



PARTICIPANT MANUAL

HELPING
WITHOUT
HURTING IN
AFRICA

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WITH BRIAN FIKKERT

**Helping Without
Hurting in Africa**
PARTICIPANT MANUAL

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**The
Chalmers
Center**

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Lesson 1: Introduction

Introduction

Hear the words of Kenyan Environmental Activist Wangari Maathai:

Africa has been on her knees for too long, whether during the dehumanizing slave trade, under the colonial yoke, begging for aid from the international community, paying now-illegitimate debts, or praying for miracles. At both the top and the bottom, all Africans must change the mind-set that affects many colonized peoples everywhere. They must believe in themselves again; that they are capable of clearing their own path and forging their own identity; that they have a right to be governed with justice, accountability, and transparency; that they can honour and practice their cultures and make them relevant to today's needs; and that they no longer need to be indebted—financially, intellectually, and spiritually—to those who once governed them. They must rise up and walk....

It cannot be overemphasized: Africans must decide to manage their natural resources responsibly and accountably, agree to share them more equitably, and use them for the good of fellow Africans. Otherwise, they will continue to allow outside forces to seduce or bully their governments into arrangements that allow those resources to be removed from the continent for a pittance. It is for Africans to determine whether they will work hard to build up their own talents and abilities, strengthen their democracies and institutions of governance, and foster their people's creativity and industry. Or, instead, whether they will continue to nurture a culture of dependency.¹

We believe that what Maathai was passionately calling for can only be accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, who not only saves people from their sins, but is right now working out His good rule and kingdom in this world. Only in Jesus can we hope for Africans to know God personally and experience His love and eternal life. Only through the work of Jesus can we hope that the African people will realise that they have been made in the image of God, and have been given skills, resources, and creativity by God that they can use to develop themselves and their communities without feeling inferior and helpless. Only through the work of Jesus can we hope for much success in our struggles against war, corruption, environmental degradation, and the many other challenges that Africa is facing today. This training will help churches and leaders to embrace their calling to preach the gospel and live as citizens of Jesus' kingdom in this broken world.



Opening of the Training

Opening Prayer and Introductions of Participants

Workshop Logistics

This Participant Manual can be photocopied for the participants, but the Facilitator Manual can only be purchased and may not be photocopied. You **should not** try to facilitate this training without the Facilitator Manual. The Facilitator Manual can be purchased through Amazon.com in print or in select African bookstores. See your facilitator for more information on how to obtain a Facilitator Manual. During the training, follow along in your Participant Manual and take notes throughout the lectures and group discussions.

- This course uses the Bible as the foundation for all our efforts to fight poverty and development our communities. Each participant is therefore encouraged to come with their own Bible, notebook, and pens.
- All participants are expected to arrive at the workshop on time, prepared to actively engage in discussions throughout the workshop. Participants are also expected to sign the attendance sheets every day.

Training Objectives

The goal of this training is to transform the mind-sets of African Christian leaders like you, and equip you to wisely help poor people in your churches and communities. This is not an easy task. As Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, said, "One of the most difficult things is not to change society but to change yourself."²



Expected Outcomes of the Training

As a result of walking through this course, we hope you will:

- Grow in your relationships with God, others, self, and the rest of creation.
- Gain a new focus on the kingdom of God in your ministries.
- Renew your love and compassion for the materially poor.
- Obtain knowledge about how to help the materially poor and materially poor communities wisely.
- Be equipped to go and teach these development principles to your churches and communities.
- Go home after the training is over, and put into practice the "Take-Home" activities of each lesson.
- Begin working on your own development with your churches and communities, using your own resources, even before receiving help from missionaries, foreign donors, or NGOs.

Hopefully a few of you, having been trained, will go out and facilitate more *Helping Without Hurting in Africa* trainings to benefit other leaders and communities. Not everyone will have the capacity to facilitate this training, but every participant will have a chance to go home and teach principles and activities to their churches, teams, and families through the take-home activities.

Course Timeline

You will be awarded with a certificate at the end of the training if you complete all of the lessons in this curriculum. Once you receive a certificate, you will be allowed to be a facilitator and train another group.

Curriculum Outline

Lesson 1: Introduction	1.75 hours
Lesson 2: Why did Jesus Come to Earth? This lesson will give us a biblical and theological foundation for how to think about the role of the Church in development and fighting poverty.	2 hours
Lesson 3: What is Poverty? This lesson will take us deeper into understanding what poverty really is, and we will learn about different types of poverty.	3 hours
Lesson 4: Broken Relationships in Africa In this lesson, we will look at how the different types of poverty are present in Africa and how they are challenging our communities today.	2 hours
Lesson 5: Fighting Poverty through Reconciliation This lesson will look at what success means in fighting poverty, what we are aiming for. We will begin to see what we should be doing to fight poverty.	1.75 hours
Lesson 6: Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development This lesson will look at the different types of responses we should give to different types of needs. Specifically, we will learn when to give money and when not to give.	2.5 hours
Lesson 7: Asset-Based Community Development In this lesson, we will learn how to encourage people to see the resources and abilities that God has given to them.	1.75 hours
Lesson 8: Opening Exercise Evaluation This lesson will review the exercise that we are about to do here in the introduction.	1 hour
Feedback, Testimonies, Evaluation, and Prayer	30 minutes
Lesson 9: Working for God's Glory This lesson will look at the importance of work and business in overcoming poverty.	2 hours
Lesson 10: Worldview Transformation This lesson will examine the importance of our beliefs and attitudes in overcoming poverty.	2 hours
Lesson 11: Broken Systems In this lesson, we will discuss how to change broken systems that keep people trapped in poverty.	2.5 hours
Lesson 12: The Prosperity Gospel	2 hours

This lesson will explain why the prosperity gospel is false and how it harms materially poor people.

Lesson 13: African Culture and Money **2.5 hours**

In this lesson, we will compare the way our cultures view and handle money with the principles we have learned in this curriculum.

Lesson 14: What Causes Change in Someone's Life? **1.5 hours**

This lesson will examine what causes someone to make a change in their life. We will also study Bible passages and determine if it is ever right to withhold money from someone who asks.

Lesson 15: Participation of the Community **1.5 hour**

This lesson will explain the importance of community participation in the process of development.

Lesson 16: Church Benevolence Ministry **2 hours**

In this lesson, we will learn how to set up a benevolence ministry at our churches, and what policies we should put in place to respond to poor people in our church and community.

Lesson 17: Urban Ministry: Opportunities and Challenges **2.5 hours**

In this lesson, we will look at the current urbanization in Africa and the opportunities and challenges it brings to our church ministries.

Lesson 18: Mission Trips within Africa **1.5 hours**

This lesson will examine how to help without hurting as our churches send teams on trips to other communities in order to preach the gospel and/or respond to the needs of the poor.

Lesson 19: Foreigners, Missionaries, and Sponsors **2 hours**

In this lesson, we will discuss the complexities and misunderstandings involved in our relationships to foreigners in Africa, especially foreigners acting as donors to our governments, NGOs or churches.

Lesson 20: Seed Projects and Further Resources **1 hour**

This last lesson will encourage us to take practical action to apply what we have learned from this curriculum in our communities. Possible next steps and programs will be suggested.

Feedback, Testimonies, Evaluation and Prayer **30 minutes**

Total = 38.5 hours



Statistics about Poverty in Africa

God has been working through His people and changes have been taking place. According to the World Bank report from 2016³, it was noted that there was a decline of people in extreme poverty in Africa, from 57 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2012. This is an amazing improvement! Specifically, we can see:

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- GDP in Africa is increasing at nearly 4% a year, higher than the world average of about 3% per year.⁴
- Life expectancy has increased in Africa. In 2013 compared to 2000, life expectancy increased by 6.2 years per person on average.⁵
- Between 1995 and 2012, adult literacy rates in Africa increased by 4 percent.⁶
- We can all see the ways Africans are utilising the new technologies of the Internet and cell phones for education, communication, and development.
- Despite all of these good changes, however, poverty in Africa persists. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the poorest region in the world.⁷ It is unacceptable that 43% of the entire population lives in extreme poverty, which is measured as living on less than \$1.90 USD per person per day.⁸
- It is also discouraging that this poverty remains despite over \$1 trillion USD in development aid having been transferred to the African continent from rich countries in the last fifty years.⁹ While this aid has helped a lot in certain cases, it has not always been given wisely nor used wisely.
- Only 25% of Africans have access to an improved water source.¹⁰
- There is great inequality in Africa. The 10 richest individuals in Africa possess wealth equivalent to the wealth of the poorest half of the population.¹¹
- HIV remains a serious problem in Africa. In 2012, 1.1 million people in the region died of AIDS—almost four times as many as in the rest of world combined (about 300,000).¹²
- Malaria is another serious problem. The U.N. Millennium Project has calculated that a child in Africa dies from malaria every 30 seconds, or about 3,000 each day.¹³
- Since 2010, violence has been on the rise in Africa, due to civil war, terrorism, and political unrest. There are four times more violent events currently than in the 1990s.¹⁴
- Unfortunately, all this violence and war has not been helped much by aid from other countries. About 40 percent of Africa's military spending is financed by misused aid.¹⁵
- Many African nations are also suffering because of huge debt burdens that they owe to rich nations. Because of debt interest, and in some cases because of corrupt rulers, many African nations find it impossible to pay off these loans.
- In the last 50 years, there has been real change in Africa. By certain measures, there has been a decrease in poverty. But many challenges still remain. There is still a lot more work to do, and we need to do the work in better and more effective ways than we have done in the past.

Partner Discussion Questions

1) *What good things are happening in your community? How are people developing or overcoming poverty?*

2) *What challenges of poverty remain in your community?*

3) *Do you think you and your church are doing enough to help poor people in your church and community?*



Opening Exercise—Small Groups (30-45 minutes)

Instructions: In your small groups, discuss the scenario selected by the facilitator and answer the questions that follow. Imagine that all of your group members are from the same church. Write down the ministry plan of your church as outlined by the questions. Write your answers on large sheets of paper and record your names on the top of the papers. Store them in a safe place, or give them to your facilitator. It might be helpful to record your own personal answers and notes in your manual so that you also have a copy of your group's answers.

Scenarios

Scenario 1—You must plan how to help the **beggars** in your city. One of the pastors in your city recently preached about giving to the poor, and many people in the church were convicted and wanted to do more to help the poor. Particularly, members of your church have felt a burden to help the beggars who they always see in the market. Up to this point, the church members have mostly ignored the beggars and avoided them, but a few church members sometimes give them some coins. The beggars beg for food while sitting on the ground. Some have physical disabilities while others seem healthy. Many of them are old. Your church really wants to give generously and help them.

Scenario 2—You must plan how to help the **widows** in your village community. A church member recently announced her opinion that your church should be doing more to assist the widows in the church. The other church members agreed, and added that the church should also at least do something small for the widows in the wider community who don't belong to the church. Many of the widows in the community are struggling, even though the cultural expectation is that their children and relatives are supposed to be taking care of them. Some very

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elderly widows are struggling, and some widows with small children lost their husbands at a young age.

Scenario 3—You must plan how to help **street children** in your city. Street children have been spending their time near your church. On Sunday, as people are coming to church, they beg for money and food from church members as they walk and drive to church. This annoys the church members very much. At times, the street children have even written graffiti on the church building. All the church members have agreed that the street children have become a problem, so something must be done. The church leaders have suggested that the church tries to love and care for them rather than calling for the police to intervene. The church members agreed to try.

1) How will you **plan and prepare**, before making a final decision on what to do?

2) What **money or resources** will you give away?

3) Besides giving resources away, **what other things will you do** as part of this ministry?

4) Which **people** from your church will take part in this ministry?

5) **How** will you put your ministry plans into action?

Title—*Helping Without Hurting in Africa*

Jonny's Story

Discussion—Share a time you or your church tried to help a poor person or community, but later found out that you made their situation worse.

*Don't let the worry of making mistakes stop you from helping the poor. We need to do even more to help and give more generously, but we need to do so wisely.

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on a photograph taken by Tabitha Kapic.

¹ Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009). Kindle, ed., Loc. 248-53.

² John Battersby, "Mandela", *Christian Science Monitor*, (10 February, 2000), 92, access online: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2000/0210/p15s1.html>.

³ Kathleen Beegle, Luc Christaensen, Andrew Dabalen, and Isis Gaddis, *Poverty in a Rising Africa* (Washington D.C., World Bank, 2016), xi, accessed online: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/poverty-rising-africa-poverty-report>.

⁴ "Recent Economic and Social Developments in Africa", *Economic Report on Africa 2016* (New York, United Nations, 2016), 3, accessed online: http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/era2016_chap1_en-rev6may.pdf.

⁵ Beegle, et al, *Poverty in a Rising Africa*, 88.

⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009), Kindle ed., Loc. 240-241.

⁸ Amy Frykholm, "Ending Extreme Poverty", *Christian Century* (8 June, 2016), 133, accessed online: https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2016-05/ending-extremepoverty?CID=POV_TT_worldbank_EN_EXT.

⁹ Moyo, *Dead Aid*, Kindle ed., Loc. 248-50.

¹⁰ *Economic Report on Africa 2016*, 26.

¹¹ Beegle, et al., *Poverty in a Rising Africa*, 136.

¹² Ibid., 92.

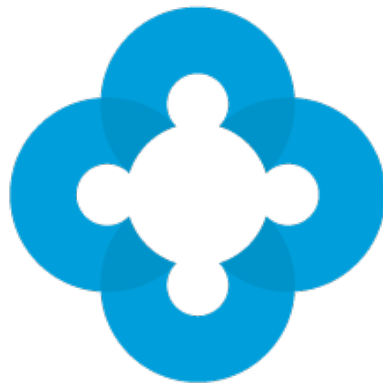
¹³ <https://borgenproject.org/10-quick-facts-about-poverty-in-africa/>.

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¹⁴ Beegle, et al, *Poverty in a Rising Africa*, 12.

¹⁵Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done about It* (Oxford University Press, 2007), Kindle ed., Loc. 1700-1701.

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**Lesson 2: Why Did Jesus Come
to Earth?**

Opening Discussion Question

*How would your church members at home respond if you asked them this question:
Why did Jesus come to earth?*



Jesus' Ministry

Our different responses to that question might have a connection to the way that we each respond differently to the poor.

Luke 4:16-21; Luke 7:18-23; Luke 4:43

Jesus came to earth to preach the good news of the kingdom of God, and he also showed the good news of the kingdom of God through his actions.

Jesus, as the King of kings, is using his power to fix everything in this world that our sin has ruined. He did not come only to save our souls, but also to heal our diseases, bring peace, establish his kingdom, and make us new.

If we think Jesus only came to bring us to Heaven, we will only try to save souls. But if we have a kingdom perspective, we will live as citizens of the kingdom, people who preach the gospel and show love and care to others in their daily lives. We will fulfil the Church's mission of preaching the good news, but while doing that, as citizens of the kingdom we will also heal the sick, care for the poor, counsel the broken, give justice to the oppressed, and give hope to the hopeless.



Salvation and Justification by Faith Alone

We need to understand how it is that a person can become a part of the Kingdom of God. Once we receive salvation, we become citizens of God’s kingdom, enjoying the blessings of the kingdom and doing good as citizens of the kingdom. But how does the life and death of Jesus actually save us?

Discussion Question:

How does Jesus save us? How are we able to join his kingdom?

Romans 3:10-12, 23

Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:21-24

When we are united to Christ, we are justified in God’s sight. He looks at us as people who are perfectly righteous, since Jesus’ perfect righteousness has been given to us as a gift.

Romans 5:17-19

We can never be “good enough” to save ourselves. We are saved by Jesus’ righteousness and good works, not our own. God sees the perfect righteousness of Christ in us. So we don’t need to live in fear of Judgement Day. We are saved by faith in Christ. This doctrine is called **justification by faith**.

But we still need to do good works. We won’t be perfect, but those who have true faith in Christ will try to live for God, confess and repent of sins, and produce good fruit.

Romans 6:1-2, 15; Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 7:17; James 2:17-18; 1 John 1:8-10

Discussion Questions:

Do most people in your country become Christians to be justified by faith in Christ and enter into His kingdom, or do they become Christians because they want God to give them food, money, or physical healing?

Explain your answer.

It is only because of justification by faith in Christ that we can be adopted as God’s children and enjoy the blessings of being part of the kingdom of God. The good news of the kingdom is only good for those who are justified by faith in Christ. For others who don’t trust in Christ for salvation, but only want things from God, the kingdom of God brings judgment and punishment.

If we want to enjoy having God as our loving Father who cares for us as his children by giving us good things, we must first become reconciled to God and have our sins forgiven, through justification by faith in Christ.



The Kingdom of God and the Role of the Church

Discussion Question:

We’ve been talking about the kingdom of God, but what is the kingdom of God? Is it here right now, or are we still waiting for it?

Explain.

Colossians 1:15-20. We learn from this passage that Jesus is the Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler of **EVERYTHING**. Jesus died to save us, but He also died to reconcile all things that He created. This means He wants to put **EVERYTHING** into right relationship with Him and each other. Jesus is making all things new!

Lesson 2: Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?

We need to understand that the Kingdom is **already here, but not yet fully here**. God's kingdom that Jesus preached about is **already** here. It came for the first time when Jesus came and died and rose again. We are experiencing the blessings of Jesus' kingdom **already**. **Revelation 21:1-4**.

Because the kingdom of God is already here and the Holy Spirit is at work, we can be optimistic that God will use us to make change and bring people out of poverty and develop our communities. Jesus came to preach good news to the poor. But **because the kingdom of God is not yet fully here**, we can be realistic and know that we will always have some poor people and some poverty ourselves until Jesus comes back.
Matthew 6:9-10.

Quotation from Desmond Tutu, former Archbishop in South Africa:

Dear Child of God, I write these words because we all experience sadness, we all come at times to despair, and we all lose hope that the suffering in our lives and in the world will ever end. I want to share with you my faith and my understanding that this suffering can be transformed and redeemed. There is no such thing as a totally hopeless case. Our God is an expert at dealing with chaos, with brokenness, with all the worst that we can imagine. God created order out of disorder, cosmos out of chaos, and God can do so always, can do so now—in our personal lives and in our lives as nations, globally.... Indeed, God is transforming the world now—through us—because God loves us.¹

King Jesus reigns over all things—individuals, creation, cultural systems, and spiritual forces.

We are to do our preaching, our daily work, our family duties, and everything else in our life as a citizen of the kingdom of God, and we do these things for God's glory.

Discussion Question:

Are African Christians taught well about the kingdom of God and the Church's role in Jesus' kingdom? Explain.

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Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom and showed the good news of the kingdom through His actions. The Church needs to follow the example of Jesus. The Church in Africa also needs to ask: "What we can do to help people out of the suffering they are experiencing right now?"

Two Mistakes to Avoid:

1. _____
2. _____

We should aim to be more like the Early Church. **Acts 4:32-35**

Discussion Question:

Explain whether African Christians today both worship together and care for each other's physical needs like the early Christians did?



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities will include assignments or activities to be carried out in your community, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Depending on what fits your situation and position, choose one of these two activities to do in response to what you have learned in this lesson.

1. Preach a sermon to your church on one of the Bible passages from this lesson about justification by faith or the kingdom of God. Alternatively, preach on one of the Bible passages in the small group discussion questions.
2. Have a conversation with your family, work colleagues, or community group about what you learned in this lesson concerning the kingdom of God. If they are interested and willing, try to organise a Bible study with them so that you can look at some of the key Bible passages mentioned in this lesson and discuss them together.



Small Group Discussion Questions

Read the following Scripture passages (continued on the next page). Discuss together what God teaches us in these passages about how to love and care for poor people. If you run out of time to discuss all the passages, study the remaining passages at home on your own.

1. What general principles do these passages teach? What would it look like to try to apply these principles today in our time and culture?

Amos 2:6-7 and Amos 5:21-24

Leviticus 19:9-10

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Proverbs 19:17

Proverbs 21:13

Isaiah 58:1-10

Luke 12:32-34

James 1:27

1 John 3:16-18

2. What can you and your church change to become more focused on Jesus and His kingdom? After discussing with each other how you will change, pray together as a group asking God to help you change.



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning)

Justification by Faith

African theologian Matthew Michael claims that the doctrine, justification by faith alone, is the least preached doctrine in African churches.² **Why do you think some African pastors don't preach about this doctrine?** Discuss this with a friend.

Sometimes pastors are afraid that if Christians believe in justification by faith, they will make excuses for their sins. But if people truly understand justification by faith, they will not be able to make this kind of excuse for sin. A person who is truly born again has a desire to please God and obey him. A good tree bears good fruit. Good works are evidence of true faith. Someone who has real faith in Christ will not use justification by faith as an excuse to sin. A true Christian will not be perfect, but he or she will not walk in sin. They will keep repenting, confessing, and trying to live for Christ.

Think about these questions and discuss them with others if you are able:

- 1. What could you or your pastor say during a sermon to make sure that people do not misunderstand justification by faith?**
- 2. How would you counsel someone in your church who has been using justification by faith and God's forgiveness of sin as an excuse for disobeying God? What Scripture passages would you share with this person?**

The Kingdom of God

Here are some more examples that illustrate how we already experience being in the kingdom of God now, but we are not yet experiencing the fullness of the kingdom of God until Jesus returns. Reflect on these examples.

1. Before Jesus came, people suffered from many sicknesses. After Jesus came with the kingdom, many people were healed of sicknesses and He even heals us today. Because the kingdom is not yet fully here, though, we are not always miraculously healed every time we get sick. In fact, we all die eventually. But when Jesus returns the second time, and the kingdom is complete, there will be no more sickness at all. And there will be no more death. We will live forever with Him.
2. When Jesus came, He set us free from slavery to sin. So now we have the power to say "no" to sin in our lives, but we still struggle with sin each day. We often do what we do not want to do. When Jesus comes again, He will completely take away our desire and ability to sin.
3. Before Jesus came, people did not experience the intimacy of God's presence as fully as we do now. After Jesus came, He sent us the Holy Spirit to be God's presence with us, but we still do not see Jesus face to face, which we will be able to do when He comes again.

Can you think of other examples that illustrate this feature of the kingdom of God?

Inspirational Stories

Read and reflect on these stories of churches that were taught about the kingdom of God. With a new mind-set focused on the kingdom of God, these churches greatly changed the way that they did ministry in their communities. Let us learn from their examples.

1. In 2005, in Rev. Emmanuel's church in central Burundi, the church members began literacy classes. After learning how to read, church members began reading the Bible and applying it to their lives. After learning about the kingdom of God, and that faith without works is dead, they began to get more involved in ministry and reaching out to the community. The church was able to teach people not only literacy, but also business skills and how to form community savings groups. Through these outreaches, the church has grown, regularly taking in new members. Their Sunday School program has grown from a few children to over 200 participants every week. The community was surprised when the church started to educate women and train them in financial management, but now their husbands are very grateful because they have seen the benefits of these trainings. Families from their church have new hope and new unity.³

2. Nigerian Anglican pastor, Canon Isaac, mobilised his church members as well as community members to undergo a program called Church and Community Transformation (CCT). It transformed the mind-sets of the people, giving them a more holistic view of the church's ministry. They were able to work together to build a simple health centre. Previously, they had to walk 1 hour to access the nearest health centre. They built the new health centre completely with their own resources. The health centre has blessed so many people, especially the 134 pregnant mothers who were able to safely give birth there so far! The church and community were also able to build a school. Because of this wonderful kingdom work, Isaac's church has grown from a few members to 170 members!⁴

3. In the year 2000, the leaders of Kampala Pentecostal Church in Uganda went to a conference and were taught a biblical worldview about Jesus' ministry and the kingdom of God. At the conference, God planted a desire in the leaders to reach out to their community with the love of Christ. The head pastor challenged the church members to identify the needs in their communities and take ownership of their problems. Church members went out and did very loving deeds in the community such as fixing wells, replacing roofs for homes of needy families, and providing food for orphans. At one time the church was looking after 1,200 orphans and built homes for about half of them! In addition, every cell group of the church was asked to look after a family with at least one person in the family having AIDS. The church members regularly go to these families, talk to them, hug them, and pray for them. If the person with AIDS in the family died, the

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group of church members would hold a worship service with the family. Even the Ugandan government noticed the church and named it one of the country's ten most influential organizations in combating AIDS. Through these ministries the church has grown to nearly 12,000 members.⁵

Line drawing by Justin Lonas.

¹ Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (New York, Doubleday, 2004), vii-viii.

² Matthew Michael, *Christian Theology and African Traditions* (Eugene, Ore., Resource Publications, 2013), Kindle ed., Loc. 5809-10.

³ From "The Kingdom in Action: A Case Study on Financial Education and Community Savings from Central Burundi", Cuba Parish, Gitega Diocese, Bugenyezi Commune, Five Talents. Used by permission.

⁴ Shared with the Chalmers Center by Richard Lister. A story from Nigeria of Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation program.

⁵ Scott Allen, Darrow L. Miller, and the African working group of Samaritan Strategy Africa, *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa* (Phoenix, Ariz., Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005), 49, accessed online: http://www.disciplenations.org/media/Against-All-Hope-Hope-for-Africa_ENGLISH.pdf.



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Lesson 3: What Is Poverty?

Opening Discussion Question

1) *Are you a poor person?*

2) *Do you have poor people in your church?*

3) *You would view someone in your church as poor if they _____?*

Fill in the blank with your own answers.

During the 1990's, the World Bank asked thousands of poor people around the world this question: "What is poverty?" Write down important words and ideas you heard in their responses.

Large group Discussion Questions:

What words or phrases did you hear that you think are significant?

What differences are there between how we described poverty at the beginning and how these poor people described their own poverty?



Facilitator Lecture: Understanding Poverty

As we try to help the poor, a large problem is that we often define poverty very differently from how poor people themselves do. **The way we define poverty determines the way we try to help people in poverty.**

When working with people who are poor, we need to get a proper diagnosis of what is causing their poverty before we can try to give the correct treatment to their problem.

What we believe about the cause of poverty will determine the treatment we respond with.

- If we think poverty is caused by a lack of material resources, we will give material resources to the poor.
- If we think poverty is caused by a lack of knowledge, we will try to educate the poor.
- If we think it is caused by oppression from powerful people, we will work against corruption.
- If we think people are poor because of their personal sins, we will try to evangelise and disciple the poor.

The Causes of Poverty

In fighting poverty, we need the correct diagnosis and correct treatment, so we have to take time to figure out the true cause of someone’s poverty.

Discussion Questions:

<p><i>What do you think are the main causes of poverty in your country?</i></p> <p><i>What are the main causes of poverty for poor people in your church and in your community?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/>

Think about this scenario:

What if a man comes to your church and asks for help paying for school fees for his children? Should you help him and give him money?

When we look at poor people around the world, the symptoms of poor people look mostly the same. They all lack material things. But what is causing the lack of things might be very different for each person.

Isaiah 58:10—Spending ourselves on behalf of the poor.

Examples of causes of poverty include sinful behaviour—like laziness or sexual immorality, lack of education, being oppressed by people, being oppressed by demonic forces, having false beliefs, disease, lacking opportunities, lacking resources, natural disasters like droughts or floods, social isolation, broken governmental and economic systems, or physical or mental disabilities.



Drama

Write any lessons you learned from the drama.

Questions from the Drama:

1. *Why is it difficult to diagnose someone's true cause of poverty?*
2. *What could the aunt and uncle do to truly help this family?*
3. *Should they give any money or things to the family? Why or why not?*



What Does the Bible Teach about Poverty?

The root cause of all poverty and problems in this world is **sin**, going all the way back to the Fall of Adam and Eve.

The overall story of the Bible is about God and his relationship to his people—**Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation**. What happens in each of these four parts of the biblical story?

Creation

Fall

Redemption

Consummation

Today where do we fit in the story?



Creation—The Four Key Relationships

Genesis 1-2

The Bible teaches there is one God who is Triune—**three** persons sharing **one** divine essence. This means that God is a relational God. Since humans are made in God’s image, we were created also to have relationships. In the story of Creation, we see four key relationships that God intended humans to have.

