising that the abundance of creation is destined for everyone and that the environment and other people are necessary for the well being of any people.

There can be no shalom without justice, it is the basis of shalom.

Shalom means just relationships (living justly and experiencing justice), harmonious relationships and enjoyable relationships. “Justice, harmony and enjoyment of God, self, others and nature; that is the shalom that Jesus brings, the peace that passes all understanding”, Wolterstorff tells us (quoted in Myers, 1999, p. 51).

Jesus captured the concept of shalom when he described his mission in John 10: 10 as ‘I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.’ Other
versions talk of ‘life and life abundantly’. Life abundant is about living, not simply having. Connected to that, shalom includes striving for the prosperity of all (this does not mean amassing wealth or material goods for individual pleasure). This should be the basis for Christian development work. Because of the biblical concept of shalom we can have hope and an optimistic vision for the future and work towards an alternative human society. Shalom recognises that human beings have a variety of needs—physical, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, social, economic and political—and that the fullness of life can only come when all these needs are satisfied.

**Characteristics of the Kingdom**

God’s kingdom is characterised by love, justice, freedom, peace and hope. It is the realm of love and love that is expressed in serving others. It enters into the present bringing hope for the future. When God is not seen as the owner and people as the stewards, development can result in injustice, oppression of the poor and dominance of one group over another. Christian values and thoughts are needed desperately within development and should run like a thread through the whole process of Christian development work.

**The Kingdom of God has been called an upside down kingdom.**

In the kingdom of God what we believe to be the natural order of things is reversed; the kingdom is to be peopled by those we consider today as powerless: the poor (Luke 6:20), the meek and the persecuted (Matthew 5:5,10). There may be other kingdoms rivalling the kingdom of God now, but come the end of time, the only kingdom standing will be that of the broken and humiliated Christ.

The New Testament presents the kingdom of God as inverting the social norms of the day. It says that leaders must be servants, not those who are served. Jesus demonstrated this by washing his disciples feet. To enter the Kingdom, we must be like a child. All citizens of the Kingdom are equal (no matter how or when they entered it). The least is the greatest. Repentance brings the immoral into the Kingdom, often while the ‘religious’ miss the heavenly banquet. These are the values of God’s kingdom.

“A voice of one calling:  
In the desert prepare the way for the Lord;  
Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be raised up,  
Every mountain and hill made low;  
The rough ground shall become level,  
The rugged places a plain.”  
Isaiah 40: 3-4
What a picture of the kingdom of God— a kingdom where valleys are filled and mountains are brought low; a level kingdom, a kingdom of equality. Socially the status quo is upset— the position at the top of the pyramid occupied by the rich and mighty is brought low, while the poor, oppressed and hungry are elevated. Socially, Israelite society (and most societies throughout the modern world today) was characterised by mountains and valleys— the rich, educated and powerful are on the mountains and have more influence, prestige and power than those in the valley. Such stratifications are accepted and taken for granted; as children grow up, the process of socialisation teaches them this is the way things are and should be. It is reinforced by the media. The kingdom of God is different and one of our roles as Christians is to extend the kingdom of God within our society.

Equality is at the heart of the Kingdom. When Paul instructed the Corinthian church to provide for some in the church in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8: 13-15) the thrust of Paul’s argument was quite simply— it was a matter of equality. Sharing what you have is part of being in the Kingdom. James had to admonish the brothers who claimed faith yet were unwilling to show it through sharing (James 2: 15-16). The church is a worldwide church and the needs are many— the spirit of sharing within the Kingdom is a message that needs to be heard.

The Kingdom of God is a present reality and yet has a future perspective.

People enter the kingdom of God here on earth and become its members. The New Testament talks of it having ‘already come’ and ‘yet to come’; the Kingdom is present with us but its final consummation will be when Jesus’ returns. When we pray ‘your kingdom come’ in the Lord’s prayer, we are not just praying for a distant reign of God, but also for the realisation of the Kingdom in all aspects of our lives here and now. We cannot bring the Kingdom fully now, yet we are to be committed to work for its coming. We have to have the uniquely Christian stance of living and working in the sinful here and now, while believing in the coming of the sinless Kingdom in the future. It allows for a dual emphasis— trusting in the promise of Christ’s future return, while not abdicating our responsibility here either. Because of this nature of the Kingdom, God is asking us not necessarily to be successful, just to be obedient.

When Jesus sent the 12 disciples out on their first mission (Matthew 10: 5) he told them ‘go preach this message: The kingdom of heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons’ (v. 7-8). They were to take care of their physical and emotional needs as a manifestation of the Kingdom that had drawn near. Christ’s mission challenged the established power structures and yet was built on ‘strength through weakness’. “He took the weak, the nobody’s, the uncouth peasant poor and formed them into followers that shook the foundations of the Roman Empire through a ministry of compassion and reconciliation” (Elliston, 1989, p. 70).
The Kingdom of the Church

God is the King of the Kingdom and he reigns through his will, word and works. His authority to rule is rooted in his pre-existence. E. Stanley Jones says that the Kingdom is the Father’s, while Jesus is the embodiment of the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the first fruit of the Kingdom, the assurance that there is more to come, and the one who helps us discover the truth and the fullness of the Kingdom.

The triune God and the Church:

![Diagram showing the relationships between God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church.]

The church as the visible body of Christ is represented by redeemed men and women in local churches. The church is the people of the Kingdom, but not the Kingdom itself. The Kingdom creates the church as illustrated by Jesus’ parable of the net that draws all types of fish (Matthew 13: 47-50). The church is now the custodian to the Kingdom (instead of Israel). Therefore there can be no Kingdom without the church and no church without the Kingdom, although they do remain two distinguishable concepts, the rule of God and the fellowship of men (Ladd, 1991, p.119 quoted by Jakonda). The church or the Kingdom community as some have called it, imperfect as it is, presents the world with an alternative lifestyle based on Kingdom values - love, joy, peace, justice and righteousness. The church becomes the salt and light and yeast of society. This involves challenging the status quo in social, economic, political and even religious spheres where the issues of justice are neglected. The church, like Jesus, becomes a threat to the unjust, oppressive power systems of the rulers, but will not use force to establish the Kingdom (John 18: 36). The church through its lifestyle is to be the hope of God for the world.
Complete Transformation

The pinnacle of the Kingdom, the church and humankind will be accomplished when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and there is true shalom, where all creation will enjoy peace, harmony, justice, love, truth, joy, freedom and well-being. This is when complete transformation will take place. Isaiah 65: 17-25 gives us the picture of the perfect community— the new heaven and the new earth, a happy people whom God is also happy with. It will be a shalamic community, where God reigns and where the politics, the economics, the environment, the society and the spiritual life of people work fully according to God’s design.

The triangular representation of God’s redemption is complete only with the Second Coming.

In the meantime, while we wait for those glorious final days, we must remember that God is at work here and now too. The kingdom of God can bring about renewal of relationships, restoration of home and family lives, establishing of more just circumstances. It can bring justice and hope for the poor, oppressed and hopeless. All of us within the of world development and communities can by God’s grace, participate in bringing the kingdom of God to bear on the world’s needs. The potential of the kingdom of God is massive; God is a God who wants to heal, to restore, to set free all men and women to live godly, healthy lives.

33
God's Redeeming Work in Scripture

**CREATION**
- Flood
- Abraham
- Law
- Prophets

**FALL**
- Satan established his kingdom of darkness (sin)
- rebellion, corruption
- injustice, disease and poverty

**JESUS**
- casting out of demons
- healing the sick
- feeding the hungry
- restoring self worth
- Shalom
- Humanity Redeemed
- The New Creation

**THE CHURCH**

**THE VISION**
- Consummation of the Kingdom
- The Kingdom of God

**Restoration**

A perfect world. Provision made for both evangelistic and cultural mandates.

To continue the work of Jesus reflecting the Kingdom values by **declaration** and **demonstration**
Adapted from: Joe Lamigo, CRWRC, 1997
Word, Deed and Sign

Myers talks of the gospel message being presented in the form of a pyramid.

![Pyramid Diagram](image)

(Adapted from Myers, 1999, p.54)

The top of the pyramid is being with Jesus, life in and with the living Lord. This relationship frames all that lies below. Each of the corners of the pyramid are one aspect of the gospel: preaching (the gospel as word), healing (the gospel as deed) and casting out (the gospel as sign).

Each of these can be developed:

- **Gospel as word**, includes teaching, preaching and the doing of theology.
- **Gospel as deed**, means working for the physical, social and psychological well-being of the world that belongs to God.
- **Gospel as sign**, means signs and wonders, those things that only God can do, as well as the things that the church does as a living sign of the Kingdom.

The metaphor of a pyramid is helpful as you cannot break off a corner and still claim to have a pyramid. It reminds us that for the gospel to be the gospel - all 4 aspects: life, deed, word and sign have to be present. They are inseparable, so too is the holistic nature of the gospel. Also each corner is a place you can start from to share the gospel; each emphasises one part of the good news of the Kingdom. God can start to work his grace into people from any of the corners. But we must not finish there. Deeds are a wonderful way of showing Christian love, but alone cannot bring anyone into the Kingdom. Words witness to the Kingdom and declare the truth of God but only paint the outline of the picture. Signs are an encounter with God’s power but on their own are not enough for people to submit to the call of discipleship.

We must make sure we do not just show one dimension but the whole gospel. Through word, we need to say what the gospel story is and invite others to make it their story. Through deed, we are engaged with the world and seeking to make it more for life and the enjoyment of life. Through
signs (healings, miracles, raising of the dead), we point to the reality of the Kingdom here and now and the anticipation of the final consummation of the Kingdom. Signs of the Kingdom are samples, and a sample (e.g. of cloth) indicates qualities of the whole cloth from which it has been cut.

**The church is to be a sign of the Kingdom and a sample of what is to come.**

God’s story is about more than saving souls. The biblical account has a more wholistic view of salvation, seeking the restoration of our relationships with God, each other and creation. Personal salvation through faith in Christ is the centre of God’s concern, but by no means the limit of God’s concern. The story in the Bible is a story of God’s concern for people as productive stewards living in just and peaceful relationships alongside God’s concern for people living in right relationship with him.

**The other kingdom**

Satan is not happy with the kingdom of God and so has established an opposing kingdom, the kingdom of darkness. All evil spirits reside here and bring about rebellion, injustice and corruption and seek to displace God as the Supreme Being of worship and put self and idols in his place. Without a doctrine of principalities and powers, it is unclear why good people cannot make social institutions do what they were set up to do. Furthermore, there is no other way of accounting for the destructive behaviours and bad choices of both the poor and the non-poor.

The characteristics of Satan’s kingdom are the opposite of shalom - war, hunger, exploitation, poverty, oppression, discrimination, inequity and division. Some more specific modern day signs include violence against women, devastation of the environment, concentration of political power by a small elite, excessive consumerism and the threatened extinction of indigenous peoples. This unnatural order is in contradiction to God’s purpose for humanity, which commands what is good and forbids what is evil. The kingdom of God is working to bring an end to the kingdom of darkness, “God desires to destroy all evil and bring an end to every grief that plagues humankind” (Glasser, 1985). The kingdom of God is in conflict with Satan and his kingdom. As members of the kingdom of God, we should be penetrating the kingdom of the world; we cannot expect that accepting Jesus as our personal saviour will mean that all problems will go away. Our membership demands of us a response.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>SECULAR</th>
<th>WHOLISTIC</th>
<th>FUNDAMENTALIST (Conservative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTHROPOLOGY</td>
<td>Personal and communal. African societies almost always communal.</td>
<td>Balance of personal and communal.</td>
<td>People are individuals; body/soul dichotomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOSPEL AND SALVATION</td>
<td>Good news about the possibility of social progress and justice and peace in society</td>
<td>Good news of the kingdom of God. Justification of individuals who are redeemed to the kingdom of God and bring kingdom values to society</td>
<td>Salvation of individual souls through justification and regeneration of individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE OF THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS</td>
<td>Reason and human experience</td>
<td>Bible - contextualised</td>
<td>Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECT OF EVANGELISM</td>
<td>Changing social structures through politics and social action</td>
<td>Change individuals and society through words and deeds of mercy and justice</td>
<td>Individuals are changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEWARDSHIP</td>
<td>Give a reasonable portion of your wealth to causes</td>
<td>Resources are to be given for the building of the</td>
<td>Give tithes and the rest of your wealth is for you to use as you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW IS SOCIETY CHANGED?</td>
<td>Restructuring the society</td>
<td>Through conversion of individuals and the reconstructing of societal institutions</td>
<td>Converted individuals are salt and light of the society</td>
</tr>
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<td>LOCUS OF GOD’S ACTIVITY</td>
<td>Only the world</td>
<td>Primarily in the church to the world</td>
<td>Primarily the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINGDOM OF GOD</td>
<td>Here in the world</td>
<td>Now and to come</td>
<td>In the last days and only in heaven.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Four: 
EVANGELISM OR SOCIAL ACTION?

“If our vision for the poor is anything less than to come to know Jesus, then surely we are short-changing the poor?”

Dewi Hughes

God in the flesh thought he could spare, or rather ought to spare, a great deal of his potential preaching time and devote it to meeting the needs of people.”

Ronald Sider

Dichotomy

Many people and organisations have debated this question and the priority between the two for years. For the purposes of this chapter, we see social action/development as dealing with people’s ‘physical’ needs and evangelism as dealing with ‘spiritual’ needs. The fact that this subject has been a debate at all, let alone for so long, is testimony to the fact that we have followed modernity’s division between the spiritual and physical; we have neatly carved people up into physical and spiritual beings. Social action has been seen as a lesser priority, because it has been seen as something that ‘man’ can do by himself, whereas evangelism is seen as something ‘spiritual’. The question that has to be asked is: is social action not as dependent on God’s grace as evangelism? However as one organisation working with World Vision found “try as we might we could not bring these two together, nor could we abandon one for the other. The Bible is clear about the demands on us to do both” (Cormack, 1991, p.17).

Many of us see that sin is individualistic, it is a revolt against God and what we need is purification of that sin. Yet the impact of the Fall is on both the individual and the social system and so the impact of the gospel must be on both. If the Bible is just used for personal discipleship, worship and nurturing of the soul, it subconsciously prevents the Bible from speaking to the material world.

If we only promote and practice one ‘wing’ of the gospel, it is like an eagle attempting to fly with only one wing.

When we separate the spiritual from the physical, not only do we separate evangelism from development and social action but we separate gospel-as-word from gospel-as-deed and provide no home for gospel-as-sign.

Words clarify the meaning of deeds.
Deeds verify the meaning of words.
Signs announce the presence and power of God, the true source of all good deeds and the author of the only words that bring life in its fullness.

If we reduce the gospel just to the spiritual, then we ignore the social order and the society we live in. To do so is in effect to leave the social order to Satan. The social, economic and political areas of life are left unredeemed and into this vacuum come kingdoms or ideologies seductively and deceptively promising a better future - yet they are all shakeable kingdoms.

God is wholistic

Our creation in the image of God means that we as human beings are spiritual and physical beings. The incarnation shows us how seriously God takes the material world. “The incarnation smashes any argument that God is only concerned for the spiritual realm and that the material is somehow evil or unworthy of the church’s attention. God embodied himself, his voice was heard, real people were healed, a dead man lived again ...” (Myers, 1999, p. 46). As we saw in Colossians 1: 20, Jesus’ death, as well as his birth, was for every part of life. It was not for men and women only, but for the whole of creation. True religion Isaiah 58 tells us is releasing men and women from the bondage of sin and responding to oppression and injustice. Whether we are planting churches or involved in a ministry of compassion, a truly wholistic approach rooted in biblical truth is essential.

The gospel provides a wholistic approach to meeting the needs of all humanity. We are living in a world of increasing struggle for most people on earth, a struggle against grinding poverty that can become overwhelming. These same people deserve to know the God who cares and loves them. “Authentic love for neighbour will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person” (Sine, 1987, p. 55) wrote Tom Sine in the Mustard Seed Conspiracy. Christians believe that the starting point for anyone’s progress is to come confessing their sins to a loving, forgiving Father. As a result the motivation of greed is replaced with one of love for one’s neighbour.

We are to work with Jesus towards the redemption of all created things. Jesus therefore must be central in all our efforts to improve the lives of our fellow people. We must ask ourselves ‘are we busy trying to work with Jesus towards the fulfilment of God’s purpose for mankind and for the whole of creation?’ (Batchelor, 1992, p.155). Myers sums up what it means to be wholistic. “If there is no work directed at the spiritual or value change; no work involving the church; no mention of meaning, discovery, identity and vocation, then one should be concerned that the program is not wholistic” (Myers, 1999, p.135).

Evangelism

As CRUDAN, we believe that the goal of evangelism is to see men and women commit themselves to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and become responsible members of Christian churches.

The central aim of the Great Commission is to make disciples. Not to get converts, but to make
disciples – this includes practicing love and righteousness which by definition involves upholding justice.

“The tendency to narrow mission down to personal, inward, spiritual and heavenly concerns makes a travesty of the gospel, yet this tendency is not far from much of modern evangelism” (Elliston, 1989, p. 175). When discipleship is treated solely as a spiritual activity, we tend to locate discipleship in the church. By doing this we reduce discipleship to developing one’s relationship with God, with little or no attention to developing one’s relationship with community and the environment. If we make this mental separation and reduce prayer, reading the Bible and worship to spiritual activities, we obscure their relevance to working and acting in the ‘real’ world. Also if we do this, we have trouble seeing how the Bible speaks to all parts of life including politics, economics, race and culture. The goal of discipling is surely to discover God and our true identity and our true vocation.

The ‘go and tell’ frame of evangelism may be appropriate for a church or a traditional mission agency, but it is not a good fit for a development agency—by nature the method is anti-developmental. It challenges the idea that the community is the owner of its own development. It works against the notion of beginning where the community is and helping it find the answers to its own questions. The initiative is with the outsider, the position of power and control is external. Since we don’t do ‘go and tell’ development, we should do what we can to avoid ‘go and tell’ evangelism. (Myers, 1999, p. 209).

Instead we can proclaim the gospel, more in response to questions provoked by the activity of God in a community. When there is an action that demands an explanation, the gospel is the explanation (see Acts 3: 12-13; 6: 8-10). Myers continues by viewing evangelism as the work God does through the Christian community that provokes questions to which the Good News is the answer. Our witness should be in the “framework of living and doing our development work in a way that evokes questions to which the gospel is the answer”. (Myers, 1999, p. 210). For these reasons, some people within development prefer to use the phrase ‘Christian witness’ as opposed to evangelism. It distances itself from the stereotypical images of evangelism, but includes the idea of proclamation without being limiting to it.

**Social Action/ Development**

Development in the Christian sense starts with people and keeps its focus on people. It is done in love and not out of a sense of duty. It is done as a result of faith in God through Jesus. It means being co-workers with God in the work of restoration. Social action has been confused with partisan politics in the past; while it is not to be, it does strive to effect social and political changes and this means action may be necessary. Jakonda defines social action as ‘a process where people are helped to empower themselves toward achieving social justice. It looks beyond poverty and injustice to the causes of the poverty or unjust structures. It aims at transforming the
economic, political and social systems that cause injustice or oppression. It is only through social action that one can achieve sustainable development’

Social action is a important part of development as development must include deliverance from all that prevents a person from reaching his or her potential in the sight of God. It includes freedom from bondage of jealously and fear. To incorporate social action, evangelism, self-reliance and empowerment— all aspects of Christian development, some use the term ‘Transformational Development’ to encompass them all.

Without disclosure of the Good News, development has not taken place. Development requires that we be tremendously concerned about the spiritual dimension.

**There are few greater horrors than development, and the material progress that goes with it, without Christ.**

Without Christ it becomes a matter of self-interest and greed. The challenge Christians in development have is to help people to raise their living standards without pushing them into the snare of materialism. If the motivation for change is a Christian one, as opposed to self-interest and greed, it is possible. Our first reason for doing things better is to glorify God; the chief incentive for preventing disease is obedience to God who commands that we treat our bodies as a temple.

However, meeting material needs is important. We can offer what we can to those in material need, not because it is their ultimate or only need, but because Christian love demands it. We cannot call people to a ‘new life in Christ’ unless we are willing to demonstrate that same new life flowing from what we do. Great care must be taken to ensure that our development work or our social concern is not used as a bait for evangelism. The danger here is that we will produce ‘rice Christians’— people who are attracted to the Christian faith for the benefits they can receive and not because of any true faith in God. Jesus did not make any of his healings or miracles a bait for evangelism, neither should we. Carl F.H. Henry argues that: “the primary reason for social involvement ought not to be an indirect evangelistic ploy, but rather a straightforward demonstration of God’s justice in the world”. (Henry, 1971 quoted in Elliston, 1989, p.123). There is biblical justification for doing good whether or not men and women are brought to faith in Christ as a result of it.

**Wholistic**

Ultimately, the church is of no value to the poor if it tells them only the truth that allows them to become less poor. The church is good news when it contributes to relationships being healed and to the emergence of truth, justice, peace and righteousness. If Christians are not living and sharing the whole gospel for the whole person, then the message of the gospel is truncated and flawed. David Bosch says “our concept of salvation must include both the personal spiritual aspect and also the social concrete
aspect, and it must emphasise neither to the detriment of the other. We must reject a gospel that is ultimately spiritualised to such an extent that it does not touch reality, but also one that has been secularised to the point that there is no call to repentance and no relationship with God above. (Bosch, 1987, quoted by Elliston, 1989, p.172). If we can be wholistic and carry all out together then the church will have a more positive influence in the society.

Evangelism and development are incredibly similar at their core and can support each other. If the goal of evangelism is to make disciples who communicate Christ’s love to others, then Christian development is a powerful means of evangelism. If evangelisation should always attempt to begin at a point of people’s needs, then Christian development is the primary form of biblical evangelism. (Cormack, 1991, p.18). The only difference between the goals for transformational development and the goals for Christian witness, Myers tells us, is that the latter focuses more but not exclusively on our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, while the goals of development focus more, but not exclusively, on the other four relationships— with self, community, others and our environment. “Because the focus of Christian witness is more on our relationship with God, witness by word moves to centre stage alongside witness by life and deed. The fact that the goals for Christian witness and transformational development are the same, except for the focus, should be reassuring. They can only be the same however if we have overcome the dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual” (Myers, 1999, p. 212).

The Mission of the Church:

The mandate for declaring the gospel is found in Matthew 28:19,20 – the great commission; while the mandate for demonstrating the gospel is found
in John 13:34-35— the great commandment. In order to deal with both the sin and the suffering in the world, we need both to declare (or proclaim) to the world (to deal with the sin) and to demonstrate (or provide) to the world (to deal with the suffering). Both are essential and preferably should be done together.
Chapter Five:
GOALS OF CHRISTIAN WHOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

“If the church preaches only divine forgiveness and does not affirm justice, she implies that God treats immortality and sin lightly. If the church proclaims only justice, we shall all die in unforgiven sin and without the Spirit’s empowerment for righteousness. We should be equally troubled if we lag in championing justice or in fulfilling our evangelistic mandate.”

Carl F.H. Henry

People need God. All people need to hear about the God who created the world and their culture, the God who wants human beings to worship God and love their neighbour, and the God who wants and will enable them to be productive stewards in creation. So much of our work involves alleviating distress and raising living standards. This is good but our first concern as Christians must be to help improve the quality of people’s lives. This is what will make a real and lasting difference. Fundamentally the goals of Christian wholistic development are related to the effects of the fall. Christian wholistic development seeks to restore the things that were in place at creation before the fall. God has been in the business of restoration ever since then, and we as Christians, as the people of God, are part of God’s continuing plan of restoration - until He comes again.