CREATION

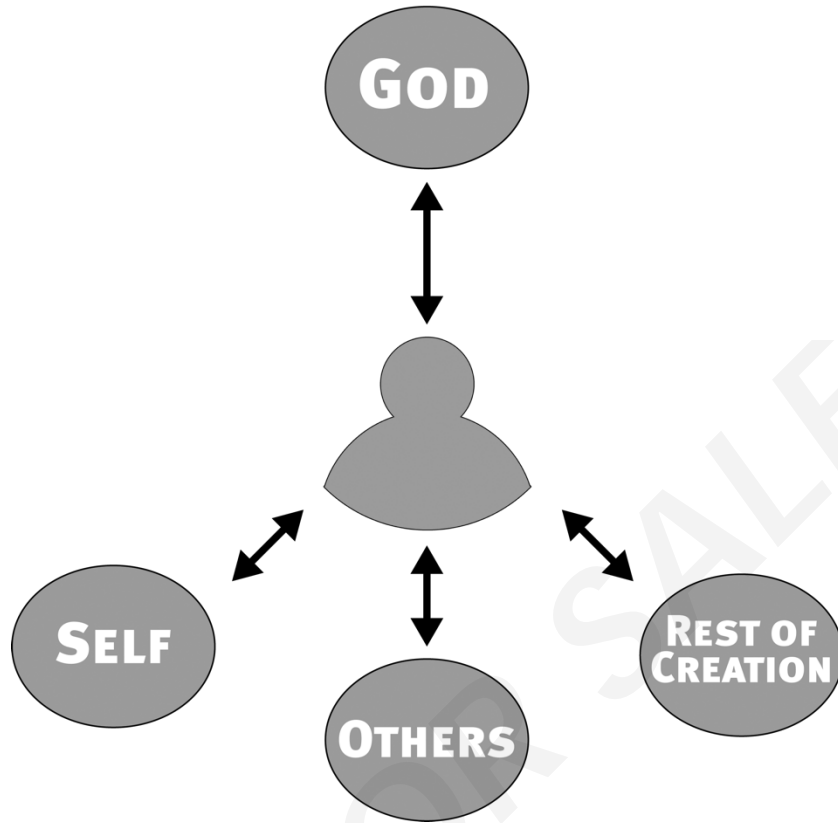


Fig. 2.1

Adapted from Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 27.

1) Relationship with God

2) Relationship with Others

3) Relationship with the Rest of Creation—Read **Genesis 1:28-30**. We are to be stewards of God’s creation. We work in God’s world, and we create culture. God has given us this world to understand it, to protect it, to rule it, and to manage it.

4) Relationship with Self—This refers to how we think about ourselves. God created us to be at peace with ourselves and to take care of our bodies and our souls. All people are created in the image of God. This means every person has worth and dignity.

When these four relationships are working correctly, people are able to do what God calls them to do. They can glorify God by working and supporting themselves and their families. When all these relationships are working rightly, we say that there is “shalom”. Shalom is a Hebrew word that means that everything is at peace, the way it is supposed to be. Before Adam and Eve sinned, everything was good, and there was no pain, no problems, no hunger, no disease, and no poverty.



The Fall—The Four Key Relationships

Genesis 3

How was Adam and Eve’s relationship with God broken or damaged?

How was Adam and Eve’s relationship with one another broken or damaged?

How was their relationship with the rest of creation broken or damaged?

How was their view of themselves damaged?

Poverty is the result of the sin of humanity who rebelled against God. Poverty is the result of these four key relationships being broken. And since we all experience broken relationships, we will see that we all have some poverty in our lives.

THE FALL

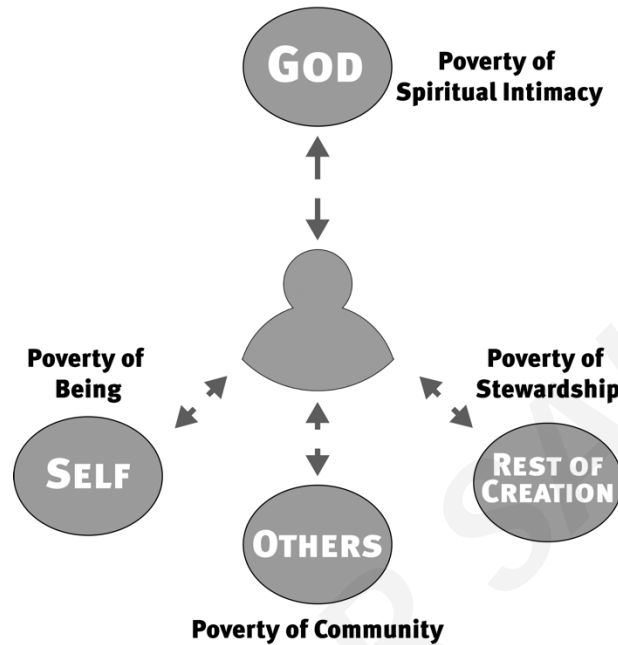


Fig. 2.2

Adapted from Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 27.

Five Types of Poverty

Since poverty is about relationships not working correctly, there are then four types of poverty based on the four types of broken relationships, plus one more that results from this.

1) Poverty of Spiritual Intimacy

2) Poverty of Community

3) Poverty of Stewardship

(a. Not being good stewards of Creation. b. Not working in God’s world)

4) Poverty of Being

5) Material Poverty

So, who are the poor? All of us are poor. All people can struggle with one or more of these broken relationships.

When we come to know Jesus, we are forgiven for our sins and have peace with God, and begin to recover from our poverty of spiritual intimacy. Then Jesus begins to transform our hearts and behaviour so that we hopefully have less poverty in the other three areas.

For some people their brokenness in these four relationships results in material poverty. **Material poverty** is what people normally mean when they use the word "poverty". Material poverty refers to people lacking money or things that they need to live, such as food, shelter, or healthcare.



Example: The Story of Mary

Mary lives in a slum in Kenya and is struggling in poverty. She grew up in a society which informed her that men are superior to women. Her parents did not value her as much as her brothers, so they did not send her to school for very many years. When she was finally married, she was only one of her husband's wives. Her husband beat her regularly until she finally ran away to live on her own. Now she was living with material poverty. She felt so inferior to others that she had no confidence to apply for a job. Instead, in her desperate situation, she decided to become self-employed. She needed a loan to get started.

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She got a loan from a local dealer, but he charged her a very unfair 300 percent interest. She started a business of selling homemade charcoal in the local market, but there were hundreds of other people selling charcoal so the prices stayed very low. Mary never even considered doing another more productive kind of work because she felt like she had to do what everyone else was doing. Frustrated by her inability to pay the loan, Mary went to a witch doctor in search of help. The witch doctor said that her problems with poverty were caused by Mary having angered the ancestral spirits. She told Mary to purchase a bull and sacrifice it to them. So Mary used almost all her remaining money from the loan to purchase the bull. At the end, she was even more materially poor than she was at the beginning, and even more frustrated and hopeless.¹

Discussion questions:

1) What types of poverty did Mary have besides material poverty?

2) How did those other types of poverty contribute to Mary having even worse material poverty?

3) If we wanted to help Mary and we simply gave her money, would it help her out of her desperate situation?

4) What could we do to truly help Mary, not only with her material poverty, but with all her types of poverty?



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your community, church, or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned.

Think of at least one person you know in your church or community in need of help. Try to help this person holistically, in all four of their key relationships. Commit to helping this person over a long period of time. Tell your family about what you plan to do and see if they will commit to helping this person along with you. You might consider beginning by inviting the person to your home for a meal, so that you can build the relationship and get to know one another. Pray for this person every day. Once a month, take time to think about this person and their four key relationships, and review how you've been helping, and what more you could be doing. These are questions you can ask yourself regularly:

- How have I been helping this person grow in their relationship with God?
- How have I been helping this person to have hope, and not feel inferior or worthless?
- How have I been helping this person to have a better relationship with his or her family, friends, and neighbours?
- How have I been helping this person to get meaningful work to do to support him or herself?

Small Group Discussion Questions

1) Think about your own life. What are some ways in which your relationships with God, self, others, and the rest of creation need healing? What are some specific things you can do to seek God's healing in these relationships in the next two weeks?

2) Have any of the four broken relationships contributed to material poverty in your life or in the life of one of your family members? Which ones? If you feel comfortable doing so, share your answer with your group members. If the problem is ongoing, discuss together how the broken relationship could be addressed.

(Questions continued on page 34)

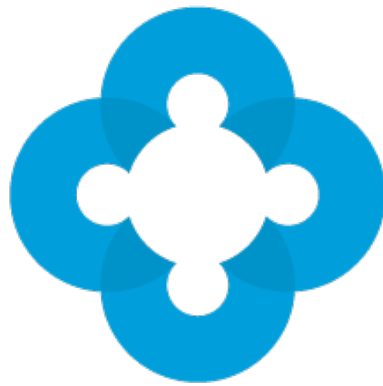
3a) Briefly, tell your group members a personal story about a time that you helped a poor person. (Example: I could say, “Last week, I met a beggar in the market and I gave him some groundnuts.”) Complete parts a. and b. completely for one story, before the next person shares a story. There will not be time for every person in the group to share a story.

3b) Analyse each story that is shared in your group. Critique other people’s stories with love and gentleness.

- **Did the group member help the poor person to have less material poverty? Explain.**
 - (Example: “Yes—I gave the beggar food to provide for his need.”)
 - **Did they help the poor person to have less poverty of spiritual intimacy? Explain.**
 - (Example: “No—I did not help the beggar to grow in his relationship with God.”)
 - **Did they help the poor person to have less poverty of being? Explain.**
 - (Example: “Yes—I shook his hand and talked to him, trying to show him he has dignity and value.”)
 - **Did they help the poor person to have less poverty of community? Explain.**
 - (Example: “No—I did not help him meet new people or get involved at a church.”)
 - **Did they help the poor person to have less poverty of stewardship? Explain.**
 - (Example: “No—I did not help him to find meaningful work in God’s world.”)
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-
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Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on an Adobe Stock Photo.

¹Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts, 2e* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 60.



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**Lesson 4: Broken Relationships
in Africa**

Opening Discussion Questions

1) *Share some examples of poverty of spiritual intimacy in your church, community, or region.*

2) *Share some examples of poverty of community in your church, community, or region.*

3) *Share some examples of poverty of stewardship in your church, community, or region.*

4. *Share some examples of poverty of being in your church, community, or region.*



Facilitator Lecture

In this lesson, we are going to look at how the different kinds of poverty are present in Africa and how they are affecting our communities today.



Material Poverty

The brokenness in the four relationships results in material poverty for some people. Material poverty is the lack of sufficient income and other basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and even basic education. The various aspects of material poverty can work together to keep people feeling trapped.

The diagram at the top of the next page gives us some common examples of the other four types of poverty:

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS



Fig. 3.1

Adapted from Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 27.

Poverty of Spiritual Intimacy

1) **Idolatry.** An idol is **anything** that is placed before or above the one true God. It can include worshipping false gods like wood, trees, stones, rivers, mountains, animals, spirits, and statues.

In what way can this type of poverty of spiritual intimacy lead to material poverty?

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Exodus 20:1-6. If we take anything in our lives and make it more important than God, that is idolatry.

Do we see this type of idolatry in our communities today? In our churches? Explain.

2. Pleasing the spirits and ancestors. In many places in Africa, people give offerings and sacrifices to please the spirits or ancestors. **Deuteronomy 18:10-11** and **1 Timothy 2:5**. It is common to give offerings to the spirits, gods, or ancestors to try to gain spiritual protection, to gain money, to receive healing from disease, or to secure a specific political appointment or job. Unfortunately, the people often doing these practices are the vulnerable and desperate poor who feel like they have nowhere else to turn.

Is ancestor or spirit worship a problem in our communities?

In what way can this type of poverty of spiritual intimacy lead to material poverty?

3. Witchcraft and Charms. Through these practices, people are trying to utilise the power of the spirit world to obtain their desires, rather than trusting in God's power alone. **Revelation 21:8**.

Do Christians need to be afraid of other people using witchcraft or charms against them?

Read **Ephesians 6:10-18** and **1 John 4:4**.

4. Hopelessness. Without forgiveness and hope of eternal life, without believing that God has a plan for their lives, people probably do not have hope in the future, and so might do nothing to try to change their situation. Read **Romans 8:28** and **Philippians 1:4-6**

Is hopelessness a problem in our communities?

How can we give people hope?

5. Materialism. Materialism is valuing material possessions and money as the primary way to find meaning in life and the way to be happy. **Luke 12:15** and **1 Timothy 6:6-10**. Even in some churches, the focus is not on glorifying God and thanking Him for forgiveness, but rather on worshiping God in order that He gives us more money.

In what way can this type of poverty of spiritual intimacy lead to material poverty?

6. Sin. Even as Christians, we still sin sometimes. If we are truly born again, we will confess our sins and repent and keep on fighting against sin. But when we sin, it displeases God, and we also experience natural consequences for living in the foolish way God does not want us to live. So in a way, when Christians sin we experience a little poverty of spiritual intimacy. But the more common example of poverty of spiritual intimacy is non-Christians living in sin. Sin, of course, takes many forms but there are some common examples of sins that not only create poverty of spiritual intimacy, but they also cause material poverty. These include alcoholism, drug addiction, theft, gambling addiction, and sexual immorality. It is largely (though not exclusively) through the sexual sins of adultery and fornication that the epidemic of HIV is spreading throughout Africa.

Are any of these sins causing a lot of material poverty in our communities?

In our churches?



Poverty of Community

1. Tribalism, Conflicts, and Wars. Many countries in Africa have a long history of wars, coups, rebel groups, banditry, tribal conflicts, and even genocide. Every day, 9,500 people on average are uprooted from their homes in Africa, mostly due to conflict and violence.¹ At the end of 2015, nearly 12.4 million people in Africa were living as refugees or displaced people.²

Is tribalism or conflict a problem in your region?

Is the Church speaking out about it?

God cares about all tribes and wants people of all nations and languages to be included in his Kingdom. **Revelation 7:9-10**.

“Ethnicity should enrich us; it should make us a unique people in our diversity and not be used to divide us.” – Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former president of Liberia.³

“We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race.” – Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations.⁴

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2. Broken Relationships between Men and Women. This refers to broken relationships between men and women. In society, it can be manifested by preferring boys to be educated over girls. In the area of marriage, the broken relationship between a man and a woman can manifest in rape, polygamy, unfaithfulness, or divorce. About one third of African women report to have experienced domestic violence (physical or sexual), not counting those too afraid to report.⁵ Another issue in African marriages is that some people believe the role of men is to sit while the women do most of the work.

In our churches, do some people think it is acceptable for husbands to beat their wives?

Genesis 1:27. We must remember that men and women both are equally made in the image of God. Even though created with different bodies and different roles, they were both created to have dignity and value. Women were created to help men with their work, but not to do all the work. **Ephesians 5:28-29.** Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. To beat one's own body is inhuman.

3. Child abuse. Many children have been subjected to child labour working as house girls/boys in people's homes, digging in people's gardens. More than 40% of all children aged 5–14 labour for survival in Africa.⁶ Excessive beating is often used as a form of punishment by parents.

In what ways did you suffer abuse as a child?

How did this affect you?

4. Corruption.

We will come back to this topic in another lesson.

5. Land disputes. Examples include arguments between neighbours about field boundaries, arguments between families on issues of inheritance, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, disputes between the state and indigenous peoples, and arguments between companies and local populations about rights to exploit mineral, water, or other resources.

Are there land disputes in your community? Explain.

What is the Church doing to help resolve such disputes?



Poverty of Stewardship

This could take the form of improper care of the environment, or not working and being productive. **Psalm 8.**

1. Pollution and Rubbish. Water, air, and land are being polluted by leaked chemicals, fumes in the air, and plastic rubbish. The result is unhealthy soil, breeding of pests and disease, and taking away the beauty of God's creation.

When we do not obey God's commands to take care of his creation, we experience the painful natural consequences of our actions.

Quotation from Kenyan Environmental Activist, Wangari Maathai:

The challenges facing agricultural communities throughout Kenya are mirrored throughout Africa and many of the poor countries in underdeveloped regions. In these regions, concern for environmental issues is treated as a luxury. But it is not: protecting and restoring ecosystems, and slowing or reversing global warming, are matters of life and death. The equation is simple: whatever we do, we impact the environment; if we destroy it, we will undermine our own ways of life and ultimately kill ourselves. This is why the environment needs to be at the centre of domestic and international policy and practice.⁷

2. Deforestation. Deforestation refers to the systematic destruction of trees and forests without replanting the trees. Deforestation in Africa has produced famines, desertification, water shortages, drought, massive economic and social dislocations, and widespread resource-based conflicts. 80% of households in Africa depend on wood or charcoal as their primary energy source.⁸ The deforestation rate in Africa is four times the world average.⁹

Which of these environmental problems do you see in your community?

Is either the Church or the government addressing these issues? Explain.

3. Laziness. It can involve taking shortcuts, not working when the manager is away, showing up late for work, or not completing work within the agreed-upon timeframe. It is common, especially for office workers, to report to work but then to spend hours discussing politics, receiving personal calls, shopping, or reading the national dailies.

In what ways does this type of poverty of stewardship result in more material poverty in your community?

4. Living in fear of spirits. There is a common belief among some people that spirits control the land, rivers, or particular forests in Africa. Because of fear, these people refrain from utilising the resources God has given to them. Other people may not do specific jobs or may not work at all, claiming that the spirits would not allow them. These people do not realise that God has given us the power and responsibility of being stewards over the land. **Read James 4:7.**

Are there people with this kind of fear in your community?

What can the Church do to help them?

Poverty of Being

Poverty of being refers to having a broken relationship with ourselves. We will narrow our discussion to looking at only two types of poverty of being. Basically, people might either 1) think too lowly of themselves and not see their value as people made in the image of God, or 2) they might think too highly of themselves, as more like gods themselves, rather than as servants of God.

Poverty of Being 1: Low-Self Esteem

People have this type of poverty of being when they feel too lowly about themselves. It can include feeling inferior, unworthy, incapable, incompetent, ashamed, fearful, humiliated, voiceless, and dependent. In general, it is having a negative attitude about yourself. It is very common (though not universally true) for materially poor people to have low self-esteem and to feel all of these things.

This is a story from Bryant Myers, an American seminary professor and author. Bryant was sitting at a fire in the Kalahari Desert talking to a woman from a local tribe. He told her that the Son of God had died for her sins. In response to this, she said she could believe that God would let His Son die for a white man, and maybe even a black man, but she could never accept the idea that God would let His Son die for a woman, especially one of her tribe. You can see that she had a poverty of being. Not only can poverty of being contribute to material poverty, but in this case, she felt so worthless and inferior, that she refused to accept even the good news of the gospel. Her poverty of being was also keeping her trapped in poverty of spiritual intimacy. She needs help to recover her identity as a child of God, made in God's image. She needs to be taught that her true role in life is to live and work as a child of God in the world He made for her.¹⁰

1) What causes low self-esteem in your family, community, and region?

2) How can you counsel materially poor people in your church who feel ashamed and helpless because of their poverty?

History of the slave trade and colonialism. Through the colonial period, Africans learned to fear westerners, learned to feel shame about their own cultures, and learned to feel submissive and inferior about themselves.

- Augustine Musopole, reverend and author from Malawi, said, "This is where the African feels his poverty most: A poverty of being, in which poor Africans have come to believe they are no good and cannot get things right."¹¹
- We need to learn and preach that Africans are not inferior, that they do not always need to be dependent on foreigners. We are made in the image of God and God can use us to transform our communities.

When you see a foreigner in your country, do you feel equal to him in status and value or do you feel inferior?

Why?

Discussion Questions:

Do women in your church and community feel inferior to men or equal in value before God?

Do people with disabilities or albinism in your church feel just as important and valuable to the church ministry as everyone else? Explain.

If these people are not in your church, why might that be?

We must preach and we must remember that we are all equally made in the image of God, blessed with talents and gifts, no matter the colour of our skin or where we came from. **Psalm 139:13-16.**

Poverty of Being 2: God Complex

People with a “god-complex” think of themselves more highly than they should, as superior to others. We call it a god-complex because these people are putting themselves almost in the position of God. They want to receive glory and honour. They think of themselves as very important. Often it is those who are materially rich who feel this way.

When you walk through town and you see a beggar begging for money, do you feel superior to that person? Do you feel more important?

One of the main times that we think of ourselves too highly, with a god-complex, is when we try to help the materially poor. We imagine that we help them out of love, but we must question our motives. Are we helping them in order to be praised as their saviour? Are we helping them so that we can feel better about ourselves? As we help them, are we blaming them for their poverty, thinking that we are better than them and that they deserve their poverty? Do we think we are more intelligent and have all the best ideas compared to materially poor people?

Is someone willing to admit their mistakes and share a story about when you yourself had a god-complex when helping materially poor people?

Harming the Poor

The equation for harm in fighting poverty:

- 1) The rich who are trying to help have a god-complex.
- 2) The materially poor people being helped have low self-esteem.

$$1 + 2 = 3$$

- 3) After being helped, the materially poor feel even more ashamed and helpless while remaining in poverty, and the rich feel even more

superior. The materially poor and the materially rich who tried to help end up *having bitterness towards one another*.

Case Study about Water Filters:

1) *What do we learn from this story?*

2) *Does anyone want to share a similar story to illustrate this equation that you have heard or seen? As you share, do not share specific names or organisations.*

So what can we do to avoid making these mistakes when we help people? How can we remove our god-complexes?

First, we need to change our definition of poverty. We must repent of only thinking about money, and understand that there are many types of poverty.

Second, we need to remember that in some ways we all have poverty (in the four important relationships), and so we all need Jesus.

Third, we need to be humble and keep encouraging the materially poor that they are made in the image of God and are equal to us.



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Choose one of these activities below.

1) Plan a worship service centred on the four relationships. Briefly teach the church about them. Consider having a time of repentance and confession, looking at how we have all failed in various ways in our four key relationships. Particularly take time to confess how we have contributed to making the poor feel low self-esteem. During the service, preach a sermon about how all people are made in God's image, and are worthy of our respect and love.

2) Alternative for non-pastors—Teach your family about the four relationships. Then, together as a family, make a plan for how you will try to specifically improve each of the four relationships.



Small Group Discussion Questions

1) Looking at your own relationships with God, self, others, and the rest of creation, what can you do to improve them?

Relationship with God

With self

With others

With the creation

2) Read **Psalm 19:1-4**. The creation is supposed to reveal God's glory. What can your church do to make your community's physical environment a more beautiful and healthier place that better reveals God's glory?

3) When we look at materially poor people, do we see them as equals made in the image of God? Explain.

4) Read these Bible verses about pride. Discuss how to remove your god-complexes. **Romans 12:3, Romans 12:16, Matthew 23:12, and Proverbs 26:12.**

5) Do you yourself ever feel inferior to those with more money than you? Explain.

6) Pray together as a group. Take time to repent, ask for humility, and ask God to transform your relationships with Him, self, others, and creation.



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning)

Understanding the Image of God

Read and reflect on Genesis chapters 1-3.
What does being created in the image of God really mean?

On the sixth day of creation, God created His most amazing and unique creatures, human beings. Read **Genesis 1:26–27**. God finished His work of creation with a “personal touch”. God formed Adam from the dust and gave him life by sharing His own breath (**Genesis 2:7**). Accordingly, humanity is unique among all God’s creations, being made with both a material body but also an immaterial soul (which we can also call our spirit).

Having the “image” or “likeness” of God means that we were made to resemble God. But we should not think that this resemblance is similar to how we look in a mirror and see an image. Adam did not physically look like God. God, in His divine nature, does not have a body; rather He is Spirit. Read **John 4:24**. The Bible talks about God’s hands or ears or eyes in a metaphorical way to help us to understand Him better. So the image of God must refer to something else besides physical appearance. Throughout church history, Christians have thought deeply about what the image of God means and concluded that being made in the image of God refers to ways that we were created to be like God. And we were created to be like Him in many ways:

1. We were created not only as physical beings, but also as spiritual beings, to be like God who is Spirit.
2. We were created to be holy and righteous as God is. This can be called the “moral image of God.”
3. We were created differently from the animals to have intelligence, language, emotions, and moral freedom.
4. Our God is a triune God. As the three persons have always been in perfect loving relationship with one another, so also were we created to be in loving relationship with God, ourselves, others, and the rest of creation.
5. God created us to be His stewards and to do His work in this world. As God rules the creation, He created us in His image to take part in ruling the creation. Read **Genesis 1:28–30**. We are to manage the creation, lovingly care for it, and work in it to develop it and make it fruitful and beautiful. We will discuss more about this work in a later lesson.

The image of God is something that is shared by all people. Our sin stains the image of God in us, but we are all still people with God’s image. Even the evillest people in the world are still made in the image of God. We have to remember that every person is made in the image of God, including non-Christians, including those with physical disabilities, including those who have mental disabilities, including those still in their mothers’ wombs—absolutely everyone. This should cause us to have respect for all people, even those who are uneducated and extremely materially poor. Every life is precious. Because we are all made in the image of God, harming another person not only wrongs that person but is a sin against our almighty God as well. We must treat everyone with honour, dignity, respect, care, and love.

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The goal is that we all should have true and healthy views of ourselves as people made in the image of God. But we can all-too-quickly forget this important truth. Some people have never been taught this at all. When we have an improper view of ourselves, we have poverty of being. We need to avoid both low self-esteem and god-complexes.

The Moral Image of God

It's good to reflect more deeply on the moral image of God (the second meaning of the image of God in the list above). Adam and Eve were created in God's image, but when they rebelled against God, Sin came into the world. Adam was our representative for humanity, so we bear the consequences of his sin together with him (**Romans 5:12**). Now all people are born with a sinful nature and all people sin against God just like Adam and Eve did.

Sin has distorted God's image in people. We've used our rationality to think up complicated lies. We've used our relationships to manipulate and use other people. And instead of using our power over the earth to represent the loving rule of God, we've corrupted and ruined much of the creation around us. How do we get out of the mess and destruction that we have caused? We need to have the image of God restored in us. But this is something that we are unable to do on our own. We need a new Adam, a new representative whose image is not stained by sin, someone who perfectly resembles God and perfectly obeys God.

We need Jesus! Jesus is the perfect image of God. He is God himself. Reflect on **2 Corinthians 4:4**, **Colossians 1:15** and **Hebrews 1:3**. In the incarnation, Jesus revealed God to us in the most powerful way. As a human being, he walked and talked with people face to face. And Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience and righteousness. When we have faith in Jesus and become united to him, he restores in us the moral image of God. We are justified by faith and receive the perfect righteousness of Christ as a gift. Now when God looks at us, he sees the perfect moral image of God because he sees Christ in us. Read and reflect on **Colossians 3:9-10**, **2 Corinthians 3:18**, **Ephesians 4:22-24**, **1 Corinthians 15:49**, and **Romans 8:28-30** to see how God restores the image of God in us through Christ.

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on a photograph taken by Musa Tukurah.

¹ Ellie Kemp, ed., "Africa Report on Internal Displacement" (Oslo, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2016), 5, accessed online: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2016/2016-Africa-Report/20161209-IDMC-Africa-report-web-en.pdf>.

² Ibid.

³ Quoted in Joe McCarthy, "It's Time for a Woman to Lead the UN: Here Are 5 Candidates" (Global Citizen, 24 August, 2015), accessed online: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/its-time-for-a-woman-to-lead-the-un-here-are-5-can/>.

⁴ Quoted in Shirley A. Jones, ed., *Simply Living: The Spirit of the Indigenous People* (Novato, Calif., New World Library, 1999).

⁵ Luc Christensen, "Domestic Violence and Poverty in Africa: When the Husband's Beating Stick is Like Butter" (World Bank, Africa Can End Poverty blog, 18 January, 2016), accessed online: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/domestic-violence-and-poverty-in-africa-when-the-husbands-beating-stick-is-like-butter>.

⁶ "Child Labour in Africa" (International Labour Office, 2002), accessed online: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_decl_fs_37_en.pdf.

⁷ Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009) Kindle, ed., Loc. 3482-93.