Restored relationships
The Fall broke and distorted all relationships and our goals are to restore those relationships with God, ourselves, others and the environment. We are to seek to make ‘right’ each of these relationships and recognise that failure in any one aspect affects the other three. Relationships must be restored in all their dimensions.

1. in an intimate and serving relationship with God, through Christ.
2. in healthy, righteous and just relationships with ourselves and our communities.
3. in loving, respectful, ‘neighbouring’ relationships with all who are ‘other’ to us.
4. in a preserving, making-fruitful relationship with the earth.

If all relationships were characterised by justice and peace, we would be doing well.

Wholism
To work for human transformation as a Christian means working for the redemption of people, their social systems, and the environment that sustains their life - a whole gospel for all of life. Both social systems and culture need transformation to a lesser or greater degree. Changing the
social systems will include the distribution of power, resources and status (see section on justice later). Changing the culture involves the systems of beliefs, feelings and values that shape the way people see reality. The physical, psychological and social needs of people are crucial, but our sights must not stop there, we must also move into the spiritual sphere. If the poor are to become the ones that do the development and bring about change, then people need to be transformed themselves. Without repentance that touches on all values, all work will likely crumble when the development intervention is over.

“Effective ministry to the whole person is a process whereby worldview and values are transformed into a form pleasing to Christ and shaped by his word. As this happens people increasingly fulfil their God given potential and demonstrate righteousness in motivation and behaviour. This we call release. Such radical and lasting transformation occurs when the Holy Spirit changes people and makes them like Jesus.” Only then, Steward, tells us—development has begun (Steward, 1990, p. 24).

**Changed people**

The only true measure of development is how it affects people, their attitudes and their quality of life. Myers considers the twin goals of Christian wholistic development to be changed people and just and peaceful relationships - we talked about the latter already. By ‘changed people’ we mean people who have recovered (or even discovered) our identity as human beings created in the image of God and who have recovered (or even discovered) our true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for the world and all the people in it.

*Identity and vocation are critical, we must know who we are and the purpose for which we were created.*

These must be our focus. By focusing on them, we can proclaim to the poor (many of whom lack self confidence, dignity and self worth) that they are made in the image of God, that God calls them his children and that God values them as much as he values anyone else. It is only biblical understanding of identity and vocation that can bring about the healing that so many are desperate for.

It is imperative that our evangelism also addresses these issues of identity and vocation. Christian wholistic development is in the business of transformation and transforming lives. True transformation only takes place in the heart and moves out from there. If change is not in people’s hearts, outward changes will have limited impact or will not last long. Unless people move towards the kingdom of God and become its citizens, revealing its values, we will not see radical change in their outward lives. Once a person is changed or transformed, then they can transform their environment. Isaiah tells us that once the poor hear the good news and receive freedom and release, they become ‘oaks of righteousness’ and ‘they will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated (Isaiah
61: 3,4). The potential once people are truly transformed is enormous. Peter Batchelor quotes a project leader in Tanzania talking of what can happen after people have been transformed; “the project has become a movement; it has taken root in the hearts of the people and is certain to go on”. (Batchelor, 1992, p.137).

Justice and liberation

Over and over the Old Testament confronts us with the declaration that God loves justice; “for I the Lord, love justice” (Isaiah 61: 8). It is an active love, God does justice; “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed” (Psalm 103: 6). This love for justice is grounded in his special love for the victims of injustice. Justice is present in a society when the people enjoy those goods, to which they have a rightful claim. God’s love for justice is grounded in his longing for shalom and his sorrow over its absence. We serve a God who responds to injustice with a blazing moral clarity and passionate commitment to what is right. God’s hatred for injustice is passionate. Not only were justice and righteousness inculcated in the attitudes of God’s people, but they were enshrined in the socio-economic structure of Israelite society. We can see it in the fact that tithes were used to provide for the Levites, aliens, widows and orphans. We can see it in the fact that wages were to be paid the same day, cloaks returned before nightfall and farmers were to leave the edges of their fields. The prophets insisted on justice in favour of the poor and weak, especially in contrast to hollow religious practises. The prophets condemned those that oppressed the poor, the widows, the fatherless and the alien (Zechariah 7: 10). Amos was particularly angry with those that sold the poor for a pair of sandals (Amos 2: 6) and Isaiah proclaimed ‘woes’ to those who make unjust laws, robbed the needy of justice and deprived the poor, widows and fatherless of their rights (Isaiah 61: 1-2).

The Exodus story is a story of Israel’s liberation and their formation, it is a story of wholistic transformation. The liberation was from the oppression of Egypt and its Pharaoh; the formation was God transforming them from a group of slaves into a people. It took a day to get Israel out of Egypt and 40 years in the wilderness to get Egypt out of Israel.

- **Spiritually**- it is the story of God revealing himself and demonstrating his power so that Israel would believe and be faithful.
- **Socio-politically**- it is the story of moving from slavery to freedom, from injustice towards a just society.
- **Economically**- it is about moving from oppression in someone else’s land to freedom in their own, a land fairly distributed to all.
- **Psychologically**- it is about losing self understanding as a slave people and discovering that with God’s help, they could be a people and become a nation.

God’s intention is for people to have freedom from all types of molestation and we should be involved in freeing people held in bondage. One of the goals of Christian wholistic development is freedom from poverty, often resulting from unjust social, economic and political systems. Jesus said he had come to bring freedom for the prisoners and to release the oppressed.
As members of his kingdom, that is our work too. It is because we serve a God of justice that we must have a passion for justice. The Christian’s doing of justice is grounded in the desire to answer the lament of God and relieve the divine suffering.

**The command to do and struggle for justice is also the command to imitate God.**

As God is just, so are we to be just; we are to image his justice in our justice. The call to justice is also grounded in the call to be holy—justice is sacred. The prophets moved so fluidly between condemning idolatry, immorality and injustice (Amos 2: 6-8). They are all desecrations of God’s holiness.

As Christians within wholistic development, bringing people into the kingdom of God where all souls and bodies will be saved and people will have life in abundance, is our ultimate aim. **We are to be both Christians and do Christian work.** Doing Christian development is acting out who we truly are.
Chapter Six:
Practicing Christian wholistic development

“Kingdom greatness is to serve the servant, which is the same as saying to serve the poor.”

Dewi Hughes

Introduction

As opposed to waiting for a problem to occur and then looking at the best way to solve it, the development approach tends to focus more on people and how their lives can be enriched. Attention is directed more at enhancing the overall health of a person so that problems will be less likely to arise and if they do, the person will be better equipped to creatively discover a successful way out. Just as Jesus expressed God’s love by dealing with the spiritual, physical and mental, emotional and social problems of people, so too must those who follow him. Christians within development work have two sources of help that others do not have: the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. “The Holy Spirit is the agent of discipleship, and the Bible is that unique and unusual book that reads us, even when we think we are reading it” (Myers, 1999, p.161). Neither should be underestimated or under-utilised.

Theological and contextual

Christian development has two dimensions: theological and contextual. Theologically, our vision and motivation must emerge out of our understanding of the nature of God, human beings, the fall, redemption and the kingdom of God. Contextually, our development must be rooted in the modern day reality of community, village and city life. We need to begin with the reality and more towards the ideal, revealed by God. Theology is nothing if it is not earthed in the experience of the people.

God, the change agent

Ultimately, transforming people and communities and society at large is something only God can do. Our role is to discern what God is doing and obediently join in. Because of this significant fact, we learn that God is not asking us to be successful, only obedient. We are not authors of change, nor even the primary actors.

It is the action of God that will ultimately bring about true, lasting change.

Our role is vitally important but we need to have the humility to recognise that through our own efforts, we are quite unable to bring about God’s purposes. If there is to be any human transformation that is sustainable, it will be because of the action of the Holy Spirit, not the effectiveness of our development technology or the cleverness of our participatory processes. Elliston talks of the saddest words that a church can hear being “the Spirit has departed”, even while the outward forms of worship continue (Elliston,
1989, p. 63). We as development workers and organisations need to ensure the same cannot be said of us while we are busy trying to serve God and people in our work.

**Relationships**

These are key to understanding people and situations. We must learn to speak our neighbour’s language and understand our neighbour’s memberships in overlapping communities. We must come to know what makes our neighbour laugh or cry. Once we come to love our neighbour, we realize that our love is rooted in the pain of God, the pain God feels when our neighbour is not loved (Erickson, 1996, p. 56). If we cannot genuinely love our neighbour, where can development really begin? But this means, we need to learn to be patient. Our work fundamentally is about people before it is about ideas; about relationships before teaching or doing programs. As development workers, we should be looking to be good neighbours more than problem solvers or answer givers.

Good relationships are essential and the prerequisite to any development programme. They have been likened to a bridge across which ideas and values can be carried. Too often we try to introduce new technology and new ways of thinking before the bridge has been built. In many ways the bridge is the most important because it links us together in a fragmented world.

“**Relationships of mutual understanding and trust are the foundation on which all Christian development ministries must be built.**

Without them, the gospel is alien and development programs are merely foreign imports”. (Elliston, 1989, p. 79). We will only obtain the reliable, accurate information and feedback that we need after the hard work of relationship building has taken place.

**Incarnation**

Christian ministry begins with relationships and ends with transformation of people and communities. This is the model for Christian development programs and was the way of the incarnation, the way of God becoming man. This concept of incarnation which includes living among and within people, sharing and reciprocating distinguishes Christian development from secular development. Christians have a different set of relational attitudes: including respect (for God, their divine calling and authority and for the individuals, communities and cultures that they serve) and meekness (restrained pride, and insistence on one’s own way). An incarnational approach is a mutually beneficial approach. We, as Christians have a dual citizenship - we live on earth seeking to impart Kingdom values into society in order to bring about transformation.
Modelling

Our lives tell a story. Christians have been referred to as the 67th book of the Bible. People read our lives, our words and our actions and draw conclusions about Christianity from them. Our deeds, what we do and how we do it, declare in whom or in what we place our faith. The way we live our lives declares whom we love and on whom we depend. If we are truly living lives that demonstrate our love of God and neighbour, then questions will arise to which the gospel is the answer. If we are living lives worthy of our calling as children of God, then the Holy Spirit will evoke questions in people, to which our faith is the answer. We need to study, learn and live the values of the Kingdom introduced by Christ. If we apply them, the results will be Christian behaviour in an un-Christian world.

We are all witnessing all the time, the only question is to whom are we witnessing and what are we witnessing.

We are to demonstrate God’s love in such a way that the people might learn the truth of God’s love by our practical living. We are to show the worth of the gospel so that people become interested in the truth. Many do not accept the gospel because they do not see its value, its worth. One of our roles is to demonstrate the believability of the gospel by showing its worth and value before we then speak its’ truth.

God is at work in our lives and the lives of our communities every day; our role is to recognise God’s hand or fingerprints in daily life and then use every conversation and program activity, as an opportunity to point to the work of God. We are to plant evidence of the gospel and the value of the gospel by the way we live our lives and do our work— then people will inquire about its truth and later discover it and own it themselves. We are to be salt and light to the world and this will often mean being in confrontation with the dominant world systems. It may mean going against the status quo, against society’s expectations, not ‘dancing to the music’ of religious formalism or entertainment (Luke 11: 17-19).

We are to be people who constantly provide explanations. For the effectiveness of finding water, for the saving of a child’s life (etc), our explanation should point to the character and activity of a loving God. If we do not provide an explanation, people will provide their own. It may be an animist explanation or a ‘scientific’ explanation, but people will explain it somehow. If we do not provide an explanation, a Christian explanation will not be found. In the long section of teaching in the gospel of John, most of the teaching is an explanation of something that Jesus has done (healing the paralytic man, feeding the multitudes, giving sight to the blind). The preaching and teaching is an explanation of the healings. The healings in themselves do not explain themselves. Newbigin tells us “healings, even the most wonderful, do not call this present world radically into question: the gospel does, and this has to be made explicit” (Newbigin 1989, p.132). In Acts 14, Paul heals a lame man but does not explain the healing. Therefore the people provide their own explanation: ‘the gods have come down to us
in human form’ (v.11). The people then, set out to organise the required sacrifices and worship to the gods (v.13). Only then does Paul see that he has not explained what happened; he rushes back (v.14-15) to explain whose miracle it really was.

Values

Respect for another person, their community and their culture also characterises the Christian approach. This means that we can learn from others and build relationships of trust. Respect includes patience, kindness, gentleness and goodness. All communities already have some level of sustainability. In fact there is considerable evidence to show that poor communities are quite sophisticated in developing sustainable survival strategies in terms of food, water, housing and living within the constraints of a marginal natural environment (Jayakaran, 1996). We must recognise and respect the value of what the community already has. God never has, or will, impose change upon us, and neither should we on others.

“Compassion is love in action. It is applying the Christian faith to human hurts. It is sharing other people’s burdens. It is a loving sympathy that makes us restless until we have done something to heal people’s wounds, correct injustices and uproot the causes of poverty” (Danladi Musa in CRUDAN News, No.29, 1999). We need compassion to be within and throughout all that we do; often it is the only thing that can break down barriers and open up hearts to the gospel.

Empowerment may be a development ‘buzz’ word, but is at the heart of God’s methodology. The greatest contribution we can make is to help people and communities discover that they can formulate, carry out and evaluate programs on their own. Transformation of communities can only begin when empowerment is present. We must make sure we do not do for people what they can do for themselves. That is to dis-empower people. If we are committed to this way of working, we will have to go at the pace of the people, even if we consider it to be a slow pace. Involving those who are in need and will benefit is a prerequisite to this way of working. Jesus repeatedly involved those who were in need. We should be in the business of handups, not handouts.

The task in front of us is by no means small and we must recognise that we cannot work alone. We should have an open attitude of co-operation especially with those from other denominations. God’s pattern was, and still is, ‘one sows, another waters and the next harvests’. If we are to be truly effective, we must intentionally co-operate with other communities, churches and agencies. This may involve networking, sharing of facilities, joint times of prayer and careful long range planning together. Christians are like coals on a fire - together we glow, apart we grow cold.
TABLE 4: Priorities, Principles and Characteristics of Christian Development (according to U.K. development agency Tearfund)
(Taken from Tearfund’s Operating Principles and Transforming Church manual)

Priorities
If poverty stems from broken relationships then the priority is the restoration of those relationships (with God, ourselves, others and the environment). A desire for good relationships should be woven into all we do.
We serve a God who will establish a new heaven and a new earth and we want all (rich and poor) to have the hope of a new home in that new creation. All we do should be working towards this eternal future and challenging people to prioritise the future through commitment in the present to the gospel and the poor.

Principles

Dignity (Genesis 1:27)
Everyone is made in the image of God and so we should honour the dignity of all the people we serve. We fail to honour people's dignity by: showing a lack of respect to people, discriminating against people on certain basis' and failing to listen to people or imposing solutions on them.

Incarnation (John 1:14; Hebrews 2:14)
Jesus became one of us. We too should go to the people we serve: identifying with them as they are, living, eating and suffering with them.

Love (1 John 4:10)
God loved us even when we did not love him and sent his only Son to die for us. We should love others in the same way: practically, sacrificially and without looking for reward. People should not merely
be seen as beneficiaries, target groups or clients, but as equal partners. We should love both our friends and our enemies.

**Poverty** (Psalm 146:7-9)
God has a special concern for the poor and vulnerable because they are so often marginalized and oppressed. In our development work, we should serve those who need help most.

**Discernment** (Philippians 1:9-11; James 1:5)
We must look to God for wisdom and discernment in our development work.

**Justice** (Isaiah 58:6; James 5:1-6)
God is concerned with both personal holiness and social justice. Our development work needs to address the underlying causes of poverty. We need to speak up for those who are oppressed and marginalised, enable them to speak for themselves.

**Unity and Co-operation** (John 17:23; Philippians 2:1-2)
We must co-operate with others because we will be more effective when we pool our skills and resources and because Christian unity is a sign to the world that Christ came from God.
Prayer (John 15:7-8)
Fruitfulness is impossible without prayer. We are engaged in a spiritual battle in which we are dependent on God’s strength and grace.

Training (Luke 6:12-16)
Jesus chose 12 disciples and spent a lot of time teaching and training them. We need to focus on people with commitment and train them to continue and expand our work.

Characteristics

Cultural sensitivity and transformation
Cultural diversity is an expression of God’s goodness. The resources and knowledge of every community are to be valued. However no culture is perfect and the gospel should challenge and transform all cultures.

Accountability
Good relationships require mutual accountability, trust and transparency. We are accountable to God to steward the resources of creation for the good of all people. Corruption at any level or self-indulgence has no place in Christian development.

Leadership
This is very important. Our model should be Christ who came not to be served but to serve. Leaders need humility before God and a commitment to the needs of others above their own.

Empowerment
The hopelessness and powerlessness of poverty demean the dignity which God has given people and denies them the opportunity to work and serve others. Empowerment enables people to make choices, to have a voice and become agents of change.

Participation
Participation involves people taking part in decisions and actions that affect their lives. It recognises people’s dignity and is one of the key
ways in which people become empowered. Involving people values their contribution.

Sustainability
Sustainability is a continuing process of positive personal and community change— not simply financial independence. Reconciliation to God facilitates sustainable change as it breaks the power of whatever bound us before and frees us to serve. Sustainable Christian development requires sustainable Christian communities.
Stories

Within any community, there are always 2 stories - the history of the community and the story of God at work in that community. If there are Christians in the community, then the church or churches are the primary bearers of this story. If there are no Christians or churches, God has nonetheless been working in that community. God, Myers tells us “did not come into the life of the community with the arrival of the missionaries and certainly not with the arrival of the development agency. God has been active in the story of the community since the beginning of time” (Myers, 1999, p.117). We are part of God’s story in that community, we are not the primary actor but we are the carriers of the message. If we can view the development story of a community as part of God’s larger work in history, then people can begin to understand “that the meaning and goal of history are not to be found in any projects, programs or ideologies” (Newbiggin, 1989, p.129) but in something so much greater.

If we can transform our understanding and mindset away from the idea of development as a process in which God periodically intervenes or visits, and realise that God has already started a development process and the community and development organisation periodically co-operate with that and are invited to join in.

Every development program represents a convergence of stories - see diagram below. It is a convergence of our story (as development workers), God’s story and the community’s story. God’s story is the only one that has the power to redirect and make sense out of all our stories. “The best human future is one that moves towards the kingdom of God; therefore witnessing to God’s story is the beginning of hope and the promise of a new story”. (Myers, 1999, p. 205).

Our task is to interpret what God is doing around us and attempt to get involved with him.
Word, Deed and Sign

As we have seen the gospel message is an inseparable mix of life, deed, word and sign. We are to be with Jesus (life), so that we can preach the good news (word), heal the sick (deed) and cast out demons (sign). Each dimension adds to the meaning of the others. Our life and deeds make our words make sense, our words help people understand our life and our deeds. Life, word and deed are all signs of the living presence of God. If the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be grasped in its fullness, then over time all the dimensions need to be revealed. As development workers, our witness often begins with good deeds. This can then be backed up by the way we live our lives and treat people (life). Any prayer, miracle or pointing out that God is the source of any good emerging in the community are witnesses of sign. Any responses to questions (like ‘why are you here?’ ‘Why are you helping us?’) to which the answer is the gospel is the witness of word.

Jesus is the only way to God, but there are a thousand ways to come to Jesus. With this life-word-deed-sign relationship, we are able to lead with whichever part of the gospel message most clearly relates to the needs of those to whom we are trying to witness to. “For those afraid of spirits, we pray for the Holy Spirit to do the signs that show God is more powerful. For those seeking intellectual truth, we begin with words. For those empirically inclined or seeking evidence that God is concerned for the material world, we begin with gospel as deed. For those seeking meaning in their relationships, we begin with gospel as life”. (Myers, 1999, p. 213). While we can begin with any aspect, we must not stop there. Everyone needs to encounter and engage the gospel message in its wholeness. To stop short is to truncate the gospel.

Women

Much of the work done by women, both in the past and today, goes unnoticed and unpaid. The long hours that women work at bearing and caring for children, growing and providing food for the family, maintaining clean and healthy environments for the family often are not appreciated. The work is not counted among the ‘productive’ activities of the society. Many women carry triple workloads - in the household, the labour force and in their reproductive roles. Williams and Mwan told us, in 1994, that women perform 2/3 of the world’s work, earn 1/10 of the world’s income, are 2/3 of the world’s illiterate and own less than 1/100 of the world’s property (Williams and Mwan, 1994, p.100). Documentation confirms that women have poorer nutrition, receive less health care and less schooling. Yet the roles of women are strategic and sometimes they are much better than men at things—women handle money much better and more responsibly than men. Having a woman treasurer means that poor bookkeeping and resultant fraud is greatly reduced. Lack of basic education not only prevents women from developing intellectually, but also affects their self-image and ambitions. Malnourishment does not just affect mothers, but also the children they bear.
In the Old Testament, God values women in particular because they were the most vulnerable group.

In Jesus’ day, women were considered very inferior to men, religiously and legally, they had no legitimate voice. It was in this context that Jesus, through his deeds, showed that he considered women to be equal in worth to men.

He was sensitive to women and their needs, he talked with them, taught them, touched them, healed them and was ministered to by them. He did not conform to the attitudes and values of the surrounding culture; instead he violated some of the values and affirmed women in all their capacities. He even nullified the double standards placed on women. When the man and woman were caught in adultery, Jesus asked ‘why was the woman only brought?’ Jesus’ commission to spread the Good News was to both men and women, he could see the faith, commitment and determination in women. Women were prominent in both Old and New Testaments (see table).

It is commonly agreed that women carry out a disproportionate share of the productive work relating to the family and the community but also are critically involved in areas that are key to change in development. Women are vital providers of health care and critical to the education of children. Women hold families together, through them we can reach the next generation, women not only have information that needs to be part of the development process, but research shows that much positive social change is correlated with the education and involvement of women (Myers, 1999, p.190). Women are crucial for mission, for development work, for bringing about change. A UNICEF report in 1991 said “the education of girls is probably the world’s best investment”. (Hughes, 1999, p. 254).

Listening to and empowering women is a very effective way of impacting whole families and communities. This is because many of the tasks done by women are directly linked to initiatives commonly undertaken by people involved in improving the lot of the poor (e.g. health, water, sanitation, nutrition.) Also the first thought of women is for their family (unlike men often) and they are more prepared to think of the good of the community as a whole. They are more reliable at attending meetings and they know what will benefit the family much more than even the well-intentioned man. They have a major contribution to make to society, they have many valuable gifts— we ignore their rights, needs and abilities at our peril.