Lesson 4: Broken Relationships in Africa

⁸ John-Paul Iwuoha, "Africa's Addiction to Charcoal—Everything You Need to Know about This Billion-Dollar Business!" (Smallstarter, 15 September, 2013), accessed online: <http://www.smallstarter.com/browse-ideas/how-to-start-a-charcoal-business-in-africa/>.

⁹ "Deforestation 'Faster in Africa'", (BBC News, 26 May, 2009), accessed online: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8066871.stm>.

¹⁰ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 129.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

NOT FOR SALE



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Lesson 5: Fighting Poverty through Reconciliation

Opening Discussion Question

What does the word "reconciliation" mean?



Facilitator Lecture

In previous lessons, we looked deeply at the nature of poverty and the four broken relationships. This lesson looks at the solution to those problems of poverty. And the solution is reconciliation.

Redemption

Colossians 1:19–20

Romans 5:10

The Consummation

The solution to poverty is



The Ministry of Reconciliation

2 Cor. 5:17–21

How much progress in the work of reconciliation can we expect?

Is it possible that God will use us to completely eliminate poverty? Explain.

We can be realistic that we will not solve all of the world’s problems this year. But at the same time, we can go forward in hope and confidence knowing that Jesus is at work. He will use us to bring some restoration to the four broken relationships we see in the world.

Jonny’s Story

Remember in the first part of my story, I accidentally caused harm to my brother, his family and myself while trying to help him in my own way. I truly wanted to help him but I only ended up financing his alcohol addiction, which led to more broken relationships. I was really disappointed in him but later on I realised that part of the problem was my approach to helping him. So I prayed about it, and then went to see him again. I apologized for the strong words I had used about my disappointment in him and then reaffirmed my respect for him as my elder brother. He also apologized for letting me and his family down and for the way he conducted himself. We reconciled and had discussions together with his family. Both I and the other family members affirmed his gifts and potential, especially his skill in the area of farming. We also noted the free land in the village which is very fertile for farming. I praised God for this wonderful time of reconciliation and we closed our time together in prayer. Later, I gave him farming tools that he needed. I also continued to encourage him that he can get out of his situation and urged him to pray for guidance and come back to God. After some time, my brother started going around the village looking for work, and was paid for working in other people’s gardens. He saved some money and started his own farm and continues in this work up to today.

What did Jonny do well?

What could he have done differently?



Reconciling the Four Relationships

1. What can we do to help reconcile people to God?

2. What can we do to help people have a healthy view of themselves?

3. What can we do to encourage people to reconcile with one another?

4. How can we become better stewards of God's creation?

5. What can we do to support people having meaningful work to do in God's world?

These activities that we have listed are all ways to fight poverty, even though we often do not see them that way.

We also need to focus on reconciliation as we measure our success in our work against poverty. We want to see people who glorify God by living in right relationship with Him, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation. This reconciliation will lead to a reduction in material poverty as well.

Fighting material poverty is working to reconcile the four relationships so that people can fulfil their calling of glorifying God by working and supporting themselves and their families. Fighting material poverty involves more than just making sure that people have enough material things and money. It involves the much harder task of empowering people to *earn* enough to meet their material needs through their own meaningful work in God's world.

Reconciliation with God

A person's relationship with God is the foundation for all the other relationships. So the most important goal is reconciling people to God, and that is where we must begin.

1 Pet. 3:15–16

1. *Can you think of any situations in which it would be wise to help people with a material need before preaching the gospel to them?*

2. *If people reject Jesus and remain in their poverty of spiritual intimacy, is there anything we can still do to work with them to overcome their other types of poverty?*

Reconciliation with Self

Reconciliation with self means a person will think of themselves in the correct way, knowing that they are created in God’s image, and blessed with gifts and talents.

Reconciliation with Others

We are called to have a loving relationship with our neighbours following the example of God’s love for us. We must see each other as created in the image of God. Former Archbishop of South Africa Desmond Tutu once said - “When we see others as the enemy, we risk becoming what we hate. When we oppress others, we end up oppressing ourselves. All of our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others.”¹

Matthew 5:9 and Romans 12:17–21

Through the Church’s ministry of reconciliation and through love of neighbours, churches also build trust in the community. Poverty reigns where there is no trust in the community.

In what ways does a local church build trust in a community?

Reconciliation with the Rest of Creation

Reconciling the relationship with the creation has two parts. First, it means doing good work in the world for God’s glory and for the provision of our families. We will wait and talk about that in the next lesson. Second, it means taking care of God’s creation by being good stewards.



Anthony’s Story

This is a story from the other author, Anthony, when he was trying to help a beggar in a market in Uganda.

There is a beggar that I often saw in the market. He looked like he was in great need. I had given food to him a few times. But one day I decided to talk to him. I found a merchant to translate for me. I shook the beggar’s hand, introduced myself and we had a brief conversation. I found out that he has the ability to make ropes out of old bags, which is something I have no idea how to do myself. I affirmed that he was made in the image of God and it was God who gave him his gifts and skills. So I bought him some used bags for 3000 shillings. With the bags I gave him, he could make enough ropes to earn about 18000 shillings. I figured that helping him work to earn food was better than just giving him food which would keep him in the situation of begging. I talked with him about God and found out that he was a fellow Christian. I affirmed his gifts and dignity, and encouraged him to go back to working with his hands. I was proud of myself for having spent an hour helping this person instead of just giving a handout. Next time I went to the market I could not find him and a merchant told me he was no longer begging and was out selling ropes. But unfortunately, after a few weeks he returned to begging again. I now realise that although what I did was better than just giving a handout, it was not enough, and there was more I should have done.

1. What did Anthony do well in this story?

2. Did Anthony try to help reconcile all four of the beggar’s relationships? Explain.

3. What did Anthony do wrong, or what more could he have done?



Focusing on the People

Since we have seen that the main work of fighting poverty is actually the work of reconciliation, then this means that fighting poverty is not so much about material things, but it is about people.

Isaiah 58:10

Many times, we focus on programs instead of people. We design programs for materially poor people without their involvement.

We must walk together with materially poor people. We must work against our god-complexes and remember that we all have poverty, just in different ways. We and materially poor people need to go to God together to ask him to fix all of us. Instead of just offering our programs to materially poor people, we need to be together with them asking God to transform all of us.



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Try to do all four of the activities below, but choose at least two of the activities that you will make sure to do.

1. **Personally memorize Isaiah 58:10. If you are a church leader, see if your whole church would be willing to memorize it together. Explain to the congregation that we need to focus on building relationships with materially poor people rather than always making quick programs for them.**
2. **In order to have a better view of yourself, read Psalm 139 and think about how God carefully created you and how much he values you. Write down five things that you appreciate about yourself, about the person God made you to be. Then tell your spouse or a friend five things that you appreciate about them, who God made them to be.**
3. **To improve your relationship with God's creation, plant a tree somewhere in your community or at your church, especially in a place that will benefit others more than yourself. Make sure to give the new tree some protection so it doesn't get destroyed by animals.**
4. **Share the gospel with at least one non-Christian friend or acquaintance.**



Small Group Discussion Questions

What do these passages teach us about building relationships with the materially poor?

a. Matthew 25:31–46

b. Luke 14:12–14

In your church or ministry do you build close relationships with the materially poor or do you focus only on quick programs? Explain.



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning)

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most important components of reconciliation. Forgiveness is crucially important in dealing with poverty of community and broken relationships.

Reflect on this question. *What does it really mean to forgive someone?*

1. Forgiveness is about your heart and what you feel towards the other person and not about how the other person responds. Therefore, you can still forgive someone even if full reconciliation is not possible. We cannot control how another person responds, but we can control our own response.
2. Forgiveness means we try to think well of the other person. We leave the judgment of that person to God, and we ask God to bless the person. Reflect on **Romans 12:19-20**.
3. We remember that we are equally a sinner before God along with the other person. We forgive because we have been forgiven by God. As God has shown us mercy, we show mercy to others. Read **Ephesians 4:32**.
4. A person can be truly forgiven but still experience painful consequences for their actions. For example, a murderer can go to prison, but the victim's family can forgive the murderer from their hearts while the murderer has to remain in prison.

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5. When we forgive, we should try to forget, even though that is not always possible. We should try not to keep thinking about the offense and we should not repeatedly speak about it again. We should not hold on to our bitterness.
6. Forgiveness can be a long process in which we keep asking God to change our heart and feelings toward a person who has hurt us.
7. If we are truly born-again Christians, we will forgive others. God says that if we don't forgive others, we will not be forgiven. Read **Matthew 6:14-15**.

Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive? Take time to pray right now. Ask God to change your heart toward that person. Ask God to give you the strength to forgive them. Ask God to bless that person and give them grace and peace.

Focusing on People and Reconciliation: Hamida's Story²

Here is an inspirational story that reminds us to focus on people and relationships rather than quick programs.

Hamida lives in Malawi. She and her seven siblings moved to stay with her grandmother after her parents passed away. Hamida helped her grandmother in her business of collecting and selling firewood. Although Hamida worked hard, they were not earning enough money for the family. Her siblings had to drop out of school. As men started to approach Hamida for sex, she resisted at first. But as the family became desperate for money, she decided she would try sex work. For over four years, Hamida gave her body to be used by men in order to feed her family.

An organisation called Word Alive wanted to reach out to Hamida and other girls like her in the community. Word Alive formed a girl's group for them to support one another. At first Hamida was suspicious. But she joined the group and was glad to meet other girls who shared her experiences. The group became a safe place to ask questions and learn new information. They formed very close relationships. The group encouraged Hamida to get HIV tested and supported her decision to stop engaging in transactional sex. She went through some more trainings and learned how to lead small groups. She started teaching other girls about sexual reproductive health and cultural practices that are harmful to girls. Now Hamida is a peer mentor and leads a group of 17 girls. She has been helping other girls to stop engaging in transactional sex and find other work to do. She receives a small stipend from Word Alive while she uses her time to mentor other girls. She and her peers are getting business training and are planning to start a business together to support themselves and their families.

We can learn from Hamida's story how important relationships are. We must focus on the people. Although Word Alive's ministry involves programs, the core of the ministry is about people. The focus is on the relationships between mentors and peers. It is these relationships which gave Hamida the support she needed to have hope and see change in her life.

Line drawing by Justin Lonas based on a photograph by Anthony Sytsma.

¹ Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (New York, Doubleday, 2004), 49-50.

² Taylor Smith, "Together Doing More: Breaking Barriers to End Hunger" (The Banner, October 2017), 23-24, accessed online: https://s3.amazonaws.com/prod.assets.thebanner/36907%20Banner_2017oct._final%20low%20res.pdf.



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Lesson 6: Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

Opening Discussion Questions

1. *In what situations should we give money to people in our community who ask for help?*

2. *In what situations should a visitor from a foreign country give money to people in our country?*



Facilitator Lecture

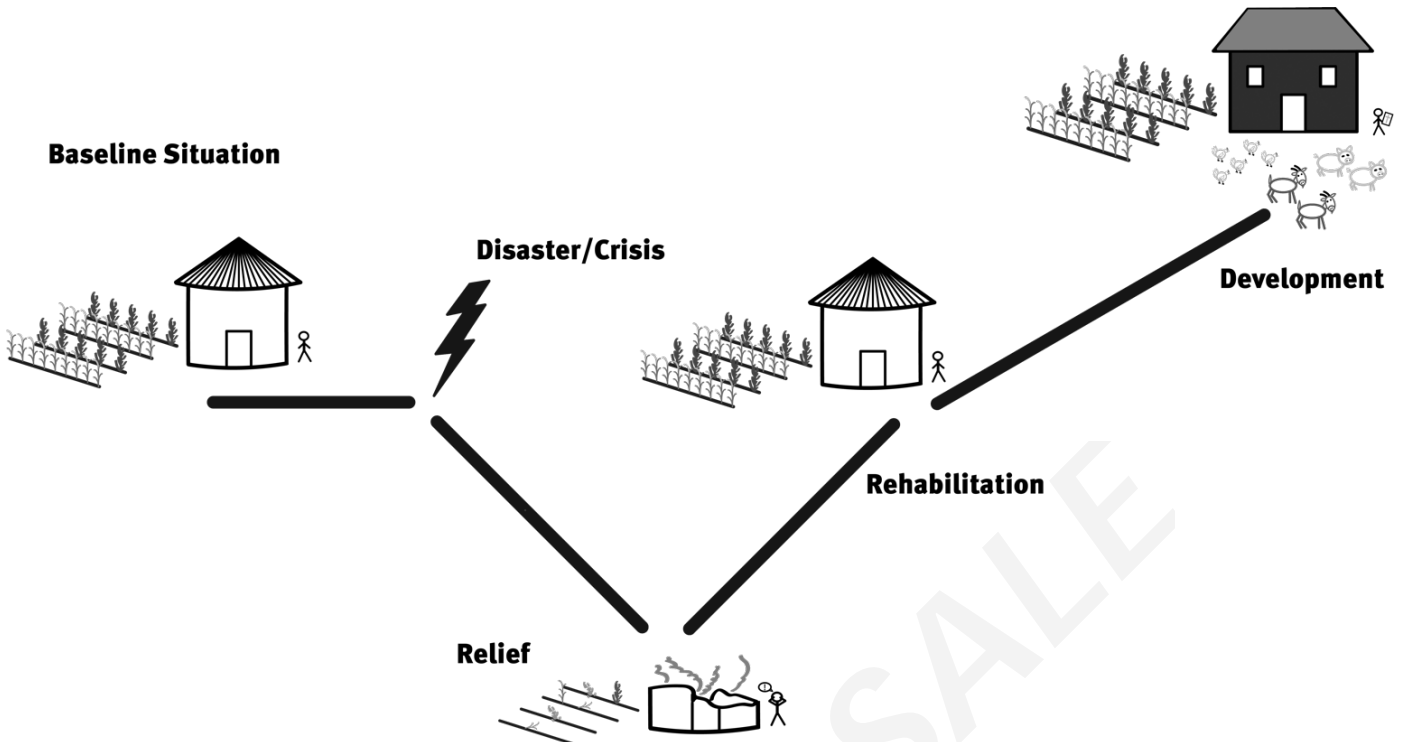
The first step is to understand the situation and figure out whether it calls for *relief*, *rehabilitation*, or *development*.

Relief—This is the temporary emergency aid given to reduce immediate suffering from a natural or man-made problem. Relief tries to "*stop the bleeding*".

Rehabilitation—Rehabilitation begins as soon as the "bleeding" stops. This is the attempt to bring people and their communities back to the same normal conditions they had before the disaster or emergency.

Development—Development is the process of change that moves people to a better way of life than they have ever experienced before. Christian development should not be only concerned with raising people's income, but should primarily focus on moving people closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation. As in rehabilitation, development is not done *to* people, and not done *for* people, but done *with* people.

Diagram¹



But development can also be an approach to helping an individual or community that is just in their normal situation and has not experienced a disaster. In fact, when we want to help people experiencing poverty, development will almost always be the correct approach, and in most cases, it will not be after a disaster.

Is it relief, rehabilitation, or development:

- *When we teach people new methods of sanitation?*
- *When we take someone to the hospital who has been bitten by a snake?*
- *When we help someone rebuild their house after a flood?*
- *When we send a missionary to a community to preach the gospel?*
- *When a child soldier escapes and returns home, and we give him counselling?*
- *When we find an abandoned child who is starving and we feed this child?*
- *When we give farmers a sample of new cassava stems to try out?*

Out of the three responses, relief is the one where resources and money are normally given. Money and resources can be given or utilised in rehabilitation or development, but this should only be done in a way that complements the people’s use of their own assets. If money is utilised in rehabilitation and development, it will be done in partnership, with the people being helped also contributing what they are able to.

Do the homeless people in your capital city need relief, rehabilitation, or development? Discuss.

Doing Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development Well

Relief

1. **Relief is infrequent.** There are very few situations in which people actually need relief.

2. **Relief needs to be immediate.** If people cannot help themselves, then a quick response is important. It is helpful to plan ahead. Have your church or organisation think about what types of disasters and crises people in your community could face.

3. **Relief is temporary.** Relief is only provided during the time that people are unable to help themselves. We don't want to stop our assistance too early. But if we give for too long, we can create unhealthy dependency that is harmful. We are all dependent on other people for certain needs. There is nothing wrong with that. But unhealthy dependency is when people are dependent on others for basic needs that they should be able to obtain on their own. They end up feeling like they cannot live without the one who is providing resources to them.

Share a brief story of a community or an individual that became stuck in dependency because relief was given for too long.

Rehabilitation

1. **Rehabilitation is done *with* people not *for* people.** The people being helped should be involved in designing and running the program.

2. **Do an assessment at the beginning to get an understanding of the disaster situation.**

3. **Respond when the people in need are not already being helped by local people and local organisations.** This means we only help when there is a need and the local organisations cannot help or they refuse to help. When local organisations help, they are able to build up good relationships, unity, and goodwill in a community. If we try to help as outsiders when local organisations are able to help, we might only get in the way or, in some cases, actually crush the

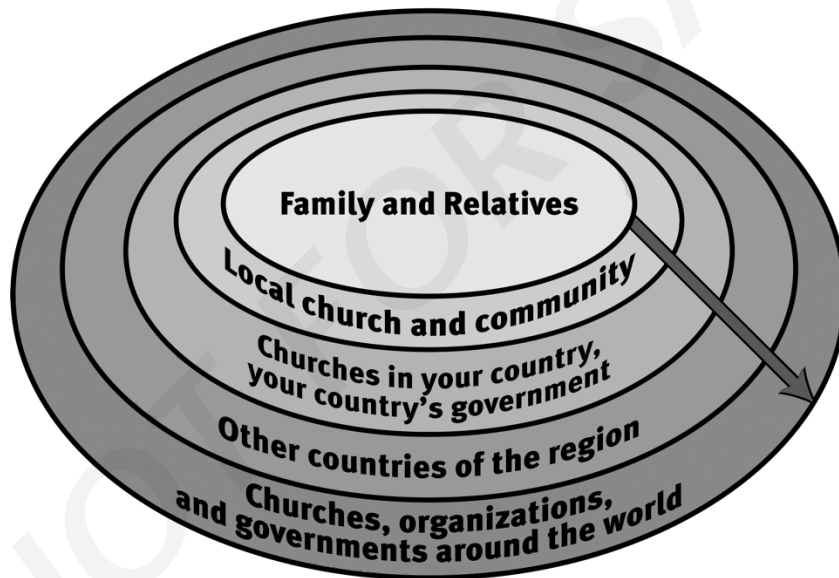
efforts to help by the local organisations.

We can see from some biblical texts that the first people responsible to help a person are those people who are closest to him or her in terms of family relationship, church, or location.

1 Timothy 5:8

Galatians 6:10

CIRCLES OF PRIORITY



The idea of the circles of priority is also important because we all have limited time and resources. If we do not have any focus but try to immediately help all the people and problems we hear about, we become overwhelmed and paralysed. But the circles of priority show us where our greatest responsibilities are. Of course, when we have the ability, the love of Christ still compels us to sacrificially help others who are far away from us.

Story of Joyful Giving

In 2010, nearly half of the population of Niger was food insecure and in need of some relief. An international Christian organisation donated grain and worked with a local Christian group, SEL, to sell that grain to people in need in several communities at a highly discounted price. In the past, during times of food insecurity, the international organisation had provided some grain that would be given freely to individuals in greater need, for example people with disabilities or

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chronic illnesses. But this time, the international staff challenged SEL to consider raising funds locally from churches to purchase the grain that would be distributed freely. At first, the SEL members were sceptical, not imagining that there was anything they as poor Christians could do on their own to help others. But the Christians gave generously and were able to purchase grain for 98 people who had the most need in the several communities being helped by the international organisation. In the end, SEL thanked the organisation for encouraging them to help their own community members. They said, “It was such a privilege to help, to know that we weren’t just distributing somebody else’s gift, but it was from our own pockets, and from our own hearts. Everyone in the village knew that it came from us.”²

How do you think this community might have changed because the 98 people were given grain by neighbours instead of foreign donors?

Development

Development is the process of moving people to a better way of life where they are better able to support themselves and their families by working, and they are growing in their relationships with God, self, others, and the creation. We will look at development principles in the next lesson, and you can read more about development in the “Further Reflection” section at the end of this lesson.



Large Group Activity—Examples of Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development

Examples of Relief:

Examples of Rehabilitation:

Examples of Development:

Common Mistakes

Lesson 6: Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development

One of the biggest mistakes we often make in fighting poverty is giving relief in situations that actually need rehabilitation or development. Giving relief to those who do not need it can cause them to feel helpless and ashamed. In some cases, they will become dependent, stop looking for work to do, and therefore not fulfil God's purpose for their lives.

There are several things we need to consider before giving someone a relief response.

1. Is there really an emergency?

2. Is the person helpless, or can they contribute to their own improvement?

3. How responsible was the individual for their situation? If people are helpless, then we should provide relief, whether they are partly to blame or not. But if they are not helpless, then the manner in which we do rehabilitation or development might be partly determined by the extent to which they are responsible for their own situation. Having a conversation with people whose irresponsible behaviour has led to their pain can make them realise their mistakes and reform.

Can one person share an example of when you refused to give money to someone so that they could experience the consequences of their unwise action and learn from it?

4. How much relief has this person been receiving from you or others in the past? How likely is he or she to be receiving such help in the future?

Many foreigners who visit Africa give relief at the wrong times, thus contributing to the problems of shame and dependency in Africa. This can easily destroy the initiatives and projects of the local people. If an NGO decides to give everyone a free mosquito net, what happens to the local person who receives his income from making and selling mosquito nets? As Africans, we need to be willing to speak up and gently confront foreigners when we see them giving in an inappropriate and harmful way.

It is helpful for your church to have a set of policies in place about when and how to help the poor who ask for help. This way the church will not be accused of favouritism for helping some people and not others.



Large Group Discussion

What types of people need ongoing handouts of financial assistance and resources?

But most people are not completely helpless, so they do not need ongoing relief. And when we treat people like they are helpless, we do them more harm than good. Even many of the people in the categories we just discussed are able to do something to work in this world and help others, even if they cannot do it for money.

Story about Eddy the Beggar



Avoiding Paternalism

The rule is: *We should avoid paternalism.*

Paternal means "fatherly". So paternalism means acting like you are a parent and the people you are helping you treat like dependent children.

Do not **routinely** do things for people that they can do for themselves. In trying to solve issues of poverty, routinely doing things for materially poor people that they can do for themselves creates dependency, lowers people's self-esteem, and only keeps them stuck in poverty.

Drama about Paternalism

How do you think the person felt who was being helped?

Varieties of Paternalism

1) Resource paternalism—This is giving resources or money to people when they have access to their own resources.

Sometimes it is good to give something to people once, even if they could buy it for themselves. Resource paternalism means we **routinely** give people resources that they could get for themselves. Robert Lupton explained it well in his book *Toxic Charity*³: *“Give once and you elicit appreciation; give twice and you create anticipation; give three times and you create expectation; give four times and it becomes entitlement; give five times and you establish dependency.”*

One easy way to avoid paternalism and avoid creating dependency is to charge a small fee for resources that you want materially poor people to receive. They will take more ownership, they will have more dignity, and their opinion will be heard.

2) Spiritual paternalism—This is when we assume that we are more spiritually mature than poor people and therefore we should be the ones to preach or lead in times of prayer. In our churches and programs, let us not show favouritism and only give leadership positions to those who are rich. A materially poor person, rich in faith, still has the ability to preach, lead worship, or evangelize.

3) Knowledge paternalism—This is when we assume that we have all the best ideas about how to do things. Sometimes we do have important knowledge we need to share with materially poor people, but as we do so, let us be open to their ideas as well.

Story about Knowledge Paternalism

4) Labour paternalism—This is when we do work or labour for people who could do the work for themselves.

5) Managerial paternalism—This is when we plan, manage, and direct activities to help poor communities when people in those communities could do those things on their own.

Does anyone have stories of paternalism you would like to share, either in your family, your church, your community, or your country?



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Choose one of these activities:

1) For Church Leaders

Together with your other church leaders, deacons, and staff members, write down all the organisations and churches you can think of in your community who are trying to help the poor. Are they doing relief, rehabilitation, or development? Do the people in your community need relief, rehabilitation, or development? Is there a mismatch between what the organisations are doing and what the people need? How can your church address this mismatch? Make a plan for what your church will do. Then have your leadership communicate to the entire church what your plan and focus will be. Pray for God's help and direction in that ministry.

2) Alternative for Development or Government Workers

Do the same activity in #1, but with your colleagues from your work. Discuss what other organisations are doing.

3) Alternative for Other Individuals

Analyse your own extended family relationships. Identify whether you or other family members are practicing paternalism in their relationships with other family members. Make a plan on how to address it so that a change can be made.



Small Group Discussion Questions

1) Have you ever tried to help a materially poor person without really listening to his or her opinion because you thought you had all the knowledge and solutions? Explain.

2) Is your church being paternalistic in any of your ministries? Explain.

3) Are you aware of any government programs for the poor that are using the inappropriate response (for example—giving relief when development is needed)? What specific actions can you take that might start to bring about some change in these programs?

4) Think about the materially poor people in your community. Do these people need relief, rehabilitation, or development? Has your church been helping in the appropriate way?

5) Are you personally giving any money to the organisations in your community that are doing good work to help the poor? If you said “no”, then why are you not giving?

6) Pray together. Repent of any paternalism and ask God to guide you and empower you to help in the right ways.



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning)

Principles of Good Development

1. **Development is about all five types of poverty.** Don't forget that development is not only about reducing material poverty through creating new roads, new buildings, and increasing people's incomes. The real goal of development should include people growing

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in their relationships with God, self, others, and the creation. The goal is not to have our country become a rich but immoral, unhappy, and godless nation. The goal is to glorify God and have healthy relationships.

2. Participation starts at the beginning. As with rehabilitation, development is done *with* people not *for* people. The people should be involved in every part of the process. Don't just go into a community and start a project. First get to know the people. Figure out together with them what the project should look like and what they can contribute to the project (money, time, talents, materials, etc.).

3. Start small. Make sure the project can be managed by the community mostly on its own. Don't make the development project so big that it cannot continue on its own without ongoing outside assistance. You do not want to rely too much on outside resources or outside people. You want the project to be sustainable and continue even after the outside funding has stopped.

4. Help people learn how to learn. Instead of just instructing people in one new technology or one new practice, teach people how to learn and experiment. It's easy to tell a farmer to use a new variety of maize, and he might use it and have some success. But what happens if a disease destroys that maize? Then the farmer might just wait for you to come back and tell him what to do. Instead, we want to teach people how to experiment, be innovative, how to learn and manage different situations. That way if a disease destroys one crop, the farmer might try out new crops on his own without waiting for you to come again.

5. Encourage the community to mobilise its own resources. A community can't rely 100% on outside donors from other countries or from other regions of your country. If all the money and resources are coming from other places, local people won't feel involved in the project, won't have a sense of ownership and won't manage it well.

Finding Your Role

It is extremely difficult for any one person or church to do all three types of responses to poverty in their community—relief, rehabilitation, and development. All three are very different things and require different skills and different programs, and they all take time. It is best to focus on one group or one community that you are trying to help. And then you should focus on either meeting the relief needs, or the rehabilitation needs, or the development needs, but not all three. If your church is known as the place that gives out free food to those who desperately need it (relief), then your church probably would not be the place that was also working on helping people find meaningful jobs (development). It's best to focus on one and to do it well. Other churches and organisations may be meeting other needs that you aren't. Together we can make a big difference.

How can you decide what your church should do? The first step is to figure out what kind of services are already being provided by organisations or other churches in your community. Second, study your community to figure out the needs of the materially poor in your community. Are they in danger of losing their lives so that relief is needed, or can they contribute to their own improvement? Most of the time the people in our communities are not in need of relief, but rather development. We suggest that you consider focusing on development after taking this course because most churches and organisations have not thought thoroughly about these issues and give mostly relief.