The subordination of and inferior attitude to women is often rooted in religion or tradition or more likely a mixture of both. Many religions teach and enforce the subordination of women. In other places tradition and religion have become so blurred that one reinforces the other and the truth gets distorted. The inferior status and valuing of women is considered the norm and in many places the way God intended it to be. “Religious belief systems then become the root cause of establishing and maintaining the subordination of women” (Elliston, 1989, p. 276). If the cause or the root of
the problem is a spiritual one, then so too is the solution. We need to return to the Bible to get God’s understanding of women.
**TABLE 5: Women in the Old and New Testaments**

**In the Old Testament, Women:**

- Rescued Moses and looked after him despite the decree to kill all male children (Exodus 2:9-10)
- Fed Elijah despite the severe famine (1 Kings 17: 7-16)
- Praised God publicly— Miriam (Exodus 15: 30)
- Obeyed God by hiding spies— Rahab (Joshua 2:1-3)
- Supported one another— Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1: 16-17)
- Became Queen— Esther (Esther 2: 16-17)
- Were used by God to save the Jewish race— Esther (Esther 4 & 5)

**In the New Testament, Women:**

- Offered very costly gifts to Jesus (Luke 7: 36-38)
- Opened their homes to Jesus— Mary and Martha (Luke 10: 38-42)
- Trusted in the deity of Jesus (John 4: 25-26)
- Were the first to go to the graveside despite all the threats from the Jewish and political authorities (Luke 24: 1-10)
- Were commissioned to spread the Good News
- Assisted in supporting Jesus financially— Mary Magdalene, Joanna & Susanna (Luke 8: 1-3)
- Travelled with Jesus (Luke 8:1-3)
- Were healed by Jesus— crippled woman healed on the Sabbath (Luke 13: 10-17)
- Followed Jesus and gathered at the cross (Luke 23: 27)
- Met with Jesus after his resurrection (Mark 16: -11; Matthew 28:8-10)
- Were used by Jesus to bring about faith in others (John 4: 39-42)
- Did good and helped the poor- Dorcas (Acts 9: 36)
- Noted Christian women— Julia, the Christian woman of Rome (Romans 16:15)
- Had faith— the woman with bleeding (Luke 8: 43-48)
- Gave generously (Luke 21:1-3)
- Were leaders in the Church— Phoebe, the Deacon (Romans 16:1-2)
- Were trades people and the first convert in Europe— Lydia (Acts 16:14)
- Prophesied— the 4 daughters of Philip (Acts 21: 8-9)
- Were teachers- Priscilla (Acts 18: 2)
- Outstanding apostles— Junia (Romans 16: 7)
- Were commended for demonstrating perseverance (Luke: 1-5)
TABLE 6: The Biblical View Of Gender

Creation- Genesis 1 v.27 says “So God created mankind in his own image: male and female he created them.” God created all humankind and equally, no hierarchies. To God we are all equal; we have equal worth and equal value. This implies that being either male or female is to be in the image of God. It also implies a male-female partnership in the life that God has designed. God gave both the man and the woman authority to rule over the creation, they had equal responsibility. In Genesis 2: 18-24 the Bible teaches us that there was a relationship of parity between the man and the woman. (The woman was created from the side of the man, not the foot!) The woman is not created as the man’s servant, she has her own identity and her own role to play. The creation account does not support the idea of a chain of command and God’s design is that man and woman should not live in a hierarchical relationship.

Equality is not about having equal numbers or having the same roles but rather about equal value, worth and dignity, of the differences and different roles that men and women have.

The Fall- sin has destroyed the equal worth, value and responsibility of men and women. Both were involved in the rebellion and guilty of the fall that resulted in alienation from God and from each other. After the fall individuals began to use their God given abilities not to serve one another but to dominate them instead. The results of the fall are seen in Israel’s social and cultural restrictions, which expressed male domination and can be seen in many countries still today. The effect of the fall has been far reaching. Israel as the ‘chosen’ nation had the opportunity to witness to the true meaning of God’s creation of humanity as male and female; but they followed their pagan neighbours in treating women as objects. The church today (the Israel of the today) has often been no better in being a true witness in this regard.

Christ and the New Testament- Jesus Christ came to restore the world to God and restore our relationships with each other; this includes the relationship between men and women. Galatians 3: 28 tells us “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Throughout the New Testament the equality of men and women in Christ is emphasised. Despite such perverting of God’s design and the immense consequences, women throughout the Bible have had many a contribution to make and been used by God in numerous and vital ways. E.g Esther begging pardon from King Xerxes, Hannah as an example of perseverance in prayer, Mary who was willing to bear Jesus despite the stigma, Rahab who went against the culture and took in the 2 spies. Women were even key in founding churches e.g. Lydia, Priscilla and Phoebe.

The church of today- Jesus could have but did not act as a total revolutionary in this aspect by declaring that all nations should repent of their sinful treatment of women or even by appointing women apostles. If he had done so, it would have been the talk of the town and actually would have distracted completely from his foremost purpose of bringing salvation to the world. However he crossed the cultural barriers of the day by having a special care for women; he travelled with and spent time with women, used them in his ministry, healed many women, let a woman anoint him with oil and did not hesitate to ignore traditional customs (e.g. Samaritan woman) in order to carry out his ministry.

The task of challenging the inequalities between men and women and the injustices that women suffer has been left to the church, just like the task of preaching the gospel, feeding the hungry and looking after the Creation. God has left much of his work to be done by his children and this is one of them.
Worldview

The biblical worldview is a wholistic one— the physical world is never seen as separate from or disconnected from the spiritual world and the rule of the God who created it. But what is a worldview? Literally it is how people view the world. It is a community’s view of reality. All cultures and communities have a way of viewing people and society and that way (which includes some large assumptions) informs so much of how they or we act. This will include concepts of time, space, people, feelings, value and together they form the basis for communication in a society. As development workers we need to adopt a biblical worldview ourselves and seek to import this worldview into our work. We have talked much about the biblical worldview so far— albeit without mentioning it as such. The biblical worldview has 3 lenses, which help us make sense of society.

- Understanding creation helps us understand what was meant to be.
- Understanding the fall helps us recognise what is working against life in communities and why.
- Understanding the redemption story helps us to know what can be and who and what can help us get there.

People’s worldview, their understanding of reality touches every part of life and their understanding of it. The Bible is a wholistic book and deals with every aspect of life. We must ensure that we let the Bible touch every aspect of a community’s worldview. If we only address people’s spiritual needs, we will only touch the spiritual part of their worldview. For example, if part of people’s worldview is an understanding of or belief in folk science and a development agency arrives in the community and sinks a borehole, then in the process people’s worldview may be transformed from folk science to modern science and technology. But are they any better off in terms of their understanding? Not only do we need to explain God’s authorship and role in science and technology but we need to be addressing the other aspects of their understanding too. Our Christian witness must address and engage every level of people’s worldview. If it does not then people only get part of the story and you end up with Christians who go to the doctor for medical advice, ask the church to pray for healing and visit the shaman at night. Much of people’s worldview is rooted in the unseen world—in spirits, demons and ancestors. If we fail to take this into account, we will not have any biblical response and we will fail to have the impact on their understanding that we are seeking.

“Jesus’ followers today must examine their priorities in life lest we unwittingly take on the spirit of our age.”

(Bartholomew and Moritz, 2000, p. xi).

We as development workers may have been influenced by a number of different worldviews. We have grown up and live in the worldview of our culture; if we have been educated in schools using western curriculum, we carry the story of modernity and as Christians, the Christian worldview too. All these worldviews shape our understanding of a better future and how to
get there; we must examine and ensure that the biblical worldview has the final say.

Another part of our worldview as Christians can be influenced by a development method or way of working known as Appreciative Inquiry. Although not a specifically Christian methodology, it fits the gospel account well. The methodology focuses on the positive, the good, and the beneficial. It affirms life, joy, beauty, excellence and innovation. Similarly the gospel, in spite of our sin, looks through that brokenness and sees God’s image in us and works to restore that image to its fullness. Appreciative Inquiry reminds us of Paul’s admonition in Philippians 4: 8,9 to think about such things that are noble, true, right, admirable and pleasing.

Western governments also have a distinct worldview; alas it is quite different from that of local communities—the people they are seeking to help. Western governments, afraid that aid will be used as a tool to encourage a certain faith, are adamant that spiritual things should not be part of the development process. By taking this stance, they require that anything they fund cannot be remotely religious in nature. However this insistence on purely material or physical programs is at complete odds with the worldview of most of the recipients of development aid. Whether people are animists, Muslims, Christians or whatever, they believe in an integrated spiritual – physical world. Western governments don’t seem to have taken this into account. Not only this, but if development is about changing values and worldviews, then one of the most critical factors to the success of any development initiative—religion has been denied. Whether governments like it or not, the secular humanist worldview has not power to change the human heart.

The Christian Distinctive

For too long the church and Christians have treated the Bible as a book for the spiritual world alone and not given it the chance to inform the material world of everyday life.

**Our challenge is to release the Bible to speak to all phases of human transformation.**

The Bible must be the bedrock and the ultimate authority for any social change sought by Christians. Our Christian distinctive must be more than beginning each day with devotions and prayer. The Word of God must be the reference for all we do, and the values of the Kingdom must run through all we do, say and think as development workers. We have a challenge as Christian development workers—we want people to raise their living standards, but we do not want to push them into the snare of materialism. Our motivation for change must be a Christian one rather than that of self-interest and greed. Our first motivation and reason for doing things better is to glorify God. If our work is preventative health care, our motivation should be obedience to God to whom our bodies belong not just as a matter of service to God, let alone helping others to be healthier.
We are to demonstrate what Christianity is all about, to show that the practical things of life are in tune with God’s purposes and living a life with dignity.

We are to live and do our work in such a way that evokes questions to which the gospel is the answer.

We are to be mirrors and who we are is vital. Peter Batchelor tells us ‘you cannot be an agent for change unless you yourself are going to be a changed agent, more and more transformed into the image of Christ’ (Batchelor, 1992, p.113). The way we do our development work should be littered with an attitude that prays and yearns for people to know Jesus Christ. We can learn much from Jesus’ methodology and how he went about his work. Jesus emptied himself of all desires to dominate, instead he became a man, identified himself with the poor and suffered a criminal’s death. “This non coercive, upside-down turning, healing, releasing Christ has implications in terms of who must own the development process and how we must run our development institutions” (Myers, 1999, p.36). The source of power that Jesus used and still uses can be found in Matthew 5: meekness, purity of heart, mercy and peace.

The weapons of Jesus’ Kingdom make us appear completely irrelevant to this world based on power, efficiency and control. We speak the truth, we pray for our enemies, we refuse to co-operate with injustice; and yet incredible as it may seem, these weapons are powerful in pulling down strongholds and bringing to birth the righteous kingdom of Jesus. (Foster, 1992, p. 264). We do not have the power of the Roman Empire or of the Sanhedrin, but the power of powerlessness, of vulnerability, of Christ. Our method as Christians has to be different. Jesus taught by showing and asked the people to learn by doing. The methodologies of the Kingdom are verbal proclamation, compassionate action, caring for people’s needs, fair co-operation, unity and speaking out against wrong.

Peter Cormack tells us of many countries where development is very ‘benefit’ orientated in the material sense and as a result the Christian workers have a hard time communicating the distinctiveness of their biblical wholism. (Cormack, 1988, p. 8) Jayakumar Christian, an Indian development worker, reinforces this by telling us that whatever we put at the centre of the program during its lifetime will tend to be what the community worships in the end. (Myers, 1999, p. 207).

The reality is that good development is being done by Muslims, animists, Buddhists and atheists around the world. So what is our Christian distinctive? We must ensure that credit is given where credit is due. “We must take great care that we point, not to our own sacrifices or professionalism, and not to the effectiveness of our development technology, but to the fact that the good deeds that create and enhance life in the community are evidence of the character and activity of the God of
the Bible, the God whose Son makes a continuing invitation to new life and whose Spirit is daily at work in our world” (Myers, 1999, p. 244).