Stories

1. Analyse this story and consider how it illustrates the importance of the circles of priority you learned about in this lesson:

In Uganda, there were two tribes with a history of conflict. The North Eastern tribe had continually stolen cattle and killed people during raids into the tribe west of this North Eastern tribe. After many years of government intervention and church initiatives, peace was finally made, and reconciliation between the two tribes was achieved. The violence stopped. But soon after, there was a desperate famine experienced by the Eastern tribe. Some of the churches of the tribe west of this North Eastern tribe pooled their efforts together in order to bring food and other resources to the North Eastern tribe. They knew this action would show their forgiveness and love and help to heal the old hurts. However, after they gathered the resources, the United States government beat them in the race to help. The USA sent many tons of relief food, so much so that the local Ugandan church's efforts became redundant and unnecessary. The foreigners ruined this opportunity for the Ugandan church to exercise their responsibility and good stewardship, and destroyed this opportunity to show love and forgiveness and create more reconciliation between the two tribes.⁴

2. This is an inspiring story about reconciliation and good rehabilitation ministry:

After attending a Vision Conference in Rwanda in 1998, a pastor challenged the members of his church to assist returning refugees who had fled Rwanda as a result of the 1994 genocide. The church members welcomed these returnees, helped to rebuild their homes, brought them food and water, and helped their children return to school. The former refugees were astounded by the sacrificial love and generosity of the church members. Many in the church had friends or family who were murdered in the genocide – and the likelihood was high that the returning refugees included perpetrators of genocide. Still, these devoted Christians reminded the returnees that reconciliation comes by hearing the Word of God and demonstrating his love by loving those who have even killed our relatives.⁵

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on a photograph by Chris Shiundu.

¹ Adapted from Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...And Yourself*, 2nd edition (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 100.

² Story shared in personal correspondence, used by permission.

³ Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How the Church Hurts Those They Help and How to Reverse It* (San Francisco, Harper One, 2011), Kindle ed., Loc. 1438-43.

⁴ Personal Correspondence from Edward Etanu.

⁵ Story told by Simon Nizaramakena in the book: Scott Allen, Darrow L. Miller, and the African working group of Samaritan Strategy Africa, *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa* (Phoenix, Ariz., Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005), 52, accessed online: http://www.disciplenations.org/media/Against-All-Hope-Hope-for-Africa_ENGLISH.pdf.



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**Lesson 7: Asset-Based
Community Development**

Opening Discussion Question

Imagine someone from another region or country visits and wants to help your community. If he asks you to tell him about your community, what would you say?



Asset-Based Community Development

Asset-Based

Community

Development

ABCD is a long-term process, initiated by local people in a specific community. In this process, the local people first identify their assets, and then they try to better utilise their assets for their own development. This results in measurable change in the community, including a reduction in material poverty, and improved relationships with God, self, others, and the creation.

Needs-Based Development

A needs-assessment can be a helpful tool. But it is important to focus on people's assets first. Then, the next step is to ask the people these questions: "What problems do you see that must be solved? How can you use your assets to address those needs and to solve those problems?"

If we as African leaders and pastors are trying to help our own communities, we need to begin by looking for the good things God is already doing in our communities. And we must look to identify even more gifts and resources and opportunities in the community, and then encourage people to utilise them and work together.



Bible Study—Parable of the Talents

What lessons do we learn from Matthew 25:14-30? What does this passage teach that might relate to community development in some way?

Story of Pastor Gideon

A young man visited Pastor Gideon and complained about his poverty. He wanted the pastor to give him money. But Gideon first asked, "What do you have?" The young man said, "I have nothing." Gideon said, "No, you must have something even if it is little. What do you have?" The young man said that he had only 1000 shillings (about 30 cents USD). The pastor told the young man that God could help him use that little 1000 shillings to bring development in his life, and so the pastor did not give him any money. Gideon said that the young man had ability to buy and sell, had good health to be able to travel, so he should be able to purchase some honey in his village area and then travel 15 kilometres by bicycle to the major town nearby to sell the honey for profit. So the young man did this. He bought honey for 1000 shillings, then was able to sell it for 3500 in the town. He found out that this could be a way to keep earning money, so he continued and after only a couple trips he had made already 35,000 shillings profit! And he felt great about earning that money for himself using what God had given him!

Large Group Activity—Inventory of Assets

Some people don't give anything to church or to other people, and if you ask them why, they will respond, "I have nothing to give." Or if we want someone to identify their assets so that we can help them, they might say, "I have nothing and there is nothing I can do to change my situation. You just need to give me money." Therefore, one of the most important things we can do is to help someone create what is called an "**inventory of assets**", or some people call this process "**asset mapping**". We can do this with an individual or with a whole church or community.

Make a list of the assets in our communities:

Financial resources:

Physical possessions:

Human resources:

Natural Resources:

Knowledge and Skills:

Local institutions and infrastructure:

Cultural and social resources:

Spiritual resources:

Describe how you feel after listing all these assets:

What changes might result in your community if you did this exercise together with all the members of your community?



Reflecting on Asset-Based Community Development

It is not true when people say they have nothing. God has given all of us many gifts, resources, and skills. Each of us has been blessed with different things.

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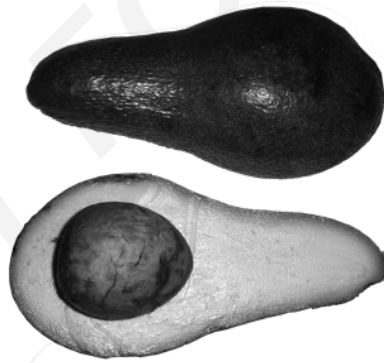
It is not our job to compare ourselves to each other, but rather to be faithful with what God has given to each of us, and to our communities.

If we focus on what we have instead of focusing on what we lack, we will be able to make changes and grow. If we focus on what God has given, our prayer lives will be full of gratitude and thanksgiving and full of joy. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**.

After people identify their assets, the next, more difficult step is to figure out how to use those resources and skills to develop and change.

Story of John Mwangi in Nairobi:

We need a changed perspective. What do you see?



Wealth and resources are not always as limited as people think. If someone else becomes rich, it does not mean that I must become poor. It is not a competition. If we have two avocados, we do not have to fight over them, but we can each take an avocado and get a whole tree of avocados with it. Through creativity, hard work, and cooperation we all can develop and produce more new things. There is potential for amazing reproduction of wealth because of the way God's creation works.

What does this mean? *"You can count the number of seeds in a mango, but you cannot count the number of mangoes in a seed." – Traditional Kenyan Proverb.*

We need to teach people a new perspective. Realise what you have, utilise the assets that God has given to you, build upon those resources and skills, and trust in God to multiply your efforts for the good of your family and his kingdom.



Principles of Asset-Based Community Development

1) Identify and utilise the skills and resources of the individual or community. Look at materially poor people as people full of possibilities, given to them by God. Sometimes people have resources and abilities they can start using immediately with encouragement. But often people may benefit from teaching or skills training to develop their God-given potential and ability.

Story of Farida

2) Look for resources and solutions to come from within the individual or community as much as is possible, rather than from outsiders. Ask good questions, and listen well to the people and their ideas. And trust that the people care deeply about their communities and want to make change.

3) Try to build up the relationships among local individuals, organisations, churches, businesses, schools, and government. God intended for the individuals and institutions in communities to be working together.

4) Only bring in resources from outside the community when local resources are not enough to solve pressing needs. And be careful about bringing in outside resources too early in the process, and be careful not to bring in too much. While outside assistance is often helpful, we must be careful not to weaken the community's effort to utilise its own resources and abilities.

Story of motorcycle fundraising in West Africa:

Lao Tzu a 6th Century Chinese Philosopher said, "Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say 'We have done this ourselves.'"¹ But as Christians, we need to add, "With the help of God!"



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Choose one of these activities:

1) For Church Leaders

Preach a sermon on the parable of the talents in your church. Then either during the Sunday service or at a different church event, instruct all the church members to identify and write down the assets and abilities of the whole church. Talk about both physical resources and spiritual gifts. Discuss together how to best use everyone's gifts for the good of the church and the community.

2) For Individuals

Do a Bible study on the parable of the talents with your family or with your community group. Identify and write down the assets and abilities of your family, or the assets and abilities of your community group. Discuss how you can use them together to overcome material poverty. Make a plan on how to address it so that a change can be made.

Small Group Drawing Exercise

In your groups, draw a picture of a community that is developing. You cannot use any words, only pictures. Be creative. Remember that development should include not only a reduction in material poverty, but an improvement of the four relationships.





Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning)

Africa is Blessed

Part of having a changed perspective is looking at our continent differently. Because of the history of the slave trade, and because of all of the aid from foreign governments and donors that has been given to our continent, many of us have internalised the idea that we are poor, helpless, and inferior to the rest of the world. Some of us have even wondered if Africa is cursed. Some foreigners in the past claimed that Africans are cursed using Genesis 9:24-27, but this is a lie. They called it the “Curse of Ham”. But in fact, the curse in this passage was on Ham’s son Canaan, not Ham. Canaan was the ancestor of the Canaanites, so this passage is not about Africans. It’s true that Ham had other sons who were ancestors of the Ethiopians, the Egyptians, and the Libyans, but they were not cursed.² And the curse was not really about ethnicity, but it was about how the Israelites would eventually conquer the wicked Canaanites in the Promised Land.³ We are not under the curse of Canaan, but even if we were, we experience blessing that overpowers that curse and any other curse once we come to know Christ. Jesus is more powerful than all curses. Jesus’ death and resurrection even conquers the original curse of death.

The reality is that God has richly blessed Africa. Some of the assets God has given to Africa include: many unique cultural heritages, a large population, natural resources like oil and minerals (for example—diamonds, gold, and also coltan, a very rare ore containing minerals used in making mobile phones), beautiful animals and national parks, some of the world’s greatest rivers, productive agriculture, and a huge land area.

Africa is rich in gifts from God. Unfortunately, sometimes these resources have been forcefully misused by foreigners, or mismanaged by corrupt African leaders. But we must realise how much God has blessed our continent and utilise well what He has given us by working together. Doing this is our best hope at overcoming our continent’s dependency on the aid from foreign nations. Aid can be helpful and we can still partner with foreign countries as we try to help our people, but we must not remain dependent on that aid. It is not a long-term, sustainable solution,

nor is aid something that builds up the dignity of our people. If we want to be obedient to God by being good stewards, we must learn to focus on and utilise the gifts God has given us. We must take responsibility for the development of our own communities and nations.

Inspiring Stories of Asset-Based Development

1. In Ethiopia, Kale Heywet Church in the Arba Minch region found a way to use the little resources they had to make a nice profit for the church. Originally the church land was given to them by the government. The government said it was full of rocks and no one would be able to do anything with it. So the government leaders thought they might as well just give the land away. The land is 20 hectares in size and large rocks cover the surface all over. But one of the church leaders realised that these rocks should be looked at as assets, not as a curse. He thought maybe the rocks could be sold for construction projects. He and the other leaders calculated and researched how this could be done. Today construction vehicles can be seen on the church property breaking up the rocks to be sold. Now the church enjoys a regular profit from these rocks! With a new perspective, things that some people see as worthless can be seen as assets given by God.⁴
2. Hellen and her husband live in Turkana County in Kenya, a place that is hot and arid and where there is no electrical grid. She and her husband are both partially blind but they feed fifteen people in their household every day. How do they manage this? Hellen joined a VSLA (Village Savings and Loan Association) in 2015. A VSLA can be like a community funded and managed bank. Members encourage each other, save together, and offer each other low interest loans. A VSLA allows people to use the little resources that they have, and multiply them by working together. Hellen used her first loan to buy a shaving machine and started a barber business earning about \$4 USD per day. After she paid off that loan she continued saving. She then took out two more loans to purchase a solar panel, a television, a video machine, speaker, amplifier, and a battery, which she quickly used to open a video-showing business and a phone-charging business, which have added another \$4-10 per day to her household income. After paying those loans off, she took another loan to buy water pipes to bring water to her house so her family has regular access to water. Now she sells water to her neighbours as well and earns \$1-2 a day.

Hellen's husband was motivated by these successes. With the VSLA's loan-lending at capacity, he secured a loan from a bank and, together with Hellen's savings, they have invested in another business venture with the purchase of a maize-milling machine. Their milling brings in about \$4-8 USD, per day. Hellen's five businesses have added up to \$24 USD per day to her family's income. Her life has changed. She can afford to feed, educate, and clothe her extended family, and gives cheerfully to the church. Hellen is encouraged by her success and isn't ready to stop; she has plans to invest next in a water tank. This story shows us one method of helping people to multiply the little resources that they have so that they can support themselves. We will examine VSLAs in a future lesson.⁵

3. Dinnah, also known as "Termite", lives near the city of Soroti in Uganda. Before she came to know Christ, she used to be a serious alcoholic. She brewed alcohol and she would drink and smoke up to 12 hours a day. Today she looks back and feels like it was such a wasted life full of bitterness and quarrels with other people. But in 2010, she came to know Jesus personally. Her life completely changed! She became full of joy and peace, and she made peace with her family members as well. But she remained materially poor, especially since she gave up brewing alcohol. After she attended a Bible study about the importance of working with her hands, she knew she needed to find productive work. She

Lesson 7: Asset-Based Community Development

tried to think hard about what resources and skills God had given to her that she could use to make an income. She saw termite mounds around her community, and as a child she was taught how to catch the termites from the mounds. She decided to catch and fry termites to sell to people. Some people in her community think of this kind of work as shameful. But her life and success prove those people wrong. Dinnah started to make a lot of money especially since she has her own unique recipe: fried termites with onions and spices. She has been able to take care of all her family's needs through selling these termites, and now it is her normal business. She has built a house with the income as well as paying school fees for her children. Now people in her church and community call her "blessed" and admire her for the change in her life. People affectionately call her "termite" in the local language. The author, Anthony, is one of her customers and he can testify that she can really cook!

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on a photograph by Tabitha Kapic.

¹ Traditional. Quoted in "Called to Transformation: An Asset-Based Approach to Engaging Church and Community", (New York, Episcopal Relief, 2015), accessed online: <http://calledtotransformation.org/team-building/called-to-facilitation/>.

² Tokunboh Adeyemo, ed., *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Grand Rapids, WordAlive/Zondervan, 2010), 25.

³ See K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, Vol. 1A, (Nashville, B&H Publishers, 1996), 423.

⁴ Accessed online: <http://reedsinthewind.blogspot.com/2018/08/when-life-gives-you-lemons.html>.

⁵ Summarised from David Kangangi, "Entrepreneurial Spirit Activated", (World Renew, December 2017), accessed online: <https://worldrenew.net/our-stories/team/entrepreneurial-spirit-activated>.



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Lesson 8: Opening Exercise

Evaluation

Evaluation

Why should we be willing to listen to other people who criticise and evaluate our ministries and our plans?

Proverbs 12:15 and Proverbs 19:20:

What kind of attitude should we have when evaluating other people's ministries and plans?

Ephesians 4:29 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-2:

It is unusual for Christians to hold each other accountable concerning the right way to care for poor people, but we must speak the truth with love and humility

Ephesians 4:2-3:



Opening Exercise Review

Refer back to pages 9 and 10 for scenario.

Evaluation Questions

1) *Mention some good things you see in your plans. In what ways did you plan well?*

2a) *Did you address material poverty in your plans? Explain.*

2b) *Did you address poverty of spiritual intimacy in your plan? Explain.*

2c) *Did you address poverty of community in your plan? Explain.*

2d) *Did you address poverty of being in your plan? Explain.*

2e) *Did you address poverty of stewardship in your plan? Explain.*

3) *Do you see any evidence of a god-complex in your plan (thinking that you are better or more intelligent than the people you were trying to help)?*

4) *In your plan, did you focus on people, reconciliation, and building relationships over a long period of time? Or did you focus only on short programs to help the poor as quickly as possible?*

5a) *In your plan, were you responding to the people with relief, rehabilitation, or development?*

5b) *After what you have learned, what do you think the people really need - relief, rehabilitation, or development?*

6) *In your plan do you see any paternalism (doing things for people that they could do for themselves)?*

7a) *Did you encourage people to recognise their gifts and assets?*

7b) *If you gave out resources, did the resources come from the local community or from outside donors?*

8) *What have you learned about yourself or your church from this exercise?*



Take-Home Activities

Take home with you your written ministry plan that you evaluated during this lesson, as well as your notes and answers to the evaluation questions. Have a meeting with your fellow church leaders or colleagues. Over the next several months, revise your ministry plan and correct any mistakes you made using what you've learned in Lessons 1-7. Improve the plan and then actually go and try to implement it in your church and community.

Please do not do this alone, but ensure that you work with your community or church. Commit your plan to God and continue to ask for his guidance. Go forward in faith and in confidence that our powerful God will be with you and use you in mighty ways to bring transformation in the lives of people in your community!



Testimonies, Evaluation, and Prayer

You are encouraged to schedule a time with your facilitator to complete the remaining lessons. This will help you to go much deeper in learning how to effectively fight against poverty in your own life and in your churches and communities. You must complete all the remaining lessons in order to qualify for a certificate of completion. The certificate is required in order to be a facilitator of *Helping Without Hurting in Africa*.

Remaining Lessons:

- Lesson 9: Working for God’s Glory
- Lesson 10: Worldview Transformation
- Lesson 11: Broken Systems
- Lesson 12: The Prosperity Gospel
- Lesson 13: African Culture and Money
- Lesson 14: What Causes Change in Someone’s Life?
- Lesson 15: Participation of the Community
- Lesson 16: Church Benevolence Ministry
- Lesson 17: Urban Ministry: Opportunities and Challenges
- Lesson 18: Mission Trips within Africa
- Lesson 19: Foreigners, Missionaries, and Sponsors
- Lesson 20: Seed Projects and Further Resources

Remember to go home and put into practice what you learned, especially the **Take-home activities!** May God bless you and empower you in those activities! Also, take time at home to read the “**Further Reflection**” sections of each lesson. Continue to review Lessons 1-7 until our next training session.



Testimonies



Evaluation Questions

1) *Is there anything we have discussed that you are confused about? Do you have anything you want help to understand before we leave?*

2) *What lessons or activities did you appreciate most in the lessons so far?*

Questions continue on page 87.

3) *Do you plan to complete the remaining lessons in Helping Without Hurting in Africa? Why or Why not?*

4) *What can be improved in this training or in my facilitation?*

5) *Would you recommend this training to a friend? Why or why not?*



Prayer



***Please also feel free to email the authors with questions and testimonies directly:**

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Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on a photograph by Tabitha Kapic.

***OPTIONAL* Written Testimony and Evaluation**

(Give this page to your facilitator after the training)

Testimony

Evaluation

1) *What lessons or activities did you appreciate most in the lessons so far?*

2) *Do you plan to complete the remaining lessons in Helping Without Hurting in Africa? Why or why not?*

3) *What can be improved in this training or in my facilitation?*

4) *Would you recommend this training to a friend? Why or why not?*

Additional Comments



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**Lesson 9: Working for God's
Glory**

Opening Discussion Questions

What is "work"?

Is work a gift or a punishment?



Facilitator Lecture

Work in Genesis

Most work is done for money but some work is done without pay.

Genesis 2:1-3

Genesis 1:31

Genesis 1:28, 2:15

Work was a gift from God so that Adam and Eve could have meaningful lives. As God is the creator, people who are made in his image also continue to create new things.

The problem with our work today goes back to Adam and Eve in the Garden.

Genesis 3:17-19

Work is still a gift even though it has become difficult. Work is a godly activity.

Recent research studies have shown that people who have work to do are far happier than those without work to do.¹ We need work.

We can have hope in our work. **Psalm 104:10-14**

Some people and cultures in Africa have viewed work as a curse or punishment. This is one of the beliefs that causes a lot of materially poor people to remain in their poverty.

Do you know any people or communities who have this belief?

In order to help materially poor people, we need to try to reconcile their relationship to God's creation. This means that we try to help materially poor people find meaningful work to do in God's world, work that can financially support them and their families. We want them to have work to do so that they can be the people God created them to be, people who are made in God's image who work just like God works.

Helping people to find work can include encouraging people to use their assets and skills, and sometimes it means educating and training people in new skills.

Working for God's Glory

What does it mean to work for God's glory?

Practically, how should we as Christians work differently from others, in a way that honours God?

1 Corinthians 10:31

Ways to work for God’s Glory

1. Do work to please God not people. **Colossians 3:23-24.**

German reformer Martin Luther talking about the work of a parent – “God, with all his angels and creatures, is smiling—not because that father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith.”²

What does Martin Luther mean by this statement?

2. Look to Jesus as our example in work. **John 5:17**

3. Commit work to God. **Proverbs 16:3**

4. Do work to provide for our own needs and the needs of our families. **Acts 20:34** and **1 Timothy 5:8**

The Apostle Paul made it clear that it is not good for us to be dependent on others, but that it is right for us to work. **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**

5. Do work so that we won’t be tempted to sin. **Ephesians 4:28**

What are some of the reasons that make people steal in your community?

6. Work hard. **Proverbs 10:4.**

7. Work with the gifts and skills God has given to us. **1 Peter 4:10.**

8. Do good quality work. God is the Creator who called the creation "good". We honour him when we also do good quality work. We should give our very best in everything we do.

Imagine you are the owner of a shop. Which gives more glory to God, running a profitable business well or naming the shop "Praise Jesus Supermarket", or both? Discuss.

9. Don't look down on certain types of work. In some regions of Africa, there is an idea that manual labor is inferior to having an office job. In the church, people often view pastors as doing more important work than everyone else. Don't look down on those who have different work from you or who earn less money.

What type of work is viewed as inferior in your community? Is this mind-set contributing to material poverty?

10. Do work with thanksgiving and try to enjoy it. **Ecclesiastes 2:24-25**

11. Love other people in the work place.

12. Take good care of God's creation as we work.

13. Do work according to the rules. We must obey even if we do not have any danger of being caught, even if the laws are not being enforced, and even if everyone else is breaking the rules.

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Romans 13:1-2

If we do not do our work with integrity, we are denying Christ through our actions. **Titus 1:16**. We actually become hypocrites by shouting to people that we are Christians, but then not living like Christians.

What rules and laws are not being obeyed in your workplace and in the nation? Are Christians obeying them?

14. Bless others with the fruit of our work. God designed the world so that our work benefits people and benefits the community as a whole. God calls us to be good stewards of what he has blessed us with by giving financial support to others. **Acts 20:35**.

15. Use the work place as a mission field.

16. Rest from work. **Exodus 20:8-11**. Sabbath was a gift from God for the Israelite people. Today, we worship on Sunday, the Lord’s Day, instead of Saturday, because Sunday is the day Jesus rose from the dead. But the principle of resting on the Sabbath should be applied to Sunday.

Some of us don’t rest because we are chasing riches. Other times, overworking is a sign of sinful pride. We love the feeling of being important and needed.

Resting shows that we trust God to provide for us.

Is overworking a problem for you? How can we change?

17. Do work honestly and with integrity. If we are dishonest in the little things, we will also be dishonest in the big things. **Luke 16:10-12.**

Our integrity and honesty are important also because they can lead others to know Christ. **1**

Peter 2:12.

Keeping our integrity can cause us to suffer. **1 Peter 4:12-16**



Daniel's Story³

Daniel grew up in a materially poor family in Ethiopia. Daniel came to know Christ personally at the age of twenty. By working hard in school as a youth, he was able to go to a university where he obtained a degree in Accounting. Upon graduation, Daniel applied for a number of jobs, but during the interviews he told the employers that if they asked him to change a number "3" to a number "8", he would say no. It took him a long time before he finally received a job.

He finally got a job at a seed company which imported and exported seeds. Daniel watched with discomfort as his boss bribed officials in order to falsely state that certain seeds were of a good quality. When Daniel's boss went back to school, Daniel knew he was going to have to take his place and be the one paying the bribes. But Daniel could not imagine doing this as a follower of Christ. So instead of taking the boss's place and earning a lot more money, he quit the job completely. The owner was shocked and asked Daniel to stay. Daniel said that he could not do anything unethical so he could not take that position. The boss valued Daniel's integrity so much that after Daniel quit the job, he hired Daniel as a tutor for his children.

Later, Daniel went back to school to get training in something besides accounting because he feared that any job with accounting would involve corruption. He got a degree in medical laboratory work. In school, Daniel refused to cheat on exams and assignments, and through his integrity he led several classmates to Christ! Daniel finished first in his class and got a great new job as a manager of a laboratory at a newly opened government hospital. Unfortunately, he again faced issues of corruption. Supervisors, even Christian ones, suggested he make some extra money by buying inexpensive and less effective equipment, while writing up invoices with a greater amount so he could pocket the difference. Daniel refused and faced a lot of hardship, but he set up an excellent lab. Then, doctors would request unnecessary tests for patients who had very little money and no insurance to increase the profits. Daniel challenged the doctors but there was no change. Daniel felt so bad about how the customers were being cheated that he finally left this job as well.

Later Daniel went to work as an assistant for an owner of a business. Today Daniel works as the manager of that business and earns \$100 a month. With that income he supports his ten children. About his life he said recently, "I don't give. God is the only giver. I simply share what

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God has given. I know that someone somewhere is looking for me to show him or her Christ. So I am waiting for God to show me the next move.”

Discussion Questions

What hardships did Daniel experience because of his integrity?

What blessings did Daniel or other people experience because of his integrity?

What will you do differently in your workplace after hearing this story?

Business for the Glory of God

How does the Church view the business world?

How does the business world view the Church?

Is it possible for a Christian to be highly successful in business?

Business can be a very good thing when it is done in a way that honours God. In fact, business is an important part of development.

Basically, business is about creating wealth. Some people tend to think of wealth as a limited cake, that there is only a certain number of slices to divide up among everyone. But wealth is not limited like this. God uses us, His people, to develop the creation and create wealth.

It is God who gives us the ability to produce wealth and money. **Deuteronomy 8:18.**

Principles from the Wealth Creation Manifesto created by the Lausanne Global Mission Movement and BAM Global:⁴

1. Wealth creation is rooted in God the Creator, who created a world that flourishes with abundance and diversity.
2. We are created in God's image, to co-create with Him and for Him, to create products and services for the common good.
3. Wealth creation is a holy calling, and a God-given gift, which is commended in the Bible.
4. Wealth creators should be affirmed by the Church, and equipped and deployed to serve in the marketplace among all peoples and nations.
5. Wealth creation through business has proven power to lift people and nations out of poverty.

Do any of these points surprise you? And if so, why?

Creating wealth and focusing on business is a lot more productive than focusing on aid from other people or foreign nations. We need to focus on creating jobs. Unemployment is above 25% in some African countries.⁵ Starting new businesses can create wealth and provide jobs for people in need.

George Ayittey, a Ghanaian Economist: "The Cheetah Generation is the new and angry generation of Africans who can see that their leadership has failed them ... They're not going to sit there and wait for governments to come and do things for them. As a matter of fact, they're not going to sit there and beg for foreign aid, because they can see that every social need in Africa is a business opportunity. The Cheetah Generation is entrepreneurial."⁶

Can you think of examples of social needs that creative Africans turned into business opportunities?

Anglican Bishop John Rucyahana in Rwanda said, "Instead of training job seekers, we train job makers", he says. "We need to be able to move from aid to production."⁷

Sometimes Christians have viewed business negatively because of the competition involved in it. But competition in business produces innovation, creativity, and good quality products and services.

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Herman Chinery, a businessman in Ghana, nicknamed the Bill Gates of Ghana: "In every business you do, it has to be win-win. The person who is buying your service must win, and you must win. Otherwise, it's not sustainable."⁸

What would be a "win-win" for both buyer and seller?

Business is work that honours God because it is using wisely the things in God's creation and in a way that helps people. Pope Francis wrote: "Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving the world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the area in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good."⁹

Christians are also able to honour God in business by earning more money to support Christian ministry and to help take care of the poor. John Wesley, an English preacher, famously said, "Earn all you can! Give all you can! Save all you can!"¹⁰



Tithing and giving the fruits of our work

What does tithing mean?

Are Christians commanded by God to tithe?

Luke 11:42

The Apostle Paul also made clear that pastors and evangelists should be supported out of the giving of Christians, just as the priests were supported through the tithe (see 1 Corinthians 9 later for more information).

As Christians we don't give out of guilt or as a burdensome obedience to a law, but out of thanksgiving. We should not be giving in order to earn salvation or God's acceptance. Instead, we give out of thanksgiving after receiving forgiveness and love as a free gift.
2 Corinthians 9:7.

Paul also taught that people should give according to what they have been given.

2 Corinthians 8:11-12.

**Some Christians teach that we should give tithes and offerings to the Church so that God will bless us and reward us with more money. We will discuss this topic at greater length in the lesson on the Prosperity Gospel.*

Tithing is one way to worship God. He wants us to use all the resources we have in a way that honours him, whether that is through supporting the needs of our family, or giving back to the ministries of the Church, or showing compassion to materially poor people.

Today, around the world, tithes and gifts of Christians are used to support church ministries and pastors, to send out missionaries, translate and publish the Scriptures, take care of the sick and those in prison, lift up materially poor people, provide for community development, and so much more.

Does your church use most of the tithe and offering money for the church building? What percentage of offering money is used each month to take care of materially poor people in the community?

Tithing gives us a regular reminder that we are dependent on God as our provider.

When Christians do not tithe, what does that say about their faith?

Should materially poor Christians tithe?

Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities will include assignments or activities that the participants should carry out in their communities, churches, or place of work, applying the lessons they have learned. Choose one or both of these activities:

1. Preach a sermon about the importance of work and how to do our work for God's glory.
2. Consider having your church start a training program to train people in the community on job skills and income generation with the goal that they will be able to find work to do and take care of their families. Some ideas:
 - a. Training program on basic job skills, work ethic, budgeting and saving.
 - b. Training program on one of the following: mechanics, carpentry, baking, hairdressing, business, brickmaking, IT (computers), tailoring, photography, etc.

Small Group Discussion Questions¹¹

Let's close this lesson by discussing in small groups about difficult ethical situations we face in our daily work and also in church ministry. We are supposed to follow the rules, work honestly, and work for God's glory. Discuss whether each person's behavior is ethical (morally right) or unethical (morally wrong).

Ethical Dilemmas in the Market

1. A lady selling sugar charges you for 1 kilo of sugar and sets her scales to give you less. (*ethical or unethical?*)
2. You borrowed money from a friend to start a new business. You promised to repay that money the next month, but never repaid or mentioned the loan again. (*ethical or unethical?*)
3. You think your employer does not pay you a fair wage. You are tempted to take some work supplies home to compensate you for the difference. Instead, you ask your employer to meet with you and talk about increasing your wages. (*ethical or unethical?*)
4. You hired four men to harvest maize in your field and you promised to pay them for their work until the end of the day. At the end of the day, the amount of maize harvested was far less than you expected. When you find one worker sleeping in the field around midday, you wake him up and send him home with half of the full day's payment. (*ethical or unethical?*). You pay the other three workers the full payment despite the smaller harvest. (*ethical or unethical?*).
5. Your manager gave you 1,000 shillings to purchase some items for work in town. You spend 950 shillings and use the other 50 shillings left over to buy a cup of tea for yourself. (*ethical or unethical?*)

(Questions continue on page 101)

6. Your neighbor borrowed your hoe to work in her garden. When she finished, she returned it to you broken with apologies and a promise to replace the hoe next month. (*ethical or unethical?*) When the next month came, she came to you and explained her financial problems. She then asked to give you a basket of maize as payment. You agree. (*ethical or unethical?*)
7. You asked the electric company to install wires all the way to your business for 6,000 shillings. After they agreed and installed the wires, you gave them 4,000 shillings and explained that was all the money you had. (*ethical or unethical?*)

Ethical Dilemmas in the Church

1. A visitor from another region gives the church a gift agreeing that it would be used for church construction, but the pastor spends that offering on a sound system after the visitor leaves. (*ethical or unethical?*)
2. A member borrows money from the church funds to pay hospital fees and fails to repay on time. (*ethical or unethical?*) The pastor then approaches the member and arranges a repayment schedule. (*ethical or unethical?*)
3. A member finds the pastor walking along the road and gives him some cash, saying that it is a gift is for the church. Using that money, the pastor buys tea and a newspaper on his way home, considering it as the church's support of his ministry. (*ethical or unethical?*)
4. The pastor tells church members the cost to pour a cement floor in the church. The funds are raised, the floor is poured, but the cost is different than what the pastor expected and there is money left over from the money raised. The pastor announces to the members about the extra money and together the members decide how to use the money. (*ethical or unethical?*)



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning).

Inspiring Stories about Work

1. Grace, a young woman in Tanzania, is an example of a person who was helped out of material poverty by finding meaningful work to do in God's world. Grace lives with her elderly parents who are materially poor. Grace completed secondary education but unfortunately was not able to go to university because her parents did not have money for her school fees. After returning home, Grace could not think of any way to earn money to meet her needs. Finally, she became desperate and took up sex work in order to meet her food and clothing needs. Later on, she heard about an organisation named ACHAMA which helps young girls who are sex workers. The staff of the organisation agreed to let Grace into their program and they taught her vocational skills. Grace learned how to make soap, fabrics, baskets, chalk, wallets, and more. Today she uses her new skills to make four baskets a day and she sells them in the market. Grace has said – "I am very happy with my newly gained skills because they enable me to meet my needs. I am also happy because I was able to leave sex work with its high risk of HIV transmission." Grace advises other girls who are still depending on sex work to leave it behind, and that there is other work that they can do!¹²

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2. A Christian sister who is a senior civil servant in the government of Benin attended a Vision Conference of Samaritan Strategy Africa. During the conference she learned that God wanted her to glorify and honour him in all areas of life – not just her spiritual life. This began to have a dramatic effect on her work ethic. She became more diligent and punctual. These changes were challenging. She was met with opposition from her colleagues and subordinates who were convicted about their own lax work habits. However, her diligence was observed by her superiors, and within three months, she was promoted to the position of Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce. She went on to hold a cabinet position in the national government, the first woman to hold such a position. She is so thankful for God’s work in her life and for the Vision Conference.¹³

On Business and Job Creation

- **Reflect on this quotation.** The first female Nigerian Finance Minister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said, “The best way to help Africans today is to help them to stand on their own feet. And the best way to do that is by helping create jobs.”¹⁴
- **Read this recommendation of the Lausanne Mission Movement:** “We call upon the Church world wide to identify, affirm, pray for, commission and release business people and entrepreneurs to exercise their gifts and calling as business people in the world – among all peoples and to the ends of the earth. We call upon business people globally to receive this affirmation and to consider how their gifts and experience might be used to help meet the world’s most pressing spiritual and physical needs through business as mission.”¹⁵

Line drawing by Justin Lonas based on a photograph by Anthony Sytsma.

¹ Jan-Emmanuel De Neve and George Ward, “Does Work Make You Happy? Evidence from the World Happiness Report”, (Harvard Business Review, 20 March, 2017), accessed online: <https://hbr.org/2017/03/does-work-make-you-happy-evidence-from-the-world-happiness-report>.

² Jeff Robison, “The Luther Family and the Reformation of Marriage”, (the Gospel Coalition, 27 October, 2015), accessed online: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/katharina-and-martin-luther-radical-marriage/>.

³ Summarised from “Daring to be Daniel”, (Reeds in the Wind, 16 May, 2016), accessed online: <http://reedsinthewind.blogspot.com/2016/05/daring-to-be-daniel.html>.

⁴ For the rest of the points of the manifesto go here - <https://www.lausanne.org/content/wealth-creation-manifesto>.

⁵ “Africa Statistics Flash”, African Centre for Statistics of the Economic Commission for Africa, (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, June 2017) accessed online: https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/ACS/africa_stat_flash_june_2017_en.pdf.

⁶ Video: "George Ayittey on Foreign Aid vs. African Entrepreneurship", (PovertyCure.Org, 21 March, 2011), accessed online: <http://povertycure.org/learn/media/george-ayittey-foreign-aid-vs-african-entrepreneurship>.

⁷ Quoted in "Education at the Sonrise School in Rwanda- Training Job Makers", accessed online: <http://www.povertycure.org/learn/issues/human-person/education>.

⁸ "Africa's Dream: Ghana's Herman Chinery Hesse", (BBC, 6 September, 2011), accessed online: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14793780>.

⁹ "Wealth Creation: A Godly Gift and Command", (Transformational SME, 23 August, 2016), accessed online: <http://www.transformationalsme.org/tag/business-is-a-noble-vocation/>.

¹⁰ A Quote from John Wesley, (Good Reads), accessed online: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/113423-earn-all-you-can-give-all-you-can-save-all>.

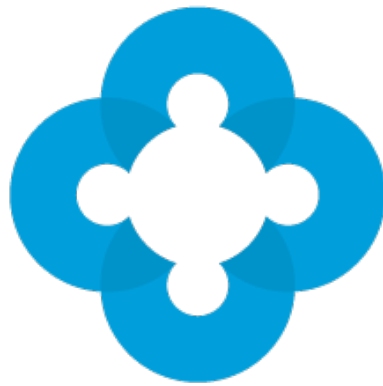
¹¹ This exercise has been shortened and edited from original, and used with permission from Leslie Mosher, from curriculum – Entrepreneurship: Christ Centered Business Education, Session 1: "Preparing your Spirit and Mind", 14.

¹² Jim Zylstra, "Vocational Skills Training Changed my Life", (World Renew, 11 May, 2017) accessed online: <http://worldrenew.net/our-stories/team/vocational-skills-training-changed-my-life>.

¹³ Scott Allen, Darrow L. Miller, and the African working group of Samaritan Strategy Africa, *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa*, (Phoenix, Ariz., Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005), 51, accessed online: http://www.disciplenations.org/media/Against-All-Hope-Hope-for-Africa_ENGLISH.pdf.

¹⁴ "Insights: The Need to Invest in Africa's Emerging Economies", (the Foresight Initiative 1 December, 2014) accessed online: <http://theforesightinitiative.org/thejournal/2014/12/1/insights-the-need-to-invest-in-emerging-african-economies>.

¹⁵ "Business as Mission", *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 59*, (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Pattaya, Thailand 2004) access online: https://www.lausanne.org/docs/2004forum/LOP59_IG30.pdf.



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**Lesson 10: Worldview
Transformation**

Opening Discussion Question

When you look at a cow, what do you see?

People look at cows differently because they have different “worldviews”.

What is a worldview? A worldview is all the beliefs that someone has which affect how they live and act. Our worldviews shape the way we relate to God, ourselves, others, and the creation. Our worldview includes our beliefs on the big questions of life.

Why is it important for us to consider a person’s worldview when we are trying to help him or her out of poverty?

We as Christians have a Christian worldview, or we can call it a biblical worldview. For other people, they might have some true beliefs, but they also have some false beliefs. But we need to remember that it is also possible that we as Christians have some false beliefs, so we need to keep reading God's Word to correct ourselves. Read **Romans 12:2**.

Part of our work in fighting poverty is to teach people the Christian worldview. We also should try to persuade non-Christians that the Christian worldview is the correct one. Once people trust in Jesus, they will be better able to have good relationships with God, self, others, and creation.



Facilitator Lecture: Worldviews

Here is an example of a false belief concerning humanity’s relationship to God’s creation. In the cultural beliefs of the Basotho in Lesotho, the traditional belief is that if farmers weed their fields during the day between 10:00am and 3:00pm, then there will be hailstorms. So the farmers do not weed during that time and much of their time to work hard and plant their fields is wasted.

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Another belief they have is that if women wash their clothes during the day or breast feed their babies during the day, there will be hailstorms. So they only do these activities at night.¹ You can see how these beliefs would cause the people to be unproductive. This can change when people are taught the biblical worldview. We must teach people that God created them to rule over the creation, not that the creation should rule over people. Also, we can teach that God is in control of his creation and the weather, and he is the one who told people to work for six days every week.

People can also have false beliefs about God which keep them trapped in poverty. If a person believes that witchcraft is more powerful than God, she might waste a lot of her money on sacrifices and rituals with the witchdoctor. The rituals and witchcraft will not result in healing or blessings, but only in wasted resources and material poverty.

In your community, what false beliefs do people have that are keeping them in poverty?

False beliefs can contribute to people experiencing all five types of poverty. This means that worldview transformation is important in fighting poverty! In fact, in some cases it is difficult to bring any progress at all until people have changed their worldview. This reveals to us, once again, what a unique role the Church has in fighting poverty. It is Christians who will share the good news of the gospel that totally changes our worldview!

False beliefs that keep people in poverty²

Activity. First discuss the ways that each belief can contribute to any of the five types of poverty in people's lives. Second, discuss what the truth is on each point, and if you can, try to mention what the Bible teaches.

1. *"If you are poor, you will always be poor. If you are poor, it is because God wants you to be poor. It is your destiny."*

2. *"Our family is cursed." Or, "Our community is cursed." Or, "Our tribe is cursed." Or, "Africa is cursed."*

3. *"God only cares about spiritual things."*

4. *"We are so poor that we are unable to give to others. Other people should give to us."*

5. *"There are different classes of people. Our people are inferior and we deserve the standard of life that we have."*

(Statements continue on page 107.)

6. *"Work is a punishment. We should do as little work as possible."*

7. *"Products from other countries are better than local products."*

8. *"There is no poverty in America, Europe, and China. There are unlimited resources there. It is their job to take care of us."*

9. *"I am powerless to change my situation."*

10. *"Women are inferior to men."*

11. *"Death, accidents, and poverty are always caused by other people, curses, spirits, or witchcraft."*

12. *"Working hard and making money is dangerous. Other people will attack me or bewitch me and I will be worse off in the end."*

For most of these false beliefs, it is helpful and important to teach about how God made all people equally in his image. Also, teach that God has created each person with a purpose. He has given talents to each person; everyone has different skills and gifts to use in this world to glorify God and help other people.

Sometimes we, who are trying to help the poor, also have false beliefs. These false beliefs are not only a problem in our lives, but these false beliefs can cause us to hurt the people we are trying to help.



False Beliefs Activity

You will be assigned a small group and certain numbers from the list below to discuss together. Discuss for 5-10 minutes how each belief you were assigned can cause us to hurt people. In other words, how would these beliefs hinder our efforts to fight poverty?

Choose one and only one of the false beliefs to present about to the large group. A representative from your group will take only one minute to summarise your answer. This presenter should also explain if we see this false belief in ourselves.

False beliefs that cause hurting while helping:³

1. *"The poor have nothing. They are so desperate. It is so sad and terrible. We must give them a lot of resources and money."*
2. *"The poor are uneducated and do not have many skills. There is nothing they can do to help themselves."*
3. *"What leaders say is always right."*

4. *“Real development requires a lot of money in order to have a big impact.”*
5. *“God does not work in the lives of poor people until we come to them as the solution to their problems.”*
6. *“Many poor people know Jesus, but we who are trying to help are more spiritually mature than them.”*

7. *“All of those people are corrupt. It’s nearly impossible to help them or work with them.”*
8. *“If the poor would just listen to all of our good ideas, then their situation would finally change. We have all the answers for them.”*
9. *“Our time is more important than the time of the poor people in the community we are visiting and trying to help.”*

10. *“The local church is unable to make a real difference regarding the community’s physical needs. They can care for one or two families, but real change takes place only through large NGOs or government programs.”*
11. *“We have more resources because we are blessed more than them.” Or “because we are better.” Or “because we have worked harder and earned it.”*

Some of these false beliefs require us to go through a mind-set change. If we are honest, some of these false beliefs are the result of our god-complexes, the result of sin and pride in our hearts. We need to take time to confess this sin and repent.



Comparing Worldviews

In this lesson we’ll look at three general worldviews: Secularism which is held by people in Western countries, African traditional religion (ATR), and the biblical worldview.

Both secularism and ATR as worldviews contain some truth that fits with what the Bible teaches. For example, one of the beliefs of ATR is that there is a Creator God. The Bible also teaches this. But for the most part, secularism and ATR are competing worldviews with the biblical worldview. To believe the biblical worldview means we must reject many of the beliefs and perspectives of secularism and ATR.

We need to understand these worldviews and how they relate to poverty and development. We will begin by looking at the different beliefs they each have about God, about humanity, and the problems in this world.⁴

View of God

Secularism: Secularists do not believe that gods or spirits exist. Or if they believe there is a god, they view God as unknowable and very distant from the world.

ATR: In ATR, people believe in many gods and many spirits. They also believe there is a supreme god who is the creator and provider. But he is often seen as too holy, powerful, or distant to communicate with. This makes it necessary to use other spiritual beings or ancestors as mediators between people and God. The spiritual beings are often viewed as having control over the earth and the activities of people. In order to escape from bondage to these spirits, people try to manipulate the spiritual forces, and try to use them for their benefit instead. People may also try to bribe God through offerings and sacrifices to get what they want from God.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

View of Humanity

Secularism: Secularists view humanity as a species that randomly evolved in this world. Most people with a secular worldview don't believe people have a soul.

ATR: In ATR, people believe humans were created by God, but they view humans as subject to the powers of the spiritual forces. People often live in fear. They may be fatalistic thinking that the place of humanity is one of slavery and there is not much humans can do to change their situation. They believe people are victims to gods, spirits, natural forces, curses, and witchcraft, and so they do not take much responsibility for their own situation.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

View of the Earth

Secularism: Secularists think we need to make use of the earth's resources for our benefit. But many secularists argue that we should also take care of the earth because if we destroy it, we will also destroy ourselves.

ATR: In ATR, the earth is thought to be intimately connected to the spiritual realm. Much of the earth is viewed to be the realm of spirits who have control of certain resources, mountains, forests, and rivers. Sometimes people are afraid of these spirits and so they do not make use of these parts of the earth.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

View of Work

Secularism: Some people with a secular worldview worship work and find their primary identity, status, and meaning in life through their work. Others view work as a necessary evil in order to obtain the money and possessions they want.

ATR: In ATR, people view work as a punishment by God or by the spirits. Work is done as a necessary evil, but work is avoided when possible. This is, however, gradually changing as we now see some influence of secularism in Africa, where some people have begun worshipping their work and looking at work as a form of identity and status.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

View of Morality and Sin

Secularism: Secularists do not believe that there is sin. They think there is no objective moral standard, but each person or each culture decides on their own what is right and wrong. Others look to human reason to teach us what is right and what is wrong, but because of cultural change, their view of morality shifts over time and place.

ATR: In ATR, right and wrong is determined by the traditions, or by what will please the rest of the tribe and clan. Actions are good if they bring honor, and bad if they bring shame. It is seen as a deep betrayal to act against the expectations of the community. Morality is also determined by the results of actions. People do what “works”. *Actions are good if they bring me rewards, and bad if they cause me problems.*

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

View of Other People

Secularism: Most secularists try to care for other people because they believe it is the best way for all of us to live together in harmony. But others mistreat people in order to get ahead, since they believe life is all about survival of the fittest. Some cultures are viewed as superior to other cultures which might be seen as “primitive” or “undeveloped”.

ATR: In ATR, people believe they are intimately connected to other people, even the dead who have become revered ancestors. They respect the tribe and clan, and the fear of upsetting other people, the community, or the clan makes it hard to do anything new even if it will be beneficial to the people. This can make change slow and difficult. Humans are not all equal to each other. The person’s own tribe is viewed as superior to other tribes and peoples. In most cases, witchdoctors, chiefs, and elders are seen as special or superior. Ancestors are to be honored and obeyed. Men are generally seen as superior to women. The community is viewed as more important than the individual. But people outside of the privileged or superior positions are expected to remain the same together. There is what some have called PHD syndrome – “Pull

Him Down".⁵ People should not try to get ahead of others, or develop ahead of others, and if they try, the community will try to pull them back down.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

View of the Problems in the World

Secularism: People with a secular worldview think that problems of the world are due to ignorance, lack of resources, and lack of technology. They think that, with enough time, human reason and technology will be able to solve most of the world's problems.

ATR: In ATR, the problems in the world are caused by gods, spirits, ancestors, curses, and witchcraft.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

Christians can make use of technology and natural things to make people's lives better, but they see that these are gifts that ultimately come from the hand of God. Christians also see that technology can cause as much evil as good, because all people are sinful, and it is people who use technology. Christians know that demons do cause problems in the world, but that in Christ we have power over them.



Discussion Questions

1. What beliefs or perspectives of ATR do you see in your country and are they contributing to any of the five types of poverty?

2. What beliefs or perspectives of secularism do you see in your country and are they contributing to any of the five types of poverty?

(Questions continue on page 112)

3. Concerning your answers in #1-2, how will teaching people a biblical worldview bring change and development?



Culture

This lesson challenges our culture, because our worldview is directly linked to our culture and traditions. Every culture has elements in it that are pleasing to God and elements that are not pleasing to God. Therefore, no matter who we are, God’s Word challenges our culture in some way. To be a disciple of Jesus, we do not have to abandon our culture completely, but we have to change any cultural practices and beliefs which do not conform with the Word of God.

It can be very difficult to go against the expectations and beliefs of the culture. It is hard to change as individuals, and it is also hard to face ridicule and anger from others in our family or tribe.

In Africa, it is easy to preach to people and see people become born again. “But in addition to ‘born again’ hearts, Christians need ‘born again’ minds.”⁶

Would one person like to share a brief testimony about when you chose to obey Christ over the expectations of your culture? Did you suffer for it and how did God help you through that suffering?

Following Christ can cause us to suffer. We remember that Jesus told us to take up our crosses to follow him. But we know that God uses our suffering for good (see **Romans 8:28**). Through suffering, God draws us closer to him, grows us in our patience and character, and uses us as witnesses to others. We also know that God will give us strength to endure the suffering and he will be with us as we go through the valley. We must put Christ first and our culture second even when it is hard.

Worldview Transformation

Because every culture has a worldview that does not perfectly line up with the truth of God’s Word, we all need worldview transformation. For some of us, maybe we need to repent of certain beliefs and behaviours that we inherited from ATR which do not conform to the truth of God’s Word. For others, we may have to repent of some of the perspectives we have unconsciously

inherited from secularism.

Teaching Technical Knowledge

It is also important to teach general knowledge and technical knowledge to people as part of our holistic approach to fighting poverty.

Quotation from former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan:

“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”⁷

We need to teach people knowledge and new skills. Sometimes we need to teach how diseases are spread, how to treat HIV-AIDS, how to make a budget, how to advertise for a business, and how to harness solar power. But as we teach these things, it is important to teach about them from a biblical worldview.

Medicine Example:

Whether you teach about healthcare, business, agriculture, or savings programs, make sure to teach about these topics with an integrated biblical worldview approach.

Have you been teaching anyone technical knowledge without integrating a biblical worldview? Explain.

Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Choose one of these activities:

1. For church leaders:

Preach a sermon about the biblical worldview using one of the Bible passages mentioned in the lesson or in the small group discussion questions. Speak about the need to be born again in our minds as well as our hearts. Be sure to talk about how we need to put Christ first, above all other gods, including putting him ahead of the expectations of our culture. It is important to talk about the reality that this might cause suffering, but also that God will be with us in this suffering.

2. For others:

Plan to teach people in your church, or your community, or in your family about a topic or skill you are knowledgeable about. It may be related to health, business, agriculture, carpentry, sanitation, budgeting, cooking, etc. But before you start teaching, make sure your prepared lesson has integrated the biblical worldview. This is not always easy to do. You might have to spend time in deep reflection about your topic as well as meditating on Bible passages which relate to your topic. If you are having trouble connecting your topic to the biblical worldview, talk to a pastor, a friend, or an expert in your topic, to see what ideas they have.



Small Group Discussion

1. What do the passages below teach us about the importance of having a Christian worldview?
a. **Ephesians 4:17-24**

b. **Colossians 2:6-10**

2. Read and discuss **1 Peter 3:14-16** and **1 Peter 4:12-16** about the role of suffering in the life of a Christian. Are you willing to put Christ first, and live differently than other people in your culture, even if this means you will suffer? Explain.

3. We have talked already about the beliefs of secularism and ATR in our country. But in what ways do you see secularism or ATR having an influence within your church today?

4. What technical knowledge would benefit the people in your community? Who in your church or in this training group with you might be able to teach them?



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning)

More information about the differences between secularism, ATR, and the biblical worldview:

1. They have different views on “the meaning of life”.

Secularism: Some people with a secular worldview think there is no meaning to life, but that humanity just evolved randomly from nothing. Some think we should just try to enjoy material things and our possessions for as long as we can, because we are all going to die. Others try to create their own meaning in life by trying to see how humans can progress and advance

through science. They want to be the best humans they can be. Secularists do not believe in an afterlife so they live completely for this life.

ATR: In ATR, most people focus on power as the most important element in life. It is about the “—power of the ancestor to control those of his lineage, power of an evil eye to kill a newborn or ruin a harvest, power of planets to affect earthly destiny, power of the demonic to possess a spiritist, power of magic to control human events, power of impersonal forces to heal a child or make a person wealthy.”⁸ The goal is to use the power of the spiritual beings for the benefit of you and your family in this life. There is belief in an afterlife. But, generally in ATR, people are much more concerned with getting daily needs met, finding food, healing, etc. then thinking about the afterlife.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

Both secularism and ATR focus on power. Secularism looks to the power of humans and ATR looks to use the power of the spirits. “Animists seek to manipulate spiritual powers by means of magic; secularists manipulate their environments by means of technology.”⁹ But the Bible teaches that the meaning of life is not to look for power, but to spend our time worshipping God and enjoying his love. Both this life and the afterlife are about God and his glory; we live to serve him and we receive his love. It’s also a problem to focus on power because power can be counterfeited. Just think of the power that Pharaoh’s magicians showed to Moses. Power cannot always be trusted. But truth cannot be counterfeited.¹⁰ It is better for us to focus on the truth of God’s Word, then to trust in power.

2. They have different views on “spirits”.

Secularism: Secularists do not believe in any spiritual world, so they do not live in fear of spirits nor do they try to make use of their power.

ATR: In ATR, there is belief in many spirits, some good and some bad and some indifferent. Humans must try to discover these spirits and then appease them in order to gain benefits from them. These spirits can help a person obtain a good job or give a miraculous healing from a sickness. Many people live in fear of these spirits and in fear of what other people can do to them using these spirits.

In contrast, what does the biblical worldview teach?

The Bible teaches that God is sovereign and almighty. He is the one who created all spirits and he is in control over all of them. Some spirits are angels who worship God and are obedient to him. Some spirits are demons who have rebelled against God. God has allowed them to continue to exist and cause harm in this world, but he has only allowed them to do this for a short time. The day is coming when Jesus will return, when all demons will be thrown into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41). As we wait, we still have to struggle against demons, even as Christians, (Ephesians 6:12-13). But even right now, those in Christ do not need to live in fear of demons. Christ has overpowered Satan through his death and resurrection. Through Christ living in us, we have power over demons (Colossians 2:15, Luke 10:18-19, 1 John 3:8, and 1 John 4:4). We no longer need to be afraid. (1 John 4:18, Romans 8:38-39).

It is true that some poverty can be caused by demons. Demons cause problems in the world for individual people, and they even work through groups and institutions to make systems more inefficient, corrupt, and unjust. We must recognise the authority and power we have with Christ living within us, and overcome these demons. This means that part of fighting poverty is liberating people from demonic influence through the power of Christ. We must put on the

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armour of God, truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the Bible, and prayer (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Some people avoid trying to develop because they fear other people will bring them down through witchcraft or curses. But we do not need to live in fear of witchcraft or spirits or curses. Jesus has overpowered them. Jesus is in control of our lives. Jesus is the victor. Jesus is the King!

More information regarding worldview transformation:

Worldview transformation is extremely important, and that is why we have a whole lesson on it, but we should also not fall into the error of thinking that as long as we teach people a biblical worldview, then everything will be okay, and people will immediately come out of poverty. Even if a person has correct beliefs, they can still struggle with poverty. Here are some reasons why:

1. The Bible teaches that Christians will still experience suffering, including poverty, even if they love God and have faith and have the right beliefs.
2. Having the right worldview about how relationships are supposed to work does not automatically make those relationships work well in the way that they should. I might know how I am *supposed* to have good relationships with my neighbours, but that does not mean there won't be conflict.
3. The entire creation is cursed because of the Fall. That means that earthquakes and hurricanes and famines and floods still happen and affect us even when we have correct worldviews.
4. Sometimes other people actively work against the efforts of a poor person to change his situation, even if the poor person has a Christian worldview.
5. Broken systems can cause poverty as well, even for people with a Christian worldview. Corruption and broken systems are discussed in Lesson 11.