Table 7: Ideas in How to be Whole in our Work

- Use the Bible as a reference and guide for all we do in our development work
- Check our own motivation- is God being glorified in all we do?
- Live lives that provoke questions to which the gospel is the answer
- Stand with and encourage those who are suffering
- Yearn for the people we work with to know Jesus
- Kingdom values should be evident in all we do
- Cover everything in prayer and ask God to demolish any strongholds working against people’s lives
- Pray with the people we are working with and for.
- Show people the relevance of the Bible by relating it to their own situation.
- Have structured times of prayer for the community within your work
- Seek and ask for God’s power in all situations we are involved in
- Stand up for justice and against injustice at all times
- Point out who is the author of life and even our work at all times to people and invite them to be part of that ‘new’ life.
- Take the time to point out to people as a testimony where God’s Spirit has been evident and working.
- Prayer walk your community
- Involve community issues, justice issues and practical outworking of biblical values in church services
- Pray for issues of justice and structural change and for the poor.
- Fast regularly for specific situations and people
- Pray for people to find their identity and vocation in God
Being, Doing, Loving

Mark 3: 14-15 tells us that Jesus appointed the 12 disciples “that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons”. As development workers, we are often eager to go straight to the second part and thereby ignoring the first part. The primary reason for appointing the disciples was so that they could be with Jesus. The same is true for us today. We will only be able to live lives that provoke questions to which the gospel is the answer, if we are being with Jesus, following Jesus, seeking to become more like him. Our ability to facilitate transformation in people’s lives depends on our being transformed and this depends on our life and relationship with God. First we are to be with God, then we are to do what God wants us to do. Being comes before doing and loving is part of doing— but that too is dependent on being. We cannot love our neighbour, unless we are loving God.

The Local Church

The Local Church is of strategic importance. It is hard for a community to be transformed if the church is not acting as a sign of the Kingdom. The church has a major role to play in pointing to the Kingdom, to God’s better future and it does this more effectively by what it does rather than what it says. The church has direct contact with the local community, it is strategically placed and has a great opportunity to minister to the needs of the members of the community. It is one of the primary responsibilities of the local church and development workers undermine that responsibility and convey the wrong methodology if they try and work outside or not in partnership with the local church.
Chapter Seven
PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

“Most Christians would probably agree that prayer has little to do with social justice. Why? Because most of those that are praying are not praying about social issues. And most of those who are active in social issues are not praying very much.”

Richard Lovelace

Prayer

‘To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world’ wrote Karl Barth (Foster, 1992, p. 259). The structures, forces of injustice, oppression and war are so overwhelming in this world of ours that all our efforts to help the poor and needy will ultimately fail unless we first invite God into the battle. Not only is it necessary but God commands us to pray and Paul reinforces this in 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 by telling us to pray for all people in all situations. We must pray for everyone but we must pay particular attention to praying for the poor because they are high on God’s agenda as we have already seen.

“Our prayer, to the extent that it is fully authentic, undermines the status quo. It is a spiritual underground resistance movement. We are subversives in a world of injustice, oppression and violence. Like Amos of old, we demand that ‘justice roll on like a river and righteousness like never failing stream’ (Amos 5: 24). We plead the case of the orphan and the widow, or whoever the helpless ones are in our content. In our prayers and in our actions we stand firm against racism, sexism, nationalism, ageism and every other ‘ism’ that separates, splits and divides.” We become the voice of voiceless, pleading their cause all the way to the throne of heaven. (Foster, 1992, p. 263).

Through prayer we participate with God to demolish strongholds, establish his kingdom and change the world. If we believe that God works through the prayers of his people, and that the kingdom of God can only be advanced by the Spirit of God, then we as development workers must be men and women of prayer, dedicated to working in the Spirit. When we realise that God is firmly against poverty, we are able to pray with confidence, knowing we are praying with him and in his will.

The spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting are important tools for development work

These have been underused tools and need to be rediscovered as they can move mountains, cause the devil and his forces to fall from heavenly places (Luke 10: 18). Prayer also links together evangelism and development, the proclamation and demonstration. When we pray, we pray to a God of...
temporal justice and eternal salvation. Like God, we are committed to both.
The Lord’s Prayer is a wonderful expression of ‘wholeness’. We begin by expressing our longing that the name of God the Father may be honoured and respected everywhere; then we acknowledge our dependence on God for our physical well-being as we pray for the food we need each day. For God, it is no unnatural jump from the sacred to the secular; it is part of God’s wholeness and his desire for us to be whole. Interestingly one of the most important words in the Lord’s Prayer is the first word ‘Our’. The Lord’s Prayer is communal—Our Father, Our daily bread, Our sins, lead Us, deliver Us. As Christians we pray ‘Our Father’, there is only one Father and he is for everyone, whatever tribe, race or nation. God is also the Father of the poor and we cannot pray this prayer without remembering that.

Prayer is crucial, it is imperative— but prayer is not a substitute for action. Nor is action a substitute for prayer. Both are essential ingredients. “Social action without prayer is soulless, but prayer without action lacks integrity” (World Vision Prayer Guide). We cannot afford to be inactive; a prayer in which we are not open to being a part of the solution will never be answered. It is not only important to pray for the poor but what we pray is also important. We need to pray that the economic needs of the poor will be met, but we should not stop there. Praying that they see themselves created in the image of God, valuable in his sight is just as great a need and a prayer. We can also remind God of his promises to the poor in our prayers. These include amongst others promises of protection (Psalm 12:5), satisfying the hungry (Psalm 107:9), being a Father and defender (Psalm 68:5) and giving his Spirit to his servants for ministry (Isaiah 61:1-2). Above all, we must pray and express our longings, our desires, our hopes. Prayer at its heart is a cry. Let us cry out to God for the desperate needs of this world.

 ―History belongs to the intercessors, those willing to believe that God is bigger than our suffering, those willing to believe that his power is more than able to answer the world’s needs, those willing to confront him with their God given vision of a society full of justice, health and love” (World Vision Prayer Guide). To work without prayer is to achieve what is humanly possible—surely we want more than that?

There are many types of Christian prayer, but let us mention two here that may be useful to us as development workers. First, the prayer of advocacy; this is prayer on behalf of others. Good examples include Jesus’ prayer in John 17, Abraham pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses pleading for Israel and Daniel pleading to return to Israel. It is a passionate presenting of another’s case before God. It is a plea. The second is the prayer of identification, seeking to stand where those who are suffering stand. Jesus is our role model in this. Here through the Holy Spirit, we can have the same sense of alienation or frustration that other’s feel and present this to God as one who feels the burden of another.
Spiritual warfare

The immediate causes of poverty include: injustice, international sin, population growth, war, climate changes and many others. But the ultimate cause of poverty is the devil himself; we cannot divorce development from the reality of evil. Development work is as much about the forces of evil as it is about appropriate technology or empowerment. Jesus teaches us that evil is something to be opposed not tolerated. Only Jesus can bring ultimate victory over the evil one. Transformation needs to touch all evil—supernatural, structural, in whatever form it comes. Satan is not going to let go of individuals or communities without a fight and before people can overcome bondage, he will need to be opposed and dealt with. Poverty and a cycle of poverty from generation to generation is a deception that keeps people in bondage and from progressing. United prayer is crucial for breaking this bondage and liberating communities, cities and nations from darkness. Prayer binds the powers that oppress the poor.

The task of setting the oppressed free involves power encounters. It is a spiritual battle. Christ did not send his disciples out without equipping them and that included the power to drive out evil spirits and to liberate mankind from demonic and human oppression. As Tokunbo Adeyemo tells us ‘any form of wickedness, unrighteousness and oppression—socio-economic, cultural or political is of the devil, and the church in partnership with God is responsible for destroying it’. The world is full of systems and political structures that oppress the poor. If we are to challenge the structures and the values behind it in the name of Jesus, we are to enter into conflict and face persecution. Satan is the ‘father of lies’ (John 8: 44), the source of false ideologies that underlie these oppressive structures. Our spiritual warfare is to counter satanic deception in the world with the truth of God’s Word and with the armour of God (Ephesians 6: 10-18). United prayer weakens and pushes back the spiritual darkness blinding countries, towns and individuals, enabling them to hear and see the good news of Jesus.
TABLE 8: Bible Study- Nehemiah, the Development Worker

Introduction

Nehemiah is one of the men in the Bible whose working methods should inspire every Christian development worker. Nehemiah is an example of a man with strong spiritual strength and good leadership skills. His character illustrates the importance of planning, problem solving and building trust and confidence in a community. We can learn much from Nehemiah to help us do our work better and more effectively. Nehemiah is an excellent example of how to carry out Community Development wholistically.

Background

In 597 BC, the mighty kingdom of Babylon attacked the people of Israel and destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Many of the people of God were taken into exile, being forced to live far away from their home. Those who remained were poor and discouraged, and were often oppressed by the people around them who did not know God.
About 70 years later Babylon was conquered by the Persians. Some of the children of Israel, who had grown up and become well-educated in Babylon, became part of the new ruling system. Nehemiah was such a person. Although an Israelite, he had become the personal assistant to the king of Persia. But he never forgot his God, or his people.

Try and read the whole book of Nehemiah first. These mini studies have been set out with a few questions and a few comments. They are not intended to be exhaustive but to be used as a basis for you to explore more in depth the lessons we can learn from Nehemiah. Take time to see the relevance of this book for your work.

Chapter 1: 1-11
Questions: What strikes you about Nehemiah?
What was the situation of people living in Jerusalem?
What was Nehemiah’s reaction when he heard the news?
What is your reaction when you hear news about problems or sufferings of other people?
What can you learn from this for your own prayers/prayer life?

Comment: Before undertaking any development work we must ask for God’s help. See also Proverbs 16:1-3; Psalms 127: 1.

Chapter 2: 1-9
Questions: Why do you think Nehemiah was afraid before he answered the King?
What kind of prayer did Nehemiah pray?
What can we learn about Nehemiah’s ability to think ahead and plan?
Why did Nehemiah think that his requests to the king were successful? What can we learn from this?
When you see a problem in your church or community, how can you follow the example of Nehemiah?
Comment: Nehemiah sought permission from the king before beginning work. The development worker must not disregard people in authority such as the chief, community leaders or local government of the State.

Chapter 2: 11-15
Questions: Why did Nehemiah go out to explore the city?
What can we learn from this in our work and projects?
What did Nehemiah find as he rode around the city?
Comment: Listening to and observing situations before taking action is most important. Nehemiah began looking and he certainly listened to his fellow countrymen before doing anything. By doing this he also made an assessment of the situation— even if it was informal. As a result of this the proposed project was based on a firm foundation of knowledge.

Chapter 2: 16-18
Questions: What did Nehemiah say to the community leaders?
Why did he not just offer money to rebuild?
Why do you think the people were so keen to do what Nehemiah suggested, when they had not done anything before he arrived?
What can we learn about how to encourage others to do God’s work?
Comment: Meetings are an important tool for a development worker. Nehemiah and we as development workers (being outsiders) often do not see problems in the same way as local people and therefore have another angle to view situations from. Nehemiah brought his fellow countrymen together so that they could understand what he saw. Then the people decided to start the rebuilding process— it was a community based decision.

Chapter 3
Questions: Who were the ones doing the rebuilding work?
How were they organised? Can we learn anything from this about our own planning?
What can we learn about the role and place of participation from this chapter and the rest of this book?
What were the resources used and where did they come from?
Is this significant?
Comment: Community participation is vital to the success of any development work. People who had previously been discouraged and confused began to mobilise themselves. Each group of people was to accomplish a specific objective within the overall plan. Through participation, people who are confronted by misery can organise themselves, set to work and play a vital role in the life of a community and the Kingdom. Participation can be seen as an important element throughout the whole reconstruction process.
Chapter 4: 7-15
Questions:  Who was opposing the rebuilding and what did they do? 
Do we have people or other things that oppose our work? 
What did the people do in response and what can we do also in response? 
What was Nehemiah’s role as a leader in such a situation? 
How important was it for the people and is it for us to trust the Lord in all situations? How is that practical for you?

Comment: Courage, faith, perseverance and trusting God are all part of development work. Development work is difficult, long term and does encounter opposition. We must expect opposition and seek to handle it wisely and with faith.

Chapter 5: 1-12
Questions:  What were the people complaining about? 
Do you know of situations similar to this? How are people affected? 
How did Nehemiah respond to the situation? 
What can we learn from Nehemiah’s example and what can we do to help such situations or prevent them? 
How can you work for greater justice in our communities and nation?