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on photograph by Tabitha Kapic.

¹ Personal Correspondence from Joshua Ramatlali.

² Edited from Anna Ho, "Truth-Centred Transformation" Presentation, Used with Permission.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gayle Van Rheenen, "Animism, Secularism and Theism: Developing a Tripartite Model for Understanding World Cultures", (IJFM, October 1993) accessed online: http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/10_4_PDFs/04_Van_Rheenen.pdf.

⁵ From notes taken during a presentation on worldview by Dennis Tongoi.

⁶ Scott Allen, Darrow L. Miller, *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa*, 43, accessed online: http://www.disciplenations.org/media/Against-All-Hope-Hope-for-Africa_ENGLISH.pdf.

⁷ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/k/kofi_annan.html.

⁸ Van Rheenen, "Animism...", Page 1 (pg.169).

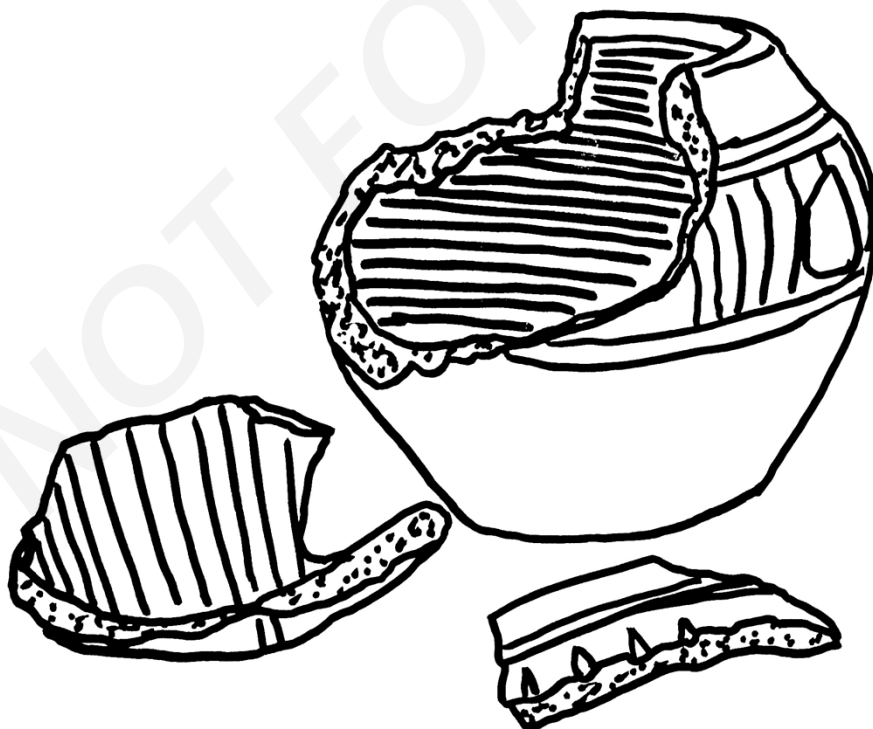
⁹ Ibid. Page 2 (p 170).

¹⁰ From notes taken during a presentation on worldview by Dennis Tongoi.

NOT FOR SALE



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Lesson 11: Broken Systems

Opening Discussion Question

When you hear the term "broken systems", what comes to your mind?

Broken systems refer to structures, policies, and programs that are not effectively promoting human flourishing: they are not helping people to live in proper relationship to God, self, others and creation. Systems can be broken because they are no longer fulfilling the good purpose for which they were created. Political systems refer to the institutions, laws, and policies governing a nation. Also in this category, we include the voting system, the police force, public education, and public healthcare. Economic systems refer to local or international systems of trade, markets, banking, wages, and management of resources in a country. Social systems include the family, the clan, the church, and other cultural systems and expectations.

When broken, these systems can keep people trapped in poverty through no fault of their own. As Christians we must care about broken systems because God cares about them too.
Amos 2:6-7

Amos 5:24

A large part of working for the justice that God wants is trying to correct and repair broken systems.



Small group Activity

Make a simple list of the broken political, economic, and social systems that you see in your country or community that are contributing to keeping some people in poverty. Arrange them in order, starting from those that contribute to keeping people in poverty the most, to those that contribute to keeping people in poverty the least (#1 should be the most harmful broken system in your country or community).



Facilitator Lecture: Broken Political, Economic and Social Systems

Political systems

Broken political systems include war and prolonged insecurity. In many African countries, we also experience poor governance, dictatorship, and the extreme centralisation of power in the hands of a few people or tribes. Other examples of broken political systems include unfair elections, and the lack of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. A system can also be broken if it benefits only a few people or disadvantages the poor.

Public Healthcare

Public healthcare exists in most African countries but it is often a system that is not functioning very effectively or fairly. Problems sometimes include:

- Limited access to health facilities especially in rural areas, and poor-quality health services due to weak and under-resourced health centres.
- Lack of drugs in hospitals. Because the drugs aren't available, patients must pay for drugs at private clinics and pharmacies.
- Lack of accountability and monitoring of health facilities and personnel. This encourages absenteeism of health workers and also theft of drugs from public hospitals. Additionally, this allows for corruption during the procurement of medical products resulting in low quality drugs.
- Low investment in health services and health research by governments.
- Health workers are paid poorly, so sometimes they charge extra for services that are supposed to be free. They are also overworked because of a lack of medical personnel. And many end up leaving for jobs in other countries where they will be paid better and not overworked.

Is the public healthcare system broken in our country in any of these ways? Which ones? How do these problems especially hurt materially poor people compared to the rich?

Public Education

Public education exists in most African countries, usually as a free public service,¹ but it is often a system that is not working well. Problems sometimes include:²

- Lack of school infrastructure and lack of adequate facilities, especially in rural areas.
- Lack of trained teachers. In 2012, the average pupil/teacher ratio in primary school was 42:1 in Africa. That statistic has not changed since 1999.³

- Failure to enforce education policy and standards. Many schools that don't meet the required standards and lack qualified teachers continue to be formed.
- Teachers are paid poorly, resulting in frequent strikes at all levels from primary schools to universities. Teachers sometimes migrate to other countries where they are better paid.
- Lack of monitoring and supervision by government which leads to corruption, as well as leaked examination papers, and forgery of academic transcripts.
- No government system of loans to help people pay for higher education.
- Schools which are supposed to be free sometimes still charge large fees for food or textbooks, resulting in many materially poor families still being unable to send their children to school.
- Families with financial means send their children to better private schools, resulting in less community investment in the public schools. Since the public schools are filled with the children of materially poor families, it is left to materially poor families with little power to advocate for the development of these schools.

Is the public education system broken in our country in any of these ways? Which ones? How do these problems especially hurt materially poor people and their children compared to the rich?

Infrastructure

In many African countries, there is a lack a good power network, good telecommunication networks across the whole country, clean water and sanitation, and an extensive road network with regular maintenance and repair. Sometimes it is only the wealthy areas of the country that get to experience the benefits of good infrastructure, while rural areas and city slums are neglected.

What tribes or regions in your country are the most disadvantaged concerning lack of infrastructure?

Rule of Law

By the "rule of law" we mean that there is authority and laws in a country that are enforced. People cannot do whatever they want, but rather people who break the law are punished. Every citizen should be subjected to the law, whether rich or poor, even government officials at the highest levels. Laws should be clearly written and made known to all citizens. Property rights should be upheld. Voting rights should be upheld and elections should be conducted freely and fairly. Term limits should be respected. The rulings of judges should not be influenced by bribes or threats. People should be treated fairly by courts and government officials, regardless of tribe.

In places where laws are not enforced, how are materially poor people more disadvantaged compared to those who are rich?

Bureaucracy

A bureaucracy is an organisation made up of many departments and divisions that are administered by a lot of people.⁴ Government bureaucratic systems were established in Africa to promote good monitoring and efficiency of service to the people of our countries. But bureaucracy can become unhelpful when the administration becomes needlessly complicated with too many forms, procedures, and inefficient processes, all of which can create opportunities for corruption.

Think about the problem of bureaucracy and people who want to come and work in your country. A country might say that it takes 14 days to get a work permit, but in reality, the process might take over a year. Think about this example: "In Cameroon, it takes an investor who seeks a business licence on average 426 days to perform fifteen procedures." In the USA, it would take only 40 days to perform 19 procedures.⁵

Explain how infrastructure, rule of law, and bureaucracy would influence foreign governments and foreign companies looking to invest in Africa. How will they choose which countries to work in and invest in?

"The Commission for Africa noted that Uganda's economy grew by around 7 per cent between 1993 and 2002 when the country improved its regulatory climate. It also reduced the number of people living on less than a dollar a day from 56 per cent in 1998 to 32 percent in 2002 after the government introduced measures to attract investors."⁶

Economic Systems

An economic system refers to the processes and innerworkings of the production, resource allocation and distribution of goods and services within a society or a given geographic area.⁷ In other words, we are looking at systems of trade, money, and managing resources.

Broken economic systems can include:

- Low wages for workers.
- Lack of access to banking, especially in rural areas.
- Inadequate revenue for the government due to a small tax base.
- The lack of infrastructure, particularly roads and other types of transport, means some people do not have the ability to transport their harvests and products to markets within country or for export out of country.
- Population growth is far exceeding the pace of job creation in many countries; thus, unemployment is very high.

But some of the broken economic systems are the result of the policies of foreign countries or international agreements. For example:

- Foreign governments and foreign companies take advantage of the willingness of Africans to work for very low wages and to sell natural resources for minimal prices. And sometimes corrupt government leaders in Africa are the only ones to benefit from the sale of natural resources while the local people watch their resources being taken away. For example, Nigeria has pumped more than 400 billion dollars' worth of oil since it was discovered there in the 1950s – enough to cancel all of Sub-Saharan Africa's debt. However, more than 80 per cent of oil revenue has accrued to just 1 per cent of the population, while the majority of the population have got poorer, leading to a violent rebellion in the oil-rich Niger Delta.⁸
 - There is limited participation of African leaders in determining the terms and conditions of international trade. This allows for the possibility of other countries making policies and tariffs that are in the best interests of their people, but not for African people. For example, "in Senegal, almost half of all chicken farms have gone out of business as a result of a 1,000 per cent increase in imports of poultry from the European Union." "These chicken imports are heavily subsidized by the European Union and have dramatically displaced domestic production."⁹
-

Loans and Debt

One international economic system that affects African countries is the system of loans and debt. African countries have received aid and also have received a large amount of money in loans from foreign governments and banks. Because of high interest rates and little money received in taxes, many African countries are finding it impossible to pay back their loans.

*What do you think is the best solution to these unpayable loans?
Should your country continue to take loans from foreign countries?*

Broken Social Systems

Family

The breakdown of family systems can be seen in the separation and divorce in marriages, single parenthood, child-headed families, child neglect, child abuse and labour, and in street children and violent youth. The Church must try to bring to broken families the peace and reconciliation only found in Christ.

The Church

Sometimes we run our churches with traditions, policies, and systems that are not pleasing to God. Some of our practices particularly disadvantage materially poor people.

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Some examples might include:

- Most leadership positions and opportunities are given to materially rich people, denying materially poor people the opportunity to serve.
- Churches mostly welcome rich or well-known people during Sunday services. These people are given nice chairs to sit in and chances to speak. Poor people are not always given the same treatment.
- People who give a large amount of money in offerings or church fundraisers are highly recognised and thanked, while poor people who give small amounts but with great generosity are hardly recognised.
- Church leaders and church members show more support and attendance at burials and parties of rich people from the church rather than materially poor people.
- Weddings in church are expected to be big celebrations that everyone can enjoy. Therefore, poor Christians may have to wait many years before marrying in the church while trying to save up money to meet everyone's excessive expectations.
- The church often finds it easy to discipline the materially poor people, but for the rich who give money to church, church discipline is not done. Their sins are tolerated.
- Some pastors prefer visiting, guiding and caring for the rich over the poor in their churches. They know they might receive financial gifts or food from the rich person's home, but the materially poor from their church might offer nothing.

Explain how each of these practices contributes to the five types of poverty for poor people in our churches?

Traditional Culture

There is a wealth of value in our traditional cultures. We would do well to learn wisdom from our ancestors and keep many of our cultural traditions alive. But at the same time, some of our cultural systems are broken and are keeping people trapped in poverty.

As Christians, is this a system in our culture that we should reject or should we continue to take part in it? If the system is good and should be continued, do we need to adjust anything about it so that it does not get abused or disadvantage some people?

a. Polygamy

b. Clan punishments for crimes or disobedience

c. Dowry/bride-price

d. Widows not inheriting land when a husband dies

e. Royal leaders who represent, guide, and lead each tribe

Can you think of any cultural broken systems we have not discussed yet?



Partner Discussion

Have you ever been a victim of corruption? How did it make you feel about the other person, about yourself, and about your country?



Facilitator Lecture: Corruption in Africa

Of the ten countries considered most corrupt in the world, six are in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Transparency International. A 2002 African Union study estimated that corruption costs the continent roughly \$150 billion a year. Compare that to the amount of aid given to Africa each year. For example, \$22.5 billion was given in aid to sub-Saharan Africa in 2008.¹⁰

Let's dream together. What could you do for your continent with \$150 billion to address poverty and encourage development?

Some Africans say that we have a disease, and it's called "grabiosis". We have a culture of wanting to grab everything we can for ourselves.

In the eyes of our God corruption is an evil sin of greed and deceit. But there are at least three other reasons why corruption must be challenged and reduced:¹¹

1. Corruption breeds inefficiency. Where services are only rendered after the payment of bribes or business can only be transacted with "under the table" payments, time is wasted, bureaucracies multiply, costs increase, and quality is compromised.
2. Corruption leads to loss of revenue by governments since money gained by corrupt means is not taxed, and is often diverted into foreign bank accounts.
3. Corruption frustrates potential investors leading to missed business and employment opportunities.

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It is easy for us to criticise corrupt politicians and policemen, but let's look at ourselves first. Have we ever stolen anything? Have we ever lied?

Which is the bigger sin, for a politician to steal a million shillings from a public fund, or for someone to steal a chicken from their neighbour?

Sometimes we start off sure that we will never fall into corruption at our place of work. But then slowly but surely, we change until one day we are surprised at how corrupt we have become. And sometimes we rationalise our behavior by saying to ourselves, "Everyone else is doing it, so what is the big deal if I do it too?"

Discussion Questions:

Do we expect preferential treatment when we have a relative in a senior position, but then at the same time criticise others when they get preferential treatment? Explain.

Do we criticise others for only voting for members of their same tribe, but then do the same thing ourselves? Explain.

Do we criticise politicians for making false promises and lying to our country's citizens, but at the same time we lie to our own spouses and friends? Explain.

Not only is corruption a sin that God hates, but it is harming our witness in the world. It may be that corruption is the greatest obstacle today to evangelizing the world. "If people do not feel they can trust what we will do or say, if they are not assured that we are working for the common good, or for their personal good, they will not take seriously what we say about anything else, including the good news of Jesus Christ."¹²

Bribery and Extortion

Bribery: With a bribe you are giving something in order to receive some benefit you do not deserve, such as asking for your forms to be processed before all the others who gave their forms ahead of you. A bribe can also be giving something in order to get out of a penalty that you deserve, such as when you give money to the police so that they don't write you a speeding ticket. Bribery is always wrong and detestable to God.

Extortion: Extortion is the act of obtaining money, property or something from another person wrongfully through either use of force, threats, violence, or fear and intimidation. This is normally done by people in power or positions of authority that wrongfully take advantage of their positions to intimidate and extort money or property from others. Extortion is when you have done nothing wrong, but money is still being demanded of you.

We all agree that to give a bribe is wrong. But is it sinful to give money in a situation of extortion?

If we always give money to those who extort us, they will continue to do so, and even extort others as well. It is better that we resist extortion, publicly announce those who are extorting others, and sometimes face the penalties for doing so. People who extort others may eventually give up trying when instead of getting money, they have to waste their time taking people to jail. Hopefully, this will then raise questions about their behaviour.

Overcoming Corruption and Broken Systems

Explain specifically which practical steps we can take to personally resist corruption and also what we can do to overcome corruption in our country?

If we all come together with boldness and determination to change, first by working at changing ourselves, and then working together to change broken systems, there can be real change. God will help us.



Story of Apartheid in South Africa:

How should we go about trying to overcome corruption and bring change to broken systems?

1. We need to first focus on reconciling our own broken relationships with God, self, others, and the rest of creation.
2. We need to strengthen our institutions and ensure that competent people with integrity and the right skills are hired for their jobs. We also need to make sure that institutions are properly funded and that government workers in the police force, and hospitals, and schools are paid adequately and on time so that they won't be as tempted toward corruption.
3. We need good laws and policies that attract investments and growth and that create a good working environment, avoiding too much unnecessary bureaucracy.
4. We need to encourage our leaders to enforce the laws at all times, and we need to speak up whenever we see laws not being enforced.

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5. We should reward those in leadership who have integrity and avoid corruption. Congratulate them publicly and support them in their work.
6. We need to publicly report corruption wherever we find it, whether in the church or the government or in business.
7. As Africans, we need to speak up for our rights in international forums, regarding international policies, organisations, structures, and trade agreements.
8. We need to ask for God’s grace and strength so that we have the courage to experience suffering as we resist and report bribery, extortion, and corruption of all kinds.



Take-Home Activities:

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Choose one of these activities:

1. For church leaders:

Together with church leaders and members, identify the broken systems in your church and discuss the practical steps that you can take to overcome them. Make an action plan that includes the problems, the solutions, the people responsible and the timeframe. Present the action plan to the church members.

2. For others:

Identify one broken system in your community or country that you would like to see changed. Discuss together with your colleagues and write a plan of action together to try to bring change.



Small Group Discussion Questions

1. *What do the passages below teach us about resisting and overcoming corruption?*

a. *Exodus 23:8*

b. *Deuteronomy 1:17*

c. *Proverbs 11:1*

d. *1 Peter 2:12*

(Questions continued on page 129)

2. *What do these passages teach us about trying to change broken systems and bringing justice and fairness to all?*

a. *James 2:1-7*

b. *Isaiah 1:17*

c. *Isaiah 58:3-7*



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning).

Trade versus Aid

Concerning the topic of international economic systems, there is a vigorous debate among world leaders about what would help Africans the most: better trade policies or more foreign aid or both?¹³

What do you think? Would it be more helpful to fix some of your country's broken economic systems and change the trade policies to be more favourable to Africans? Or would it be more helpful to receive large gifts of financial aid to your country?

There is no simple answer to this question. Trade and aid are both very important in helping a country to develop. Aid is usually a short-term intervention to address an urgent need while trade is a long-term relationship that promotes economic growth of a country. Trade is what will help countries to develop in a sustainable way, so that they are earning what they need themselves. Look at the pros and cons of aid and trade.

Pros of Aid

- Aid is essential in helping countries deal with their urgent issues such as famine, natural disasters, epidemics of disease, and budget deficits. Many African countries face such situations that require foreign financial aid since they may not have the capacity and resources to handle them.
- Aid can give a country the start-up capital it needs to build up infrastructure for later development.

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- Aid can help the very poor and vulnerable, people who would not benefit from new trade policies.

Cons of Aid

- Aid can easily become a tool by foreign donors to make African leaders do what they want. Sometimes conditions are attached to the aid to try to manipulate Africans to change their culture and values.
- Countries can become dependent on aid and this dependency can hinder motivation to change and develop.
- Aid can actually foster insecurity and corruption. When those in power receive aid, it can stir others in the country to rebellion. There is competition over who will control the aid and how it is used.¹⁴
- Unfortunately, many African leaders have used aid in the past to hoard wealth for themselves rather than using that aid to help their countries.

Pros of Trade

- Trade is necessary for economic growth and sustainable development.
- Trade helps countries to become self-reliant, and therefore helps them to feel less shame and inferiority.
- Trade promotes partnerships and interdependency between countries.
- Trade increases access to economic resources that a developing country needs, through the exchange of goods and ideas.
- Trade creates employment for the population as it attracts investments and foreign companies.

Cons of Trade

- Trade does not necessarily benefit the people who are very materially poor, but mostly the middle and upper classes, those with good work and access to markets.
- Free trade is risky to fragile developing economies.
- Trade may require an initial investment through aid in order to be profitable.
- Some African countries are not peaceful and stable enough to benefit from new trade policies.

Different countries may have different answers about whether trade or aid is needed. But generally, the correct answer is probably that we need both trade and aid, but we need them done wisely and fairly. However, because so many countries in Africa have focused for so long on aid, we recommend that we focus more on trade today so that Africa can develop.

Consider these words from Senegal's President Wade in 2002 – "I've never seen a country develop itself through aid or credit. Countries that have developed – in Europe, America, Japan, Asian countries like Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore – have all believed in free markets. There is no mystery there. Africa took the wrong road after Independence."¹⁵ And this statement from Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the United Nations - "Open markets offer the only realistic hope of pulling billions of people in developing countries out of abject poverty, while sustaining prosperity in the industrialized world."¹⁶

Inspiring stories about how broken systems and corruption can be overcome:

1. This story is a quotation from the book, *The Bottom Billion*, written by Paul Collier. Collier wrote:

The heroes are Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile, now governor of the central bank of Uganda, but in the mid-1990s permanent secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and Ritva Reinikka, a former student of mine. The story begins with Reinikka devising a survey to track public expenditure (the same survey that was done in Chad). She initially devised it for Uganda, where it came up with rather depressing results: only around 20 percent of the money that the Ministry of Finance released for primary schools, other than for teachers' salaries, actually reached the schools. In some societies the government would have tried to suppress information like this, but in Uganda, far from suppressing it, Tumusiime-Mutebile used it as a springboard for action. Obviously, one way would have been to tighten the top-down system of audit and scrutiny, but they had already been trying that and it evidently wasn't working too well. So Tumusiime-Mutebile decided to try a completely different approach: scrutiny from the bottom up. Each time the Ministry of Finance released money it informed the local media, and it also sent a poster to each school setting out what it should be getting. Tumusiime-Mutebile is a practical man who wanted to know if things were working, so three years later he repeated the tracking survey. Now, instead of only 20 percent getting through to the schools, 90 percent was getting through. In state-of-the-art statistical research that analyzed this experiment in detail, Reinikka and her colleague Jakob Svensson were able to demonstrate that the media had been decisive – in this case reports in newspapers. So scrutiny turned 20 percent into 90 percent – more effective than doubling aid and doubling it again.¹⁷

2. This story is a quotation from the book, *The Challenge for Africa*, written by Wangari Maathai. She wrote:

In Kenya in 2002, a coalition of political parties finally laid to rest the presidency of Daniel arap Moi, and the first new administration in twenty-four years came into power. A newfound spirit of enthusiasm pervaded the country; in fact, there was so much goodwill when the new government was formed that something extraordinary happened: across Kenya, the "social machine" began to move again. Here is just one example. For years, policemen had cadged bribes from the drivers of matatus, the cheap, private minivans that, given the generally poor state of public transit, are the main means of transportation for millions of Kenyans. To the drivers, the bribes were an accepted cost of doing business – allowing them and not another driver to ply a certain route, or ensuring that police officers would ignore any infractions in the vehicle's condition or running. Matatus had become extremely unsafe; high-speed accidents were common, and thousands of lives were being lost every year. And yet, people had few other alternatives but to continue riding in them. After the 2002 election, matatu passengers began to challenge any policeman who demanded a bribe from the driver. Inspired by the new government, which had vowed to make fighting the corruption that riddles society from top to bottom a

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priority, ordinary citizens stood up and demanded that neither the police nor the drivers conduct business as usual. This reached a point where policemen stopped asking for the bribes, either because they feared the reaction of the matatu passengers, or possibly, because even they embraced the new spirit and did their part to facilitate the service without demanding a kickback. Matatu drivers also began obeying speed restrictions and agreed to abide by the new government's directive to install seatbelts, a practical safety measure that also limits the number of passengers. (Previously, drivers would pick up as many people as they could, even when riders were literally hanging out of the doors.) This was evidence of the "new Kenya" that citizens wanted to work for and believed was possible, after decades of a government devaluing their aspirations for a more honest and just society. But as soon as it was clear that individuals in the new government were not honest and refused to honor the promises they made to each other during the campaign, this spirit was suddenly lost; and unfortunately, before too long many people went back to the bad old habits.¹⁸

3. This story is told by an American missionary, Renita Reed, about a businessman in Ethiopia. (His name has been changed for confidentiality). Moses worked as a manager in a furniture company for fourteen years. He was known as a manager who would not compromise his ethics. Eventually he felt God calling him to leave this business and start his own. Moses began importing high quality office furniture from China, working primarily through contracts (also called "tenders") from various government offices, businesses, or institutions. Businesses who work through contracts or tenders tend to be plagued with potential corruption, as the contract will often go to the one willing to bribe the people in charge of decision making. Moses and his wife decided when opening this business that they would not pay bribes or receive bribes. Moses said, "Each bribe has two parties - a giver and a receiver. If we all would stop being givers, what could the receivers do?" This was not an easy decision for them. Moses lost so many contracts because he was unwilling to pay bribes. But over time, and because he insisted on selling high quality furniture, he began to be known as a business man with integrity whose products would outlast his competitors. This has opened doors for him to have many conversations, especially with government officials (even those who are Christian) about doing work with integrity. But one of the main things that has allowed him to keep his integrity is the fact that he and his family have decided to live below their means, so that they will always have the option of saying no to contracts that demand bribes. Moses said, "My joy is not from money in my business but rather in the satisfaction of doing a job well." Moses is an example of someone having the courage to be light in a dark place.¹⁹
4. The city of Gulu in Northern Uganda has some of the highest alcohol consumption rates in Africa, and there are endless stories of people who have had their lives destroyed by alcohol addiction. It used to be popular to sell alcohol in tiny colorful plastic sachets of 100ml. Children were able to buy them and hide them in their pockets. In early 2015, a local group, Wakonye Kenwa decided it was time for a change. For many years, religious leaders, different NGOs and community groups had cried out about the alcohol problem. A united, strategic effort was needed. Together Christians collected data and personal stories from the community about the impact of alcohol. They submitted a report to the

District Government, demonstrating the need for new laws. A petition was signed by Gulu's top religious leaders calling for a ban on the sachet alcohol. Over 10,000 signatures were collected. Pastors and other community leaders marched through the city to present the petition to the officials. The district leaders announced to the crowds, "we will not fail you." Finally, the law was passed in October 2016. But it is easier to pass a new law than to enforce it. After a few alcohol seizures, powerful national politicians and police leaders became angry. Efforts were made to thwart the law through bribes and political pressure. But Wakonye Kenwa and other community leaders did not give up on trying to make change. Finally, they were able to convince district leaders to form an elite team to make sure the laws were enforced. Today, sales of sachets of alcohol have greatly been reduced and can only be bought in secret. There is now much less drunkenness seen in the city's streets. It took years to make the change, but with perseverance, working together, and the power of God, change is possible!²⁰

5. Listen to this true story by Mary Crickmore in her curriculum called "Shalom: A Manual for Christian Workers". The names have been changed. Crickmore wrote:

Mary was a young woman whose husband became very sick. She worked hard to support the family since her husband could not work. After some time, he died. The husband's brother came and told her to leave the house because he needed it. He and his other relations came and took all the furniture away. Because this was an ethnic group that had a tradition that all property belongs permanently to the husband's relations, no one stopped them from doing this. This had been done to many other widows in that town. And because many people in that place had AIDS there were many widows. Mary's church denomination decided that they wanted to help widows. They set up a micro-loan program, but they found that they also needed to address the root cause of why so many widows were poor. They made a rule for all of their churches that no one should take a house or furniture away from a sister or daughter-in-law who was widowed. And they began AIDS prevention teaching in the churches.²¹

6. Go to this website to see how Kampala Pentecostal Church in Uganda decided to reach out in love to the police force through a Police Appreciation Day - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0ISAzqWp_8

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on an Adobe Stock Photo.

¹ "Can Africa Afford Free Education?", *Global Education Monitoring Report*, (World Education Blog, 27 January, 2017) accessed online: <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2016/01/27/can-africa-afford-free-education/>.

² "State of education in Africa report 2015", (The Africa-America Institute, New York, NY 2015), accessed online: <http://www.aaionline.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/AAI-SOE-report-2015-final.pdf>.

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³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/bureaucracy>.

⁵ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009), Kindle ed., Location 1706-9.

⁶ Ibid. Location 1717-20.

⁷ Daniel J. Cantor, Juliet B. Schor, *Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy, and Central America*, (South End Press, 1987), p. 21.

⁸ Carmody Pádraig, *The New Scramble for Africa*, 2nd ed., (Polity; 24 October, 2016) Highlight Loc. 3069-72.

⁹ Ibid. Highlight Loc. 1450-53.

¹⁰ Stephanie Hanson, "Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa", Transparency International (Council on Foreign Relations, 6 August, 2009) accessed online: <https://www.cfr.org/background/corruption-sub-saharan-africa>.

¹¹ A.S. Moreau et al., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI; 2000), 233.

¹² <https://www.lausanne.org/networks/issues/integrity-and-anti-corruption>.

¹³ "Aid vs. Trade", (EIIF), accessed online: <http://www.eiiff.com/aid/trade.html>.

¹⁴ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done about It*, (Oxford University Press, 2007), Kindle ed., Loc. 1716.

¹⁵ Quoted by Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009), Kindle ed., Loc. 2489-91.

¹⁶ From an interview with Kofi Annan by *The Globalist*, (6 February, 2001), access online: <https://www.theglobalist.com/kofi-annan-on-global-futures/>.

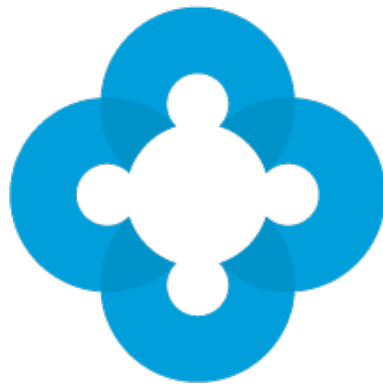
¹⁷ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Loc. 2502-13.

¹⁸ Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009). Kindle, ed., Loc. 1826-45.

¹⁹ Renita Reed, personal correspondence and access online: http://reedsinthewind.blogspot.com/2016_05_30_archive.html.

²⁰ Personal Correspondence from Tessa Laing.

²¹ Mary Crickmore, "Shalom: A Manual for Christian Workers", (self-published, 2011), 15.



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Lesson 12: The Prosperity Gospel

Opening Discussion Question

Briefly explain how you would define “the prosperity gospel”, also known as “the health and wealth gospel”.

The prosperity gospel hurts materially poor people.

Poverty does not have a quick and easy fix, but there is still hope for change because of Christ.



Large group discussion

1. What prosperity gospel teachings are being taught in your country?

2. What prosperity gospel teachings have you seen in your own church or among your Christian friends?

3. Have these teachings impacted people you know positively or negatively?



Lecture: Why the Prosperity Gospel is False

1. Prosperity teaching misinterprets Scripture passages by ignoring their context.¹

John 8:32-32

a. They misinterpret Jeremiah 29:11.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

Romans 8:28

b. 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

What do prosperity preachers misunderstand about this passage?

Sowing and Reaping

God gives so we can be generous.

2. Prosperity teaching promotes a manipulative relationship with God.

God is not a tool, but the living God who we need to worship.

We should not bribe God.

Some Christians have seen similarities between African Traditional Religion and the prosperity gospel. Is it true that both seek to use rituals and sacrifices to manipulate spiritual powers to meet our needs? Explain your answer.

Luke 1:37

3. Prosperity teaching fails to identify correctly humanity's greatest need.²

Our greatest need is to be saved from our sins and reconciled to God.

4. Prosperity teaching does not understand the true nature of poverty.

Prosperity teaching claims that poverty is directly related to the sins of people. While it's true that the root cause of all poverty is sin entering this world and Creation becoming cursed at the time of Adam and Eve (see Lesson 3), this is very different from saying that a person's poverty is always a direct result of their own sins or their unspiritual life.

There are many causes of poverty in addition to a sinful life: idolatry, broken relationships, natural disasters, demonic forces, and broken government systems to name few.

The story of Job

5. Prosperity teaching falsely claims that spiritual maturity can be measured by material wealth and that material wealth is always a sign of God's blessing.³

Prosperity teachers look at wealth as a sign of holiness and say that someone who is wealthy has been blessed by God. In contrast, the Bible makes it clear that sometimes the righteous suffer, and sometimes evil people prosper. Good health and riches should not necessarily be taken as signs of God's blessings.

Proverbs 28:6

Deuteronomy 32:15

The prosperity gospel attributes one's wealth, position, and health to his or her level of faith. Generally speaking, a person who comes to know Christ and stops certain sinful behaviours such as laziness or sexual immorality, will likely experience an improvement in their health and financial situation. But since there are other causes of poverty besides personal sin, we cannot judge a person's holiness or spiritual maturity by looking at how much money they have.

When you see a church leader or community leader driving around in a vehicle, what is your first impression about his or her spiritual maturity? When you see a beggar sitting on the ground, what is your first impression about his or her spiritual maturity? What specific things can we do to work on changing our assumptions?

6. Prosperity teaching urges people to give primarily to receive material gain.

2 Corinthians 9:7

We should give cheerfully because we love God, we love the poor, and as a way to worship and thank God.

Blessing comes in various forms.

When the pastors preach about giving at your church, what motive do they tell people to give with?

7. Prosperity teaching makes an idol out of money and encourages greed.

Matthew 6:24

Luke 12:15

God should be our central focus not money.

In what ways can the prosperity gospel contribute to corruption in Africa or to the widening gap between the rich and the poor?

8. Prosperity teaching does not include the message of self-denial.

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Rich people may attend prosperity preaching churches so that they can feel comfortable with their extravagant lifestyles.

The prosperity gospel calls us to deny Jesus and follow our materialistic lust and yet Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and follow Him.⁴

9. Prosperity teaching misunderstands what it means to have strong faith.⁵

“Word of faith” theology claims our faith can create reality.

Faith is about trusting in God’s love and power, not trust in the power of ourselves.
Matthew 9:28-29; Ephesians 2:8-9

10. Prosperity teaching values humanity’s will over God’s will.

John 14:13-14 says God will do anything for us.

But in the Bible, we see Christians suffer. And sometimes we do not get what we ask for in prayer.
2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Interpret confusing Bible passages by looking at other passages.
1 John 5:14-15

What we ask for has to fit into God’s will and plan for our lives. Praying in Jesus’ name does not involve magical incantations but rather expresses alignment of one’s desires and purposes with God.⁶

Luke 22:42

Matthew 5:10

Romans 8:28

God's plan is good for us even when we do not get what we ask for and even when we do not understand his plan. Trust him as our heavenly Father.

Matthew 7:9-11

Have you ever asked God for something that you did not receive? What did God teach you through that experience?

11. Prosperity teaching falsely promises healing from all sickness in this life for faithful Christians.

Believers of the prosperity gospel say that there is a connection between good health and one's spiritual righteousness.

Isaiah 53:5

1 Peter 2:24

Prosperity preachers say we will be healed every time we ask if we have enough faith. This causes Christians to accuse sick people of sin or weak faith instead of caring for them. Surely God has the power to heal and all of us can testify to God's healing in our lives. Yet we know that we are not always healed every time we want it. We are healed according to God's plan and God's will for our lives. Even Paul was not healed every time he asked.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

1 Timothy 5:23

Sometimes we are healed instantly, sometimes we have to wait a long time for a healing, and sometimes we are not healed at all. We will all die eventually. We wait for our full and perfect healing at the resurrection of the dead.

12. Prosperity teaching does not account for the Bible's teachings about suffering in the Christian life.

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1. According to the Bible, what types of suffering should we as Christians expect to experience sometimes in our lives?

2. Think of people in the Bible who were materially poor. List as many of their names as you can think of.

Prosperity preachers largely neglect the very important biblical theme of suffering. What does the Bible teach? Here are some important biblical principles about suffering:

a. The ultimate cause of suffering and poverty in this world is sin. We suffer because of the curse that came when Adam and Eve sinned. And remember what we learned in Lesson 3 about the four broken relationships. We suffer because we sin against God and we hurt one another. Because Jesus is at work in this world, we can hope to see some transformation and development in this life, but we will all continue to experience some suffering in this world until Jesus returns.

b. God is sovereign and in control of this world. He knows the future. Nothing takes him by surprise. He is almighty and supreme. Therefore, whatever happens, even when evil things happen, they all fit somehow into his overall plan for this world.

Proverbs 16:33

Matthew 10:29-30

We know that God is powerful enough to use evil and suffering for good.
Genesis 50:19-20 and Romans 8:28

We do not always understand God's plan, but we know that his plan is good because God is good, loving, and perfect. And our suffering is temporary. We will experience resurrection and eternal life with no more pain or poverty.

c. We can be honest with God when we are suffering.

Psalm 13

And whether God takes away our suffering or not, we must continue to praise him and obey him, trusting in his good plan for our lives.

d. We should expect to suffer because our Lord Jesus also suffered and we are united to him.

Romans 8:17

James 1:2-4

Romans 5:3-5

God can use suffering in our lives:

- To help others.
- To discipline us so that we grow in holiness.
- To teach us patience.
- To test our faith like Job.
- To make us less tempted to sin.
- To help us learn to depend on God and trust in him.
- To draw others to Christ through our testimony of praising God even in our suffering.
- To help us know how to be better counsellors to others who are suffering.

Look to the example of the cross.

Don't be discouraged

We trust that Jesus is working in our lives and in this world to bring healing and reconciliation.

The problem is that the prosperity teachers promise a life without suffering, poverty, and sickness if a person has enough faith and lives an obedient life. While having faith in Christ and living an obedient life will often lessen one's poverty, it is not always true in every situation. We sometimes experience poverty due to broken systems, natural disasters, persecution, or other reasons that fit into God's plan for our lives.

Like the prosperity preachers, we want to see Christians developing and seeing a reduction in all five types of poverty. But the way to go about this is through focusing on God and partaking in the ministry of reconciliation. We should not give people false promises or encourage people to make an idol out of money by thirsting to become rich. Instead, we want people to work for development and wealth creation as a way to serve Christ and a way to increase their ability to be generous to others.



Role play



The Prosperity Gospel Hurts the Poor

Large Group Discussion

1. In what ways does the prosperity gospel specifically hurt materially poor people?

2. If Christians in a local church have taken in some prosperity theology, how might they unintentionally mistreat poor people or sick people in their church?

The prosperity gospel increases poverty of being. It promotes a sense of guilt and shame among materially poor people and sick people.

The prosperity gospel also increases the poverty of being of the rich by inflating their god-complexes.

The prosperity gospel emphasizes individual wealth and success, without the need for community accountability. This has damaged a good feature of traditional African culture, the commitment to care for others within the extended family and the wider social community.⁷ The prosperity gospel causes people to show favouritism to the rich, since financial status is seen as an indicator of a person's spiritual maturity.

James 2:1-7

In what ways is your church obeying or disobeying the principles in James 2:1-7?

The prosperity gospel fails to encourage Christians to work hard and be innovative in order to overcome material poverty. Instead, prosperity teaching urges Christians to pray, sit back, and wait for God to simply send them a miracle. This is why many Christians today spend most of their time at church in prayer, requesting pastors to pray for a breakthrough and asking God for wealth, while at the same time ignoring the gifts and abilities God blessed them with.

The prosperity gospel will cause some people to reject God and the Church.



Overcoming the Prosperity Gospel

To overcome the prosperity gospel in Africa we must:

- Repent of how we have treated materially poor people, and repent if we have ever taught prosperity theology.
- Commit ourselves to preaching the true gospel even if it is unpopular.
- Read, study, and be taught God’s Word.
- Give generously to materially poor people in our churches and communities instead of exploiting them as prosperity preachers do.
- Provide discipleship and teaching especially for pastors and church leaders.
- Make sure that churches have well established accountability structures, so that church leaders and missionaries can be held accountable for what they preach and how they behave. In some situations, the government may even be able to work with church denominations to set good policies that will prevent prosperity preachers from manipulating and exploiting the poor.

What specific accountability structures are in place for your church leaders and for your local church? Are they functioning well?



Take-home Activities:

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Choose one of these activities:

1. **For church leaders**, choose one of the following:
 - a. Preach a sermon and clearly proclaim the good news about salvation in Christ.
 - b. If you have an adult Sunday school class, teach your church members about the errors of the prosperity gospel as covered in this lesson.
 - c. Preach a sermon on one of the passages about suffering from the small group discussion questions.
2. **For others:**
 Ask your pastor if you can start a Bible study at church in which you will guide the group to examine and discuss what the Bible teaches in contrast to prosperity teaching. You can study together the Bible passages identified in this lesson. If you cannot lead a Bible study at the church, then try to form a group of friends, family, and neighbors to study and discuss together on these points and passages. We covered a lot in this lesson in a short period of time, but in your Bible study you can plan to discuss only a few Bible passages or prosperity teachings each time you meet.



Small Group Discussion Questions

Read the following Scripture passages. Discuss together what each passage teaches in contrast to the false teachings of the prosperity gospel. You will not have time to discuss every passage. Study at home all the passages that you do not discuss in the group.

1 Timothy 6:3-10

John 9:1-3

Matthew 5:44-45

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

Matthew 16:24-26

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Luke 13:1-9

Proverbs 23:4-5

1 Peter 3:14-17

1 Peter 4:12-19

Matthew 8:20

Luke 6:20-24

2 Corinthians 11:23-30

1 Peter 1:6-7



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning).

Revisiting: “Prosperity teaching misinterprets Scripture passages by ignoring their context.”

More examples:

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9 Prosperity preachers look at this verse as clear evidence that Jesus died on the cross so that we, as his disciples, could become materially rich. But if we compare this verse with what we know from the rest of the Bible, we know that Jesus did not die on the cross to make us rich in this life. Rather, He died on the cross to take the punishment for our sin and to overcome all the effects of the Fall. So what does this verse mean? Christ gave up his heavenly glory, became a human being, and died for us, so that we could be reconciled to God and dwell with him for all eternity. When Christ comes again, we will be fully restored to all that it means to be human: our bodies and souls will live in right relationship with God, self, others, and creation. That gift of full human flourishing is the treasure that makes us truly rich.⁸ Let’s read another verse in which Paul talks about these true spiritual riches, **2 Corinthians 6:10**. If we look at the context, we can see that Paul is using Christ as an example that we should follow. Paul has just finished talking about the Macedonian Christians who were poor and yet still gave generously to help others (verses 1-2). They followed the example of Christ who sacrificed to help others. And Paul wants the Corinthians to do the same. Far from teaching that Christ will make us materially rich, this passage is emphasizing our need to sacrifice like Christ did, by giving away our money to generously help others!

James 4:2 says “You do not have because you do not ask God.” In many African churches, it is very common to hear church leaders preaching about the prosperity gospel and telling their congregation to “name it, touch it and claim it and it is yours!” They use this one verse to justify this message. The idea is that people do not have what they want because they didn’t pray with enough faith. But now read the context. Read **James 4:1-6**. In verse 3 we read: “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” We see that it is not that the Christians aren’t praying enough, but that they want things only for themselves and their pleasure. So in reality James is writing against what prosperity preachers usually tell people to do. Additionally, if we read the rest of the letter, we know we will not get everything we want. For example, at the beginning of the letter in **James 1:2-4**, we learn that we should rejoice in our trials and suffering. If all we had to do was name it and claim it, then we would never suffer. And then James tells the people to expect suffering again in **James 5:10-11**. Clearly James did not expect us to pray for whatever we want and to always get it. Instead, we should pray with faith that God will answer our prayers but also accept that sometimes we will go through trials.

Line drawing by Lisa Brown based on an Adobe Stock Photo.

¹ Some of the points are borrowed from: Michael Otieno Maura, Conrad Mbewe, Ken Mbugua, John Piper, Wayne Grudem, *Prosperity? Seeking the True Gospel*, (Africa Christian Textbooks Registered Trustees, Kenya, 2015) Published in partnership with the Gospel Coalition, 3.

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² *ibid.*, 5-6.

³ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “The Prosperity Gospel and its Challenge to Mission in our Time”, (Lausanne Movement, July 2014) access online: <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2014-07/the-prosperity-gospel-and-its-challenge-to-mission-in-our-time>.

⁴ J. Lee Grady, “Five Ways Prosperity Gospel is Hurting Africa”, (Charisma Magazine, January 2013), access online: <https://www.charismamag.com/blogs/fire-in-my-bones/19113-5-ways-the-prosperity-gospel-is-hurting-africa>.

⁵ Michael Otieno Maura, et al. *Prosperity? Seeking the True Gospel*, 29-31.

⁶ Köstenberger, A. J. *John: Series Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 433–434.

⁷ The Africa Chapter of the Lausanne Theology Working Group’s Statement on the Prosperity Gospel, access online: <https://www.lausanne.org/content/a-statement-on-the-prosperity-gospel>.

⁸ See Brian Fikkert and Kelly Kapic, *Becoming Whole*, (Chicago, Illinois, Moody, 2019).



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Lesson 13: African Culture and Money

Opening Discussion

1. Does Africa have a general “African culture”? Explain your answer.

2. Briefly explain how your culture views hospitality and money in relation to maintaining relationships in the family and community.

3. Regarding hospitality and use of money, give specific examples of things that people are expected to do, and things that people are expected not to do.



Small Group Discussion

Discuss in groups of five for ten minutes. You will be given two minutes to present your answers to the other groups.

We have analysed African cultural practices and expectations concerning hospitality and money and how they are used to maintain relationships. Now think about what you have learned from all the previous lessons in this curriculum.

1. Make a list of the advantages of these cultural practices and expectations - the ways they promote true development.

(Activity continues on page 151)

2. Make a list of the disadvantages of these cultural practices and expectations - the ways they might discourage or block true development.



Facilitator Lecture: Inheritance and Hierarchy

Wealth distribution and inheritance is usually decided by the father or clan leader. Wives may be given no opinion. Girls might receive no inheritance. Widows might lose their property to the clan when their husbands die.

1. As Christians, how should we handle these inheritance issues differently?

2. Read Numbers 27:1-11. Does this story guide us about the issue of inheritance today in our culture? Why or why not?

Most Africans believe in God as the highest authority, and second to God is man, third is woman, and fourth is child and lastly animals and nature. Wives should submit to their husbands, children should submit to their parents, and the whole family should submit to God. As the authority in the home, men control the money, and sometimes do not want to be held accountable by their wives. Consider this Bambara proverb from Mali: "An important man may be wrong but he is always right."¹

Are you familiar with similar proverbs in your own culture?

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Cultural teachings like these may explain why the majority of men control all the resources in their families and also determine its allocation irrespective of whether they worked for it or it's the wife who has worked for it.

1. From a biblical perspective, what is right and good about this cultural value of hierarchy in the family?

Romans 13:1-7, Colossians 3:18-21, 1 Corinthians 11:3

2. From a biblical perspective, what features of this cultural value of hierarchy in the family are not good?

Genesis 1:27-30, 1 Corinthians 7:1-4, 1 Corinthians 11:11

3. Which of these four options describes the common practice of families in your community? Which option do you think is most appropriate for a Christian family?

- a. The husband should decide how all the money is used as the head of the family.
- b. The husband should decide how all the money is used but should be willing to ask his wife for her suggestions.
- c. The husband and wife should discuss and make decisions together for how money should be spent. They each get an equal opinion.
- d. The husband should decide what to do with the money he earns while the wife decides what to do with money she earns herself. Both of them should use some of their money for the family's needs, and both of them can use money for other projects as well. But they manage their money separately from one another and don't make decisions together.

Matthew 19:4-6. What does it look like for a husband and wife to live as if they are one flesh?

Proverbs 31:10-31. What does this teach us about women using money?

Ephesians 5:21-33. Concerning use of money, how should wives submit to their husbands?

*Genesis 2:18 and Hebrews 13:6. Eve was created to be a helper for Adam. Yet throughout Scripture, the same language is used in reference to God as our helper as well. **What does it mean to be a "helper"?** What other words in English or your local language mean the same thing as "helper"?*

1 Peter 3:7. What does it mean for a husband to treat his wife with respect concerning the family's use of money?

Romans 16:1-4. Paul greeted many women co-workers in Rome. What does it mean to be a "co-worker"? What is another word for "co-worker" in English or your local language?

Putting Christ First

It can be very hard for us to put into practice what God has been teaching us in his Word and what we have learned in the lessons of this curriculum. We might be afraid of going against the culture's expectations or having people look down on us. Yet we are called to put Christ first. We can appreciate the good in our culture, but we must be ready to obey Christ instead of our culture when they are in conflict.

What counsel could you give to another Christian who is having difficulty obeying Christ over his or her culture? What Bible passages would help this person?

Is anyone willing to share a story about how you went against the expectations of your culture in order to obey Christ?



Debts and Loans

Why are loans an effective way to help people who are in need? What are some of the possible good results of giving people loans?

What are the disadvantages of loans? In what ways do they harm relationships?

1. What should we do when a friend is unable to repay a debt to us?

2. What should we do when a friend is unwilling to repay a debt to us?

3. What could be the result if we forgive debts very often?

4. What kind of repayment agreements do you suggest when loaning to friends or family members?

5. When someone feels pressured to say "yes" to giving a person a loan, but he really thinks he should say "no", what could he say? How should it be handled?

6. For what needs do loans work well? For what kinds of needs should we avoid giving a loan and give a gift instead?



Population growth and development

Let's look at the reality of population growth that our world is facing today.

1. In 1500AD the population of the world was only 425 million. In the year 2000, it was 6 billion. Today it is 7.6 billion. By 2050 there will be about 9.2 billion people in our world. The population is increasing at an ever-faster rate.²
2. The population is increasing rapidly because people are living longer than before. This is due to better healthcare, improved food production, and other helpful technologies.³
3. We have consumed more of the earth's natural resources in the last 50 years than all people combined who have lived in the world before us.⁴
4. If everyone in the world lived like a middle class American, then our planet could only support around two billion people.⁵ Our large population combined with the way that we live is putting great pressure on the environment. We are quickly using up oil, trees, groundwater, and the fish in our oceans. As the population rises, we can expect even tougher competition over scarce resources, especially water resources and land for settlement.
5. While the population is exploding in some countries, in wealthy nations the birthrate is dropping. As people become less materially poor, they would be able to support more children, yet research shows that wealthy people generally have less children.⁶ As a country develops economically the birthrate drops. This is thought to be due to several reasons:
 - a. As a country develops economically, women become more independent and want fewer children in order to also have careers.
 - b. An economically developed nation will have a higher rate of people going into higher education which causes many to postpone starting their families until they are older.
 - c. More people are migrating to urban areas for work instead of farming at home. In addition, modern farming methods have reduced the amount of human labor needed in agriculture. The result is that large families are not needed as often to work on family farms.
 - d. In a wealthy nation there are less children dying at a young age, so people feel less pressure to have many children.

Genesis 1:28

1. *Is this a command to each individual person to fill the earth, or is all of humanity supposed to fill the earth together?*

2. *Is the earth filled yet? How do we know when we have fully obeyed this command?*

3. *How should we view and respond to couples who are infertile?*

4. *Are couples disobeying this command if they choose to only have a few children?*



Take-home Activities:

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. Try to do at least **two** of the following activities of your choice:

1. Analyse your relationships with your family members and relatives. Because of cultural expectations, are you too dependent on one of your relatives? Or are some of your relatives unhealthily dependent on you? Have an honest conversation with the people involved and try to make a change. Remember to focus on the four important relationships – with God, self, others, and the creation.
2. Take more time to analyse how money is handled in your family. Talk to your wife or husband about the discussion you had during this training about the different ways that couples handle finances. If you have been convicted that a change is needed, gently talk with your spouse and try to implement that change.
3. Think about your relationships that have become broken due to unpaid debts. It might be because you failed to repay a debt or because someone failed to repay a debt to you. Call the other person on the phone and arrange a time to meet together and reconcile. Either arrange for forgiveness of the loan or make a plan to resolve the situation. But most importantly, pray together and ask for God's help to restore the broken relationship.
4. Talk with your spouse about what you learned about family planning. Ask your spouse their opinion and then listen well. Study the relevant Bible passages together. Pray together about it. Discuss and make a plan together for your family.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Read and discuss these Bible passages together. Do any of these passages help us to better understand what we should believe about population growth or family planning? Continue to discuss together your different perspectives about family planning as you study these passages.

a. Psalm 127:3-5

b. Proverbs 14:28

c. 1 Timothy 5:8

d. 1 Timothy 3:1-5

e. Proverbs 17:6

f. Proverbs 11:29



¹David Maranz, *African Friends and Money Matters*, (SIL International, Dallas Texas, 2015), 25.

²Stephen Dovers and Colin Butler, "Population and Environment: A Global Challenge" (Australian Academy of Science), access online: <https://www.science.org.au/curious/earth-environment/population-environment>.

³"Causes and Consequences of Overpopulation", (Acciona) access online: <https://www.activesustainability.com/sustainable-development/causes-consequences-overpopulation/>.

⁴Stephen Dovers and Colin Butler, "Population and Environment".

⁵Ibid.

⁶Vandenbroucke Guillaume, "The Link between Fertility and Income", *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis* (13 December, 2016, USA), access online: <https://www.stlouisfed.org/on-the-economy/2016/december/link-fertility-income>.



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Lesson 14: What Causes Change in Someone's Life?

Opening Exercise and Discussion

1. Why is it so hard for people to change their behaviour?

2. What kinds of experiences cause people to change their behaviour? You can use your own life example to explain.

As we work with materially poor people, sometimes we can see that certain behaviours are causing them to be materially poor, or causing them to live in dependency and shame. We encourage them to change how they behave, but we become easily frustrated when people refuse to change.

In our previous lessons, we learned that development is a process of change in which people move closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others and the rest of creation. The most important change in someone's life is meeting Christ and being empowered by the Holy Spirit!

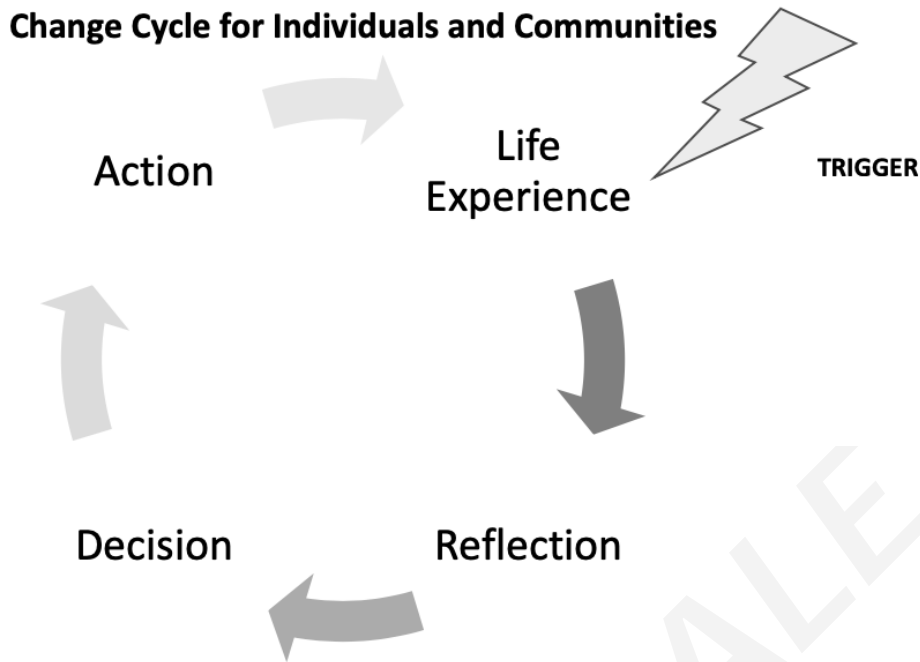
Briefly, give one specific example of how your relationships or your behaviour changed after you came to know Jesus.

As leaders in our churches and communities, we want to see our people continue to change so that they can live the way that God wants them to live, and be the people who God wants them to be. How can we best encourage them to change? The first task is to pray. But what can we do in addition to praying? In this lesson, we will examine what kinds of forces and experiences cause individuals and communities to change.