Comment: At this time there was a practice of leading money with excessive interest which resulted in the exploitation of the poorest and weakest people. In the midst of the reconstruction activity, Nehemiah saw a practice which was hurting people and God, and so took action resulting in a social transformation with far reaching effects. Nehemiah made sure that, as well as the physical reconstruction of the walls, moral reconstruction took place, and the people were reminded of the Law. We can see that, because the project was approached in a wholistic manner with clear mandate from God, it resulted not only in physical, but also moral and spiritual reconstruction of the nation—wholistic transformation!

Chapter 7: 73- 8: 8
Questions:  What role and place did God’s law have in this rebuilding process? 
How important is praise of God? Is this dependent on circumstances? 
What effect do you think such a gathering would have had? On who? 
What place does prayer, praise and the Bible have in your work? Do you need to review this?

Comment: Prayer and praise within and at the end of our projects is most important, in order to give God the place he is due in our work.
Adapted from: Issue 37, Footsteps and Christian Perspectives on Disaster Management.
Chapter Eight
THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

“God doesn’t intervene to stop the cross, but he breaks the power of death. He doesn’t intervene to stop poverty, but he equips us to stop poverty”

C.B. Samuel (EFICOR, India)

Completer

God’s story is a most unusual story. We have been told and know the beginning, part of the middle and the final chapter— but the story is not yet finished. The piece between Jesus and his work on the cross and the final chapter is still being written. God’s story is not only about the past, but also about what God is doing now through his church. God is still writing and revealing this part of the story and incredibly invites us to participate in that writing and revealing.

The church is the promoting agent of the Kingdom, it is God’s instrument for the fulfilment of his purposes.

The church is God’s people. We, as God’s people are part of the body of Christ and we are his hands, his feet, his voice— we are to continue the work of God. We should be addressing the SIN and SUFFERING of mankind. God has sent us, his people into the world to finish his work. Our perfect Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ should inspire all we do. The church is to be the bearer of the biblical story. As Christ’s body, that’s the role of the church. With all our inadequacies and blemishes, we are to witness about Christ, do his work and carry out our role as the body of Christ.

Fortunately, God has given us some additional assistance - we have been give a person (the Holy Spirit) and a book (the Bible).

Mission

The church, God’s people are now called to actively engage or intervene in redemption activities. These activities have spiritual, social and physical dimensions (see Revelation 21: 1-4; 22-24; 11: 15). Bosch (1991) called the church, both a theological and a sociological entity, an inseparable union of the divine and the dusty. Fundamentally the church exists for others, not for itself – a perspective not as common in practice as it should be. Charles Spurgeon, the great Protestant preacher had this to say about the church. “A church that does not exist to reclaim heathenism, to fight with evil, to destroy error, to put down falsehood; a church that does not exist to take the side of the poor, to denounce injustice and to hold up righteousness, is a church that has no right to be. Not for thyself, O church does thou exist, any more than Christ existed for himself” (Spurgeon, 1875, p. 66).
The Latin American Congress on Evangelism (CLADE IV) described the mission of the church in September 2000 as: the restoration of all of creation in Christ and for Christ in every socio-cultural and historical context so that all areas of life are transformed positively with no exceptions. It continued to list the activities that needed to be carried out if the church was to fulfil its mission completely. They were: the preaching of the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ; encouraging discipleship that allows each believer to have the character of Christ formed in them; becoming a community of praise and worship of God and of unity and sharing; and serving the whole needs of men and women. (Tearfund Monthly Review, Feb. 2001). If we and our churches are not involved in these fourfold activities, then we are not complete. This mission should be a normal way of life for believers.

**Potential**

The secular world may view the local church as a useful organisation capable of running useful projects. However, the Christian sees the church as having a special, distinctive role in God’s purpose. It is not just a useful organisation, it is the ‘Bride of Christ’. It is neither a convenient social organisation, it is a spiritual body able to address spiritual concerns that no secular organisation can. The church is uniquely placed to influence society and to assist in reversing the increasing poverty of our people. The church speaks to people in a way that other institutions cannot and people trust the church more than any other group or organisation.

**Churches are in a privileged position to be prophetic.**

We have a unique and important role in helping to develop a new value system, a necessary alternative to the idolatry of power, status and money. The church can use these strengths as a basis for its distinctive role. Roger Mitchell has caught the vision of the church and the potential within it. He says “I believe that poverty is overcome by the existence of the church, which is called to do the work of the Kingdom. If the church is supposed to be the alternative society, it is the very place where the Kingdom of heaven is expressed and seen and let loose on earth”. (Your Kingdom Come, p. 8).

**Importance**

Too often Christian development workers see the church as a distraction or even worse an obstacle, to their work. They have not grasped the importance and significance of the church. Leslie Newbigin says “it is surely a fact of inexhaustible significance that what our Lord left behind him was not a book or a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life, but a visible community... He committed the entire work of salvation to that community... The church does not depend for its existence upon our understanding of it or faith in it”. (Newbigin, 1954, p. 21). God left the church, nothing else, nobody else. The church’s role is crucial, it is pivotal, it is God’s way of working in this world and we as development workers must make sure the church is never on the sidelines but in the middle of all we do.
Table 9: Lessons From The Good Samaritan

Jesus was asked ‘who is my neighbour?’ and responded by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritans were excluded members of Jewish society, they had been rejected and spurned by normal society, and they could have been described as an underclass. But they were not the only ones marginalised, so too were lepers, tax collectors, the poor and prostitutes.

- **Everyone** we come into contact with is a neighbour and is to be loved.
- A neighbour should not be defined in terms of worthiness of receiving love but in terms of showing love.
- The Samaritan man not only loved his neighbour but a stranger, a foreigner. (Leviticus 19: 18,34)
- The Samaritan man saw the situation and helped; he didn’t ask “why” or “is it this man’s fault that he has been attacked?”— neither should we. Irrespective of where the blame might lie, Jesus calls us to have compassion on those who suffer.
- The Good Samaritan was good not because he met all the needs of the hurting man— because he did not; but because he had mercy on the man. He risked being misunderstood and even rejected by his own racial group.
- The Samaritan allowed his own schedule to be interrupted. For us in the modern world this is a severe challenge— in loving our neighbour we need to recognise that it will impact on our self-styled agendas and lifestyles.
- It shows up our own righteousness and shows us how far short of God’s expectations we are. It shows us our daily need of God’s grace.
- Loving our neighbour has clear consequences!
Loving and Living

If we try to love God without loving our neighbour, we will cut ourselves off from the ‘pulmonary artery’ of God. The love of God demands expression; it cannot stand alone. It is how God breathes. Therefore if we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we will be drawn of necessity to our neighbour. We see the face of God in our neighbour and to neglect our neighbour is to neglect God. The two are inextricably linked. It is only through this royal law of love that our deeds of mercy and compassion become a blessing. (Foster, 1992, p. 272). God wants us to be drawn into his love, not merely to experience acceptance, but also so we can share his love with others. We cannot be true to our identity as Christians without loving both God and our neighbour.

Self first

If the church is to be the conscience of communities, nations and the world, then it is vital that the kind of behaviour that even the world condemns is not found in the church itself. If discrimination, injustice, tribalism and the like are within the church, how can it act like salt or light. The history of the church does not provide a very good example in this area with the church having backed oppressive regimes and imperialism in the past amongst other things. The church cannot truly speak about social justice or the liberation of others until it has cleaned its own house. Like the teaching Jesus gave in Matthew 7: 3-5,

we cannot speak out about the speck of sawdust in society until the plank in the church has been taken care of.

How can we see or imagine a community being transformed without the church being transformed at the same time?

The role of the church is the same as the role of believers: to be a servant and a source of encouragement— not to be a commander or a judge. The church is more important as a source of people than a source of instruction or even prophetic word. The people are the greatest asset. Newbigin said it well: “The major role of the church in relation to the great issues of justice and peace will not be in its formal pronouncement, but in its continually nourishing and sustaining men and women who will act responsibly as believers in the course of their secular duties as citizens” (Newbigin, 1989, p.139). If the church is to effectively minister to the people in the community, it first needs to be a model of the Kingdom in all aspects of life. If the church can start modelling what it should be and what others can aspire to, then through love for one another, righteousness, justice and prosperity can result. The church may be imperfect like all of us, but God has chosen to use his church and has given each church certain gifts that are for the benefit of the whole community. It is also these gifts that need to be identified, developed and used for the benefit of the community and the glory of God.
The church has a four-fold role to teach, to assist, to empower and to speak out. These are not the exhaustive roles of the church but the four most important in enabling its people to respond to the poverty and other issues in society that they face each day.

**Teaching**

As well as the clear mandate of the church to preach, it also has a responsibility to teach. It should be teaching its members the moral demands of the Kingdom and how to relate to the contemporary problems of society. The church is called to help transform our values from those of this culture to those of the Kingdom. Within society, there is corruption, unjust market ethics, examination malpractice, environmental pollution and many traditional/cultural practices; these are all incompatible with the Scriptures and if the church is to be salt and light, the members will need to be taught that they are wrong and how to live right. Other areas, including tribalism, racism, human rights and inequalities between rich and poor, equally demand teaching from the church. If the church does not provide a lead in teaching about such contemporary issues, it cannot be relevant to society. The degradation and pollution of the environment is one area that has such a direct impact particularly on the poor and yet seems to get so neglected by all. The church can really have a particular role in this respect by teaching the principles of stewardship in relation to the earth being God’s and positive creation theology. Only Christians can teach stewardship—this is unique theology to Christians. We have a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to challenge others to handle all of God’s resources (including money) in a responsible way. Christians must take the initiative in promoting, challenging and advocating for a more sustainable, humane and just way of life. It is too important to leave this area to politicians, scientists or economists. The opportunities are there to be seized.

**Relief**

In some situations, where disasters and emergencies happen, the church should give immediate relief to the needy. To help the poor is an act of worship (Deuteronomy 26: 12-15) and not to help the poor is a turning away from and rejection of God (Proverbs 19:17). When the circumstances present themselves to us we should grasp them as opportunities to help within our means, just like the early church did in its collections for Jerusalem (see Acts 11: 27-30). Interestingly, the church has in its structure an inbuilt mechanism for collecting, transferring and distributing funds and other resources to other churches and communities in need. We should utilise this when these needs arise. Relief was practised by the early church in Jerusalem, where many believers sold their property in order to assist those in need. It should not be a continuous thing, or else it would lead to dependency.
Empowerment

The church as well as meeting extreme and occasional needs can work with communities to help the poor become more self-sufficient.

We should be in the business of hand-ups not handouts. The familiar phrase ‘give a man a fish and you will feed him for one meal; teach a man to fish and you will feed him for life’ is very true but can’t we go a step further—what happens if he wants to learn something else, does he have to wait for this person to return and teach him that too? No, he can learn it or find out for himself. If people find things out themselves with a little pointing or guidance then they are empowered; if things are always done for them they remain dependent. For example if the son of a wealthy man has always got his driver to change his wheel for him when he has a puncture, what happens when he is driving on his own and he has a puncture? A parallel can also be made with Christian conversion. If somebody professes faith in Jesus but is not given the opportunity to see how that faith can transform their everyday life, then the conversion is unlikely to last. They will not ‘own’ the conversion experience because it has not become real for them and in their lives.

One example of empowerment comes from an organisation in Delhi, India. The community was outraged at the condition of the slum that they were living in. But the people didn’t know what they could do about it and the slum landlords did not appear very interested. The organisation did not go and mediate with the slum landlords on behalf of the people, but instead they trained the people in how to contact and work with the landlords.

People have all sorts of needs and not just physical practical ones. They also have emotional needs, needs of their self-esteem and identity and spiritual needs. Empowering people in communities by getting them to find the answers, involving them in the processes and giving them the control of the projects goes a long way to meeting these other, less tangible needs of self-esteem, identity and confidence. One organisation in Cambodia has this as their mission statement: ‘to increase people’s ability to initiate change and to make choices in an environment of loving relationships’.

Perhaps we should change the saying to:

‘Give someone a fish—feed them for a day
Teach someone to fish—feed them for a while
Empower (animate) someone to think creatively—feed them for life’
TABLE 10: Jesus, the Development Worker

Jesus practiced a participatory, relational model for his interactions with communities. We can learn from him and many have copied his principles unknowingly.

Jesus rarely told people who he was or what they should do. Instead he allowed people to see for themselves. He did this because he knew that it is God who transforms (Mark 4 v. 26-29).

The woman at the well.
Jesus listened to people. He listened to the woman at the well in John 4. He spent time with her asking questions, listening and responding to her replies. He answered her questions by encouraging her to find answers to her own questions. Jesus accepted the process of questions that the woman needed to go through until she was ready to declare her need for the Messiah. Then and only then did he declare who he was. (John 4 v. 4-26) He could have directly told the woman at the well that he was the Messiah. He did not. Rather he allowed the fact of his Lordship to impact her so that she made the assertion of her need for his Lordship. Jesus allowed her to find out for herself. As a result she owned her new found revelation of who she was and who He was. Instead of being told it she had discovered it herself and therefore was much stronger in her understanding of it and better able to communicate it to others.

The feeding of the 5000
Jesus didn’t turn stones into bread as he could have done, but rather he used what people already had in order to give them the hope of change. For the disciples and the little boy that Jesus used in the feeding of the 5000, that experience and the lessons they learned from it would have stayed with then for the rest of their lives. Jesus used the opportunity he had to transform people. In our communities, transformation occurs when people realise that their lives can be changed through understanding that they can overcome difficulties.

Jesus heals the blind beggar
In Luke 18: 35-43, Jesus not only heals the beggar but also uses the occasion to heal the crowds’ attitude towards the beggar. Jesus uses the crowd by getting them to bring the man to him and then the crowd move from exclusion of the man to praise, wonder and inclusion of the man.
Speaking out

The church should prophetically speak against all forms of injustice and oppression. Proverbs 31: 8 says “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” The church can speak up for the poor as the Old Testament prophets did. As many levels of the church (local, national, international, para church) as possible can and should speak out. The louder the collective voice (not literally!), the greater the impact will be. At the local level, the church can do this through encouraging its members to be conscientious citizens who are informed about general issues. It is important like we said before, that the members are part of the solution, not part of the problem. For example in a situation where a local unit oppresses people through the illegal collection of levies or where supplies are being pilfered by governments, the church has a responsibility to speak to them prophetically and as John the Baptist did— reprimand them. If national resources are poorly managed, the church should speak out. If projects are poorly executed, the church should speak out. Human beings are stewards on this earth and God has high standards, he wants the best for all of us, especially the poor; therefore if things are not as they should be, we must speak out for God. In addition to this it can help the community organise itself to address such issues and seek justice. The church can help the world hear the voice of the powerless. In every country and community, there are the poor, the powerless and those who have no voice. Unless the church can stand with them, encourage them and be their voice if appropriate, they will be left defenceless against the powerful kings of this world. The church can be like the man in Ecclesiastes 9: 14-16 who saved his city from the powerful king. “True advocacy stands within the biblical prophetic tradition of strengthening the weak and the powerless so that they can, with God’s feet, stand on their own feet” (Hughes, 1999, p.199). We should also note that advocacy needs to be combined with empowerment, otherwise the relationship that keeps the poor powerless remains intact. Neither should advocacy be entered into without its partner—prayer.

We have a choice. We know that God is the God of justice and will bring about perfect and true justice when he comes again. But the question is: do we resign ourselves to the injustices of this world while patiently waiting for the coming of God’s final reign where injustice will be swept away? Or do we struggle for the alleviation of injustice while patiently waiting for the coming of God’s final reign where he will bring our efforts to fruition? If God left the church to continue his work on earth, surely the role of the church is not to sit and wait. John the Baptist, living during the time of Roman imperialism, did not sit and wait even though Jesus was about to be incarnated. He spoke against rulers, chief priests, tax collectors and civil servants. He spoke out because they were perpetrating social injustice and oppression. The church also has a role in releasing people from fear: fear of authority, fear of the rich, fear of the powerful....
**A conscience to the nation?**

In addition to these fourfold roles of teaching, assisting, empowering and speaking out, the church has unique opportunities to speak to and assist the nation. It can bring spiritual and ethical content to secular programmes. Governments have to make moral decisions. Many try and avoid those decisions or claim to operate in a moral vacuum but they cannot really deny this truth. Governments are to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right— that’s their job according to the Bible and that means making moral decisions. If governments have to make moral decisions, the church can assist it in carrying out these responsibilities— it can be a kind of moral mentor to the State on what is right and what is wrong. The church cannot sit on the face, it has to be a voice, standing up for God and his values. At a state level at least, the church can examine all government policies, can offer input into new ones or ones that need to be revised. They can be the prophetic voice of the people, but this requires taking the initiative and being prepared to defend what you believe and have advocated for.

**But...**

The church should be involved in these areas and could be such a force for God in society, but in many cases it has not been what it should have been. Often it has removed itself from the world and only dealt with ‘spiritual’ things; it has preferred to allow the status quo to remain. The lifestyle of Jesus, John the Baptist and the early apostles was not this, they turned the world upside down. They wanted radial changes, often we just want moderation. Because of this attitude, the church has remained silent in the face of injustice and oppression. When government schools remain without teachers or basic facilities (including chairs or desks), the church says nothing. When hospitals cannot function because of strikes and people die unnecessarily as a result, the church says nothing. When clinics are just ‘consulting rooms’ with no drugs or equipment, the church is silent. The reality of this silence is that in the face of poverty, poor people remain in their miserable state. God has been looking to us to be his hands, his feet, his voice, but we have been silent; and the poor remain poor.

The needs within society are vast, the scale of poverty is enormous, the task ahead is frightening. But God has placed his people, the church, right there to play their part. God uses professionals, development organisations, people who are motivators AND ordinary members. If we all work together, we can reach more communities and influence society for the positive. Remember we have a Person and a Book to equip us for the task ahead.
Churches and Development Organisations

Whatever the past relationship has been between these two bodies, there is no more important time than this to start working together. The church needs the development organisation and the development organisation definitely needs the church. The Latin American Congress on Evangelism (CLADE IV) clearly states the interaction between these two bodies. “We believe that Christian NGO’s, as bodies offering specialised services, must be at the service of the Body of Christ and work in his name in order to be a bridge between those who are included, those who are excluded and those who are ‘left on one side’. They neither can nor should have a wholistic ministry without co-ordination with the local church. We challenge them to work uncompetitively and encourage complementarily, remembering that we are one body. (Ephesians 4: 16)” (Tearfund Monthly Review, Feb. 2001).
TABLE 11: Attributes Of A Christian Worker

Are you aspiring to Christian Character in your service of the poor?

Do you:
- Think more highly of others than yourself?
- Have a love for the poor? And a call to serve those on the margins of society?
- See the image of God in even the most desperate human beings?
- Listen before you speak?
- Desire to serve people?
- Have a passion for helping people (both poor and non-poor) recover their true identity and discover their true vocation?
- Display sensitivity?
- See yourself as a steward of the gifts and possessions God has given you?
- Have a repentant spirit and are willing to seek forgiveness?
- Know (and affirm) the worth and gifts that God has given you and the weaknesses and sin that undermines your life?
- Have that genuine humility that being in Christ allows us?
- Live a life that declares the Good News?
- Have a passion to develop a wholistic worldview based on the Bible?
- Allow others to set the agenda?
- Act as a resource linker- using your knowledge and creativity to assist and support churches and people in their work?

Do you believe:
- That God has given gifts to the poor; and that these can be used for their own transformation?
- That the Bible speaks to the whole of life?
- That the poor are entitled to the same voice and dignity that you desire?
- That poor people have as much potential as any other person?
- That if you lay aside all you know except Christ, that in your weakness the poor may find strength (1 Cor: 2 v.1-3)?
- That you are still learning and that you can learn from the poor?
- That God was working in the community before you arrived?
- That you are a servant of the Master?
- That obedience to God (God’s call for our lives/lifestyles) is more important than success?
- That the Armour of God (of Ephesians 6: 13-18) is relevant to all parts of our lives?
are you:

- reliable?
- honest?
- demonstrating the fruits of the spirit?
- transparent and accountable?
- adaptable or flexible in your response to situations?
- open to the leading of the holy spirit and his changing of you?
- willing to speak about your strengths and weaknesses?
- growing in your understanding and obedience to god’s word?
- declaring god as the source of your strengths and the means by which your weaknesses are forgiven and overcome?
- living simply?
- dependent on god?
- seeking to display meekness: ‘the restrained self control which enables us to control our pride and potential misuse of our power’?
- welcoming?
- loving god with all your heart, mind and soul?
- longing and praying for the coming of the kingdom in this world?
- a good neighbour?
- patient?
- open to god using you at any moment?
- seeking transformation and justice?
- being continually equipped and encouraged to be lifestyle witnesses?

if you haven’t got there yet, don’t be surprised, none of us have- but don’t give up either- keep aspiring! god’s strength and grace is enough to pick us up each time we fall short.
CONCLUSION

The world in which we live is a fallen one. We see evidence of this every day in our own lives and in the lives of those around us. When we look more at the national and global level, we see the full extent of our fallenness—war, violence, destruction, manipulation, poverty, tribalism, terrorism, injustice, materialism and the universal desire for power and self. It is into this world that our Lord Jesus Christ was born into and into this world that, we, God’s people and God’s church are also born into.

God is not fazed by the sin of this world, he is majestic, he is sovereign, he is sufficient for everybody and every situation, he is complete and whole—there is nothing missing in God.

God has a plan to redeem and restore this world and this will culminate in a new heaven and a new earth when Jesus comes again. But in the meantime, the church is God’s plan. He has chosen his people (imperfect as they are) to fulfil his plan until he comes again. God has chosen to change the world through the lowly, the unassuming, the imperceptible—his people. “God choose a ragged bunch of Semite slaves to become the insurgents of his new order. He sent a vast army to flight with 300 men carrying lamps and blowing horns. He choose an undersized shepherd boy with a slingshot to lead his chosen people. And he worked through a baby in a stable to turn the world right side up!” (Sine, 1999, p. 248).

This is our calling and what Christian Wholistic Development is about—transforming the world and the lives of people so that their relationships with God, ourselves, others and the environment are restored to how God intended. The goal of the Christian life is to worship God, serve others and bring glory to God. If we are to do this, we will need an attitude of service. Jesus is our model servant and we should follow our Lord by adopting the spirit of service found in Philippians 2: 5-11. The attitude of service should pervade all we do. Dewi Hughes tells us that “kingdom greatness is to serve the servant, which is the same as saying to serve the poor” (Hughes, 1998, p. 80). Our calling is a hard one, a long-term calling, one where we will encounter hardship, sacrifice, opposition, frustration and even persecution—but it is our calling.

Yet it is possible. God is “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” (Ephesians 3: 20). Dr. Kirian Martin of ASHA, India says “Christians are sleeping giants, they can change the world if they want to.” We have the resources, the power, the strength, the hope and the vision that we need—it is all in God. We all know about human sin and fallenness, about the character of God, about the power of the cross, about the gift of eternal life. Gary Haugen helps us see how all these pieces of theology relate to the real world. He says “when falling into the well of doubt about why God permits injustice on the earth, I scrape my way out by standing first on the limits of my human knowledge. I grab onto the character of the compassionate Creator revealed on the cross. I step up to the mysterious foothold offered by the terrible gift of free will and lunge up to the dusty ground onto the hope of eternity” (Haugen, 1999, p.118).
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