Lecture: The Change Cycle

In the diagram on the next page we see that change starts with a trigger. A trigger is something that sets off a reaction. A trigger can be a person, thing, or event. A trigger could be new knowledge a person has obtained, or a crisis that a person has gone through.



Types of Triggers that Cause Change

1. **A recent crisis.** This could include sickness, losing a job, the death of a family member, an accident, a theft, or a natural disaster. This type of trigger affects both individuals and communities. The Bible teaches that suffering is one of the tools that God uses to help us change in our character and grow in maturity.

Example – A materially poor neighbour in your community has been arrested as a thief for trying to steal someone else's goats. He is now in jail. You are going to visit him.

What could you say to this neighbour to help him reflect on his choices so that he becomes willing to change?

2. **Experiencing small problems over a long period of time.** Eventually, the person will get to a breaking point where they feel too frustrated to continue. A person may be tired of regularly feeling hungry so they finally become willing to try a new type of work. A person may be tired of having their crops die from droughts year after year, so they finally become willing to pay more for drought resistant seeds.

Example – Ali is your nephew who has been regularly asking for financial help from you. He uses this money to help pay for his mobile phone and transportation. He has a degree in accounting but has not found an accounting job yet. You have been trying to convince him to do casual work while still looking for accounting jobs, but he has refused.

How could you facilitate a trigger in Ali's life so that he will change and begin to work?

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3. Learning something new. This could be something as simple as seeing a new type of product or invention. Or a person could learn a new skill from a friend.

Example – As a pastor you see that your church members are complaining that a certain kind of worm is destroying their crops. You have prayed for them and visited their homes and farms. You want to help them further but you aren't sure how to advise them.

How could you help the congregation learn something new so that they know how to change their farming practices in response to the worm problem?

4. Reward or punishment. The reward or punishment is the trigger that can cause someone to reflect and change. We have to be careful with rewards and punishments when working with materially poor people since we want to avoid paternalism and do not want to treat them like they are children under our authority. But rewards and punishments can work well when trying to help our actual children to change their behaviour, or when working with people we employ at our business.

Example – You are the manager of a shop which employs 10 workers. You are frustrated with the work ethic of the employees. Many are lazy. They are not friendly enough to customers and are not quick to help customers find what they need. Customers have complained and you know you are losing out on sales.

What kind of reward trigger could you implement to encourage your employees to work harder?

5. Relationship. Relationships have probably been the most important factor into making you who you are today and making you behave the way you do. Think about all that you have learned from your parents and how your relationship with them has shaped your character. And remember that we discussed how all of our lives changed dramatically when we began a relationship with Jesus. We must focus on building relationships with materially poor people.

Example – Samia is a single mother with two young children. She earns a little money each day washing clothes for people while her children are at school. But her life is very difficult and it's hard to earn enough money to take care of her family. She feels alone and ignored and without hope.

If you and your family began a relationship with Samia's family, how might this new relationship change Samia and benefit her?

Principles for Encouraging Change

Principle 1 - Promote trigger events that will cause someone to reflect and change.

Principle 2 - Live by example.

Principle 3 - Mobilise Supportive People.

- When people try to change, sometimes the people around them will discourage them. Because of this, people need a lot of encouragement when they try to change how they live. When we are trying to help materially poor people to make changes in their lives, we need to mobilise people who can give support and encouragement to them.
 - Sometimes this can be done through forming peer groups of people who are all trying to make the same change together. For example, you could form a group of alcoholics who all want to support each other in giving up drinking together, along with others who have already found freedom from the addiction.
-

Principle 4 - Start Small.

- If you try to help an individual or a community make many changes to their lifestyle all at once, they may get overwhelmed and give up on making any change at all. But if you can begin by helping people make one small change, they will see the benefit of change when they see the positive results.
-

Principle 5 - Start with the people who are most willing to change.

- Development can only happen with people who are willing to change. Even if someone is in a difficult situation through no fault of their own, if they are not willing to take any new action themselves to make positive change, then it will be very challenging to see any development in his or her life.
- It is also important to start with the people who are most willing to change because these people will be an example to others who are much more resistant to change.

Story of Chicken Vaccination

A Christian organisation was working in West Africa training people in poultry farming. It was already common for farmers to raise chickens for selling eggs and meat. But their chickens were susceptible to disease and often died. During the training, participants learned how to take care of chickens, how to vaccinate them, and learned about some typical diseases. As part of the training each participant was to bring a chicken from home so that they could learn how to vaccinate it. One lady, Lydia, came with a very tiny chicken. Her husband was sure that the vaccination would kill the chicken, so he told her to bring the smallest chicken they owned. Lydia learned how to vaccinate her chicken, and then went home to her village. Because of her husband's mistrust, this was the only chicken she vaccinated. Several months later an epidemic spread through the village, and all the chickens in the entire village died. The only

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one that survived was the scrawny chicken that Lydia had brought to the training! Everyone from her village wanted to know, “What did you do to that chicken when you brought it to town a few months ago?” She explained about the training and the vaccination. Amazingly, all of these people asked Lydia to vaccinate their chickens! As people in her village began buying new chickens to replace those that had died, Lydia vaccinated every last one.¹

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- If people are not willing to make any changes in their life, then we might want to consider not helping them at all and instead wait patiently until they are willing. There are two reasons we should consider this.

First, we are limited in our time and resources. We simply cannot help everyone. So it makes sense to prioritise helping those people who are willing to change and who will set a good example to others.

Second, if we stop giving hand-outs like food and clothing to people who are unwilling to do anything to try to change their lives, we may help them experience a trigger for change. Sometimes not giving money to people is actually the loving thing to do.



The Bible’s Teaching about Giving

When people ask for money or resources from us, is it biblically acceptable for us to say “no” in specific situations? Please explain your answer with examples from your life and from Scripture.

Matthew 5:42

We need to read this verse in context and consider other biblical themes. **Matthew 5:27-30**

Verse 42 should not be taken as a literal command for every situation in our lives. Jesus’ main point is that we should be incredibly generous people, and care for all kinds of people, even our enemies. But there are at least four reasons why this verse should not be understood as a command to give in each and every situation.

1. Remember we learned in earlier lessons about the story of the whole Bible and the themes we see throughout the Bible. Our goal is not just that people would have money, but our goal is to **help people fulfil their callings of glorifying God by working and supporting themselves and**

their families. Our goal is that people would be reconciled to God, themselves, others, and the rest of creation.

2. There are other Bible passages that clearly teach us "not to give" in certain situations.
1 Timothy 5:3-16

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

3. No one is able to give to everyone who asks, simply because we all have limited resources.
Acts 3:2-6

4. Even in a situation where we do not give someone a hand-out, it does not mean that we turn away from them. Our message should be - *"We love you enough to give you far more than what you are asking from us right now. We want to be part of your life and to walk with you and help you overcome the situation you are in. It would be easy to give you money, but we are going to do the harder thing of sharing our lives and energy with you to truly help you, because you are worth it in God's eyes."*



Personality and Change

People differ in their reaction to change because of their personalities and backgrounds. We can categorise people into five groups.²

1. **Risk-takers.**

2. **Respected people.** These people are considered to be wise and are respected by the community. People follow them and they sometimes have more influence than official leaders.

3. **Careful people.** When the careful people decide to change this is called the "tipping point", because now most people in the community will accept the change together.

4. **Sceptical people.** They wait until the majority of the people in the community have made a change, and they continue to observe. After they have seen the change and gotten used to it, they will also change because they do not want to be left out.

5. **Resistant people.** A few people dislike all change. They will hold on to the old ways even when they are going against the majority of the community.



Large group activity

Identify which category fits you the best. Stand together with the other participants who fit your same category.

You want to see a rural community implement a change in their sanitation practices. You are going to facilitate a training, but you only have money for training one group. Which of these five groups would you choose to train if you could only choose one? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the category of people you chose?



Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned.

For Everyone – Try to do all three.

1. Identify two people in your workplace, church, or community who you have seen make a difficult but positive change in their lives. Write them a card or note to encourage them and appreciate them for setting a good example for others.
2. Determine one change that God wants you to make in your own life. It could be something simple like getting more exercise or reading your Bible every day. Try to encourage several friends to join you in making this change in their lives as well. Then meet together once a month to encourage each other and hold each other accountable to this change.
3. One of the triggers for change is when people learn about something new. Who could you invite to a special church event to teach something new to your church members? (For example: teaching about agriculture, healthcare, business, or computers.) Make a plan to invite this person in the next few months.



Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Does your church mobilise supportive people to walk with and encourage people who are courageously trying something new to change their lives? Explain. If not, how specifically could your church be doing this better?

2. Take turns sharing with the group about a person in your life whom you have been trying to help but who is very resistant to change. Let the group members give you advice about what you can do to encourage this person to change, and what triggers would help this person to reflect and decide to do something different. Pray together that the Holy Spirit would give these people courage to change.

¹ Samuel and Brenda Soumalia Souleymane, personal correspondence. Used with permission.

² Mary Crickmore, "Shalom: A Manual for Christian Workers", (self-published, 2011), 22.



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Lesson 15: Participation of the Community

Opening Discussion

Important visitors are coming to your home, what would you need to do to feel like you fully participated in hosting them?



Story from Eastern Uganda

An international organisation wanted to help a tribe in Eastern Uganda and noted that the people there did not have pit latrines. Most people defecated in the bush out in the open. The organisation planned to give the people ventilated pit latrines in order to improve the sanitation in their environment. The pit latrines were constructed and handed over to the people. Later, a development worker from a different organisation visited the area and used one of the latrines. Surprisingly the latrine was perfectly clean inside. Unfortunately, the development worker discovered that this was not due to regular cleaning by the community. It was due to the fact that no one in the community was using the latrines. They did not want them. They all preferred to defecate in the bush. In fact, for this tribe, using latrines was considered a taboo. There was even a cultural belief that women would not bare children if they used the latrines.

1. What are some of the reasons this project did not work out well?

2. Do you think the local people were involved in the planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of this project? Explain how you determined your answer from the story.

3. In your region, have you seen similar situations in which organisations or churches did not involve the local people they were trying to help in the planning and implementation of projects? Briefly share your examples.

Facilitator Lecture – Community Participation

Positive results of community participation:

1. **Ownership.** Materially poor people and communities are just like other people in that they are more likely to appreciate and take responsibility for a project if and when they participate from the beginning of the project to the end. If we work together *with* the community for their own development, they will feel ownership. But if we do work *to* them or *for* them, they might only be passive recipients.
2. **Sustainability.** If people feel ownership of their own development, then there should also be sustainability. Even if the individual or organisation who is helping moves away, the people will continue to make changes by themselves, now that they have learned the responsibility and joy of taking charge of their own development.
3. **Self-esteem and confidence.** If an individual or community has fully participated, then they will feel good looking at the changes that have taken place in their lives. They will see that God has given them the power to continue to make changes in their lives, and this will give them confidence for the future. Participation in a project, even if the project is not fully successful, will reduce a community's poverty of being and give them more self-esteem.
4. **Knowledge sharing.** Materially poor people and communities are often not well understood by the people intending to help them. For example, a beggar understands the challenges of being a beggar far better than a local church does! It would be unwise for a church to plan how to help beggars in their neighbourhood without first talking to the beggars. We must listen carefully to materially poor people, learn about their context and culture, and share knowledge. Knowledge sharing will help us to plan successful initiatives together.
5. **Equitable distribution.** Sometimes when churches or organisations try to help materially poor communities, only certain groups within the community benefit, and the people who need the most help might be overlooked. Participation of the whole community will help to ensure the resources are distributed to those who need them most. With full community participation, opportunities for corruption and favouritism will be reduced.
6. **Resource mobilisation.** When the people who are being helped participate, they are able to offer their labour, materials, and money for the project. This greatly reduces the cost for the church or organisation that is trying to help and produces community ownership.
7. **Teamwork and Accountability.** When everyone in a community is participating together to see change happen, there can be a great spirit of teamwork and harmony between the community members, government officials, churches, and organisations. Because everyone is aware of what is happening, each member can be accountable to the others. The organisation that is helping and the community itself can hold each other accountable to doing good work that glorifies God.¹

Have you ever heard of a community calling government officials or organisations to account concerning the way they tried to help that community? Share your story briefly.

Community participation is essential in order to help people without hurting them. One of the most common mistakes that churches, missionaries, governments, and development organisations make is that they try to help people without the full participation of the people they are trying to help.

Consequences of not having community participation:

1. **God-complex.** If we try to help people without letting them plan and participate with us, this shows that we do not respect them. We will be communicating to them that we are superior and have all of the right ideas. This means we have a god-complex. At the end of the work, our god-complexes will only be made stronger and the people may feel even more inferior and have more shame.
2. **Dependency.** If we help people without their participation, they will not feel any ownership. They will view new assets like a church building, school, or a well as the property of those who built it for them. They will feel little responsibility to manage and repair such assets. They might say: "But you built this. It is yours. We are waiting for you to fix it." Since they did not participate in their own development, they will continue to wait for outsiders to bring them more gifts.
3. **Failed Project.** When outside church leaders and organisations try to help other communities, they often make the mistake of thinking that what worked in one community they helped will automatically work in other communities. But this is not always true. Every community has different personalities, needs, assets, land, and cultures. When we come into a community with a know-it-all attitude or I-have-done-this-before attitude, our attempts to help will likely end in failure. We need to appreciate the process of discussing and planning together with the people, instead of rushing in with our predetermined plans.



Case Studies

1. Project Signs.

In some communities, it is common to see signs that read – "This project was donated by organisation ABC" or "This classroom was built by organisation ABC."

Can you think of such examples in your region? What do signs like this tell us about community participation? Are these projects still functional?

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Imagine a different type of sign that reads, “We, ABC church, constructed this building with the assistance of organisation DEF.”

What does this type of sign tell us about community participation?

2. A true story: A literacy centre built by Muslims and Christians together.

In an area of West Africa where the people are a mixture of Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim, a church agency received many requests to teach literacy in the villages. The agency director knew a Christian development organisation from Canada and asked for help. The Canadian organisation gave them funds to pay teachers in just five of the villages for a test project. The villages had to build their own literacy centres and pay some fees for their books. When the literacy classes in those five villages were almost completed, the Canadian organisation sent two experts who had experience working with literacy programs in neighbouring countries. They visited the five villages, and suggested many ways to make the teaching and the classes better. They also wrote a report. Using that report, the Canadian organisation helped the church agency write a grant proposal to a donor. The donor accepted the proposal and made a written agreement to fund enough teachers and supervisors to work in 30 villages over three years. About a thousand people, Catholic and Protestant and Muslim, learned to read together, and they were very happy with their new skills.²

What is your reaction to the story?

What does it teach us about community participation?

3. A true story: A broken generator.

A development organisation in West Africa wanted to help women by making their labour easier. They decided to give generators to rural villages that could be used to grind grain as well as pump water into water towers. They went to many villages and offered to give them generators, and said it would be the responsibility of the villages to do the maintenance. There was a village where this organisation donated a generator and built a water tower. The people contributed labour as the organisation required them to do. But after a short time operating, the generator needed maintenance. Each time it broke they had to collect money and send someone to the city to buy parts. After they had repaired the generator four times, when it broke the fifth time, they decided that it was not worth it to fix and they left it sitting broken. The expensive water tower is standing in the village empty.³

What is your reaction to the story?

What does it teach us about community participation?

4. VSLA programs - Village savings and loans associations.⁴

1. Can someone please explain to us very briefly what a village savings and loans association is?

2. Why are Village Savings and Loans associations spreading rapidly in poor communities throughout Africa? What makes them so successful?



Listening to the Voiceless

Small group activity

If a donor gave \$1,000 USD to our training group today, how should that money be spent to benefit our group and improve our training location?

This activity shows us why it is important to listen to and involve all types of people in a community, whether it is our own community or a community in another region we are trying to assist.

When trying to help a community, it is very important to have people participate irrespective of their gender, education, race, age, religion, or disabilities.

We need to take special care to not only talk to the people in power, but also to those who are disadvantaged and voiceless. By voiceless, we don't mean people who are unable to speak. We are referring to people who are not listened to by other people, particularly people with power and money. Voiceless people do not have much power and influence due to social isolation, feeling inferior, or unfair treatment by the community.

What types of people are often voiceless in our communities?

We must listen to the voiceless ourselves, but also try to give them opportunities to speak so that others will listen to them as well. This is "giving a voice to the voiceless".

Proverbs 31:8-9

Proverbs 21:13

1. What do these verses teach us about how to help the voiceless?

2. Discuss how you personally or your church, organisation, or government can give a voice to the voiceless? Be specific.



Resource Mapping

One effective tool for promoting community participation is called a **resource map**.

A resource map will show the community's assets and their locations.

After making a resource map with our own community or with another community we are trying to help, we can together plan with the community members how to address pressing needs starting with available resources. It is a good first step in planning and partnering together to bring change in their lives and their community.

How do you develop a resource map?

1. Make sure that you have representation of various interest groups and different types of people from the community present in the meeting, especially those who are often voiceless.
2. Divide the community members into smaller groups based on age, gender, or occupations.
3. It is helpful to have each of the small groups draw a separate resource map. They will all draw a map of the same area but each group will highlight different assets and different challenges in their maps.
4. Tell the groups to draw their community, highlighting the assets, natural resources, water sources, trees, roads, institutions, and facilities of the community and their locations. There are many different types of assets that you can remind them about (remember Lesson 7). The map should be drawn on the ground using readily available materials such as stones, sticks, leaves, fruit, water bottles, etc. They should also mark areas of challenges and needs and areas that offer potential solutions. For example, they might mark a water source that has

become polluted. If you are an outsider discussing this with the community, listen patiently and allow time for the members to discuss. Ask probing questions to stimulate their thinking about various types of assets, and ask questions about the objects they've put in their map.

5. After drawing the resource map, the smaller groups should discuss what the top five pressing needs are for their community. They should rank them according to priority. If possible, they should identify assets they drew which might be used in some way to bring a solution to the need. For example, a resource map might reveal that there are very few trees to use for firewood. But the same map might reveal plentiful water sources, and large open spaces in which to plant trees.
6. Each smaller group should present their map to the other community members. They can explain what each object is in the map, emphasizing their most important assets, as well as explaining the pressing challenges or needs.
7. The resource map should give the community encouragement and confidence that they have resources they can use to bring change. The information can now be used by the community and other outside helpers as they plan together for future projects and initiatives.



Large group activity – Creating a Resource Map



Take-home Activities:

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned.

1. For Everyone - Go home and practice using the resource mapping tool. Begin by gathering your family members and then reflect together on the assets of your family. Think about your family's land, buildings, household possessions, and other physical assets. But you can also consider specific opportunities and skills that are unique to each family member. Also, take time to hear from each person about pressing needs and challenges. Then make a plan together as a family to address the most important challenges using the assets and opportunities that you identified. Be sure to consider every family member's interests as you make the plan together.
2. For Church Leaders - Try to gather church leaders and church members from several other churches and organisations close to you in your neighborhood or area. Lead them in utilising the resource mapping tool to reflect on the assets, opportunities, and needs in your neighborhood or area. Discuss if there is a way you can work together to use your assets to try to address one of the pressing needs. Try to make a specific action plan, being sure to determine the responsible people for each task, and the time frame in which the tasks will be done. Present the conclusions of the group to your church, pray for your plan, and carry out the plan you have made.

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¹ For more ideas on how communities and organisations can hold each other accountable and have healthy partnerships, read about the Core Humanitarian Standard - <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>.

² Mary Crickmore, “Shalom: A Manual for Christian Workers”, (self-published, 2011), 54.

³ Ibid., 55.

⁴ If you are in need of a good savings curriculum, see this free resource available from the Chalmers Center called Restore: *Savings*. <https://chalmers.org/restore-savings/>.

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Lesson 16: Church Benevolence Ministry

Opening Discussion¹

Does anyone want to try to give a definition of benevolence ministry?

James 1:27

1 John 3:16-18

Our local churches need an organised benevolence ministry with clear policies so they know to whom they should and should not give money. And remember, even when we say “no” to giving someone money, we should still seek to walk with them and partner with them in other ways.

1. Does your church have a benevolence ministry?

2. If yes, how does your church decide whom to give money to and whom not to give money to?

3. If no, does your church help people with material needs in other ways?



Facilitator Lecture: The Purpose of Benevolence Ministry

The purpose of benevolence ministry is to love people as a response to God’s love for us. We should serve people so that they are helped with physical needs and grow in their four fundamental relationships – with God, self, others, and Creation.

Who should benefit from our benevolence ministries? The Bible is clear that our responsibility is first to those who are with us in the local church. Remember the circles of priority from Lesson 6.

Galatians 6:2 and 6:10.

While benevolence ministry can prioritise the needs of the church members, we must be careful that we do not become too focused on ourselves. We must make sure that we intentionally set aside a portion of our resources to help those in the community who are not members of the church.

A good benevolence ministry can also be a central feature of a church's mission.

A good benevolence ministry can bring challenges. You might receive many new members who are materially poor. Be prepared for this and do not let it discourage you.

James 2:5

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

1. What do these Bible passages teach us?

2. Some church leaders do not want their churches to be known for having many materially poor members. Why do you think they feel this way?



Large group discussion

1. In benevolence ministry, why should we usually avoid giving cash to the person in need of help?

2. *What are the benefits of a local church giving loans to church members who are in need? What are the potential problems and complications from doing this?*



Benevolence Ministry Procedures and Policies

Benevolence ministry policies² are brief statements that capture the overall guidelines and procedures that will be applied when helping or offering assistance to people in need. Policies could also be thought of as rules governing the ministry.

Give some examples of policies that could be used for a church's benevolence ministry. Each policy statement should be one sentence long.

It is important to have clear and well thought out policies for our benevolence ministries for several reasons:

1. Policies prevent us from giving and helping in inconsistent or random ways.
2. Policies prevent us from giving with favouritism. In some churches, only well-known families in the church receive any help at times of need. In other churches, it is only the rich or influential people who decide who to help and how to help.
3. Policies will help us to be good stewards of the limited resources that we have. We can give in the ways that will be the most effective.
4. Policies can ensure that we take into account all four fundamental relationships as we try to help. The policies will help us to avoid the mistakes we have learned about in *Helping without Hurting in Africa*.
5. Policies will allow the ministry to function smoothly and quickly, without needing an extra church meeting with all the church leaders every time a new need arises.
6. Policies will guard against benevolence ministry workers being attacked or criticised when they say "no" to giving money to someone who asks. A benevolence team representative can say: "According to our policy, we are unable to give you money at this time for your specific request. This is not just my own policy, but one that the whole church agreed upon together."

Have you noticed any of these problems in your church's ministry because you didn't have policies in place? Explain.

The primary goal of benevolence policies is to give a concrete basis for decision making to those who are on the frontlines of your benevolence ministry.³

Specific Policies

One of the most important procedures or policies for church benevolence ministry is the use of intake forms. The intake form will be filled out by a member of the benevolence ministry team while they interview the person who is asking for assistance. An intake form allows the interviewer to gather more information about the people asking for help and what their specific needs are.

The form ensures that the interview is not rushed and the benevolence ministry team will not forget to gather all the types of information necessary for making a good decision. After the intake form is filled out, the members of the benevolence ministry can meet together and decide what to do.

BENEVOLENCE MINISTRY INTAKE FORM⁴

Date of First Interview _____ Date Intake Form Completed _____
Date Benevolence Team Notified _____ Date of Response to Request _____
Information fact-checked by _____ Date _____

SECTION 1: Identifying Information

Name: _____

Age _____ Male _____ Female _____ Couple _____

Address: _____

Work phone: _____ Cellphone: _____

Email: _____

Spouse's name: _____

Children's names and ages: _____

Other family members living with person: _____

Church member? yes no. If yes, how long? _____

If no, regular attender? yes no If yes, how long? _____

If not a regular attender, is this person connected to the church in any way?

Has this individual been previously assisted by the church? yes no

If yes, when? _____

What was the help for?

What help was given and to what degree?

Did the individual receive financial assistance? yes no

Has this individual received assistance from other churches/agencies in the past year?

yes no

If yes, what was the help for and what form did the help take? _____

List names and phone numbers of personal or pastoral references who could be contacted for further information regarding this individual (ask for verbal permission to contact these references):

SECTION 2: Current Situation and Reason for Request

What is the presenting problem as stated by the individual?

How long has this problem been going on?

Has the individual recently been victimized by abusive or corrupt people in ways that have created or contributed to the problem?

Has the individual done or not done anything that has created or contributed to the problem?

Other important details of the situation:

What steps has this person taken to remedy the situation?

What is the individual's specific request of the church?

What does this person think needs to be changed in the situation and/or in themselves?

Is this person willing to work with the church to create an action plan aimed at solving their current problems as well as working to help prevent this problem from occurring again?

This form was started by: _____ on (date) _____

Person assigned to follow up: _____

SECTION 3: Detailed Context and History

(You may want to wait until future meetings to obtain some or all of the following information)

Education/Work History

Current job held: _____ How long at present job? _____

Work history:

Highest level of education and degrees held:

Other training certificates or programs completed:

Financial Position

Assets

Current Savings in the bank _____

Cash on hand and Mobile Money _____

Food reserves at home _____

Vehicle assets _____

Animal assets _____

Land assets _____

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Other assets _____

TOTAL VALUE OF ASSETS = _____

Income

Monthly Income _____

Monthly gifts from relatives, friends _____

NGO support _____

Government assistance programs _____

TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME = _____

Monthly Expenses

Food _____

Water _____

Housing _____

Electricity _____

Cooking Gas / Charcoal / Firewood _____

Telephone airtime _____

Transportation costs _____

Ongoing medicine and treatments _____

Supermarket expenses like soap, toothpaste, sugar, paper, etc. _____

Animal Feeds and treatments _____

School Fees _____

Clothing / Shoes _____

ATM fees / Bank Fees / Other organisations or clubs fees _____

Personal giving to church and other charities _____

Insurance _____

TOTAL EXPENSES = _____

Housing Situation

Does this person rent or own? _____

Who do they live with? _____

Does this person have any dependents living with them? If so, who?

Is this person homeless? ____ yes ____ no

Spiritual, Social, and Emotional/Mental Health

Describe person's Christian experience/spiritual journey, if applicable:

What sort of social supports does this person have?

Does this individual have any family living nearby? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, who? _____

Does this individual have a church small group? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, name and phone number of leader

Do one or two close friends know of the person's situation? ____ yes ____ no

Is this person seeing a counselor? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, who? _____

Has this person ever been diagnosed and/or treated for a mental illness?

_____ yes _____ no

If yes, explain: _____

Is this person currently taking any prescribed medications? _____ yes _____ no

Has this person experienced trauma at some point in their life? If yes, describe:

SECTION 4: Church Assessment and Response to This Request

- Remember that poverty has multiple causes: the individual's behavior, abusive or exploitive people, oppressive systems, and demonic forces. In many cases, more than one of these causes are at work.
- However, to the extent that the person's own behavior is a contributor, you should try to gauge their receptivity to taking actions to make positive changes in their life. In such cases, check the one that most applies:

This person/family believes:

1. _____ There is no deep-seated problem that I/we need to address.
2. _____ There may be a problem, but I'm/we aren't the one(s) who need to change.
3. _____ Yes there is a problem, but I'm/we doubtful it can be changed.
4. _____ Yes there is a problem, and I/we can be a part of making changes.
5. _____ Yes there is a problem, and I/we are very ready to take steps to make changes.

Category 1 or 2: This person/family is not ready to do the hard work of: (1) identifying areas that they need to change, and (2) making those changes with your church's help. They are not ready to create an action plan. Their lack of readiness to change might disqualify them from receiving assistance from the church at this time. But that doesn't mean ignoring them. Through continued contact and conversation, they might develop more openness to change.

Category 3-5: This person is ready to create an action plan.

You may find that people in category 3 or 4 complete the action plan but then do not follow through on their goals. *Do not give up!* They will probably need extra encouragement and support, and their goals and timeframes may need to be adjusted. If they do not make sufficient progress on their goals even with repeated encouragement or help, then you and your church may need to stop providing the material and possible human resources that you committed to in the action plan. But you would continue to encourage them and build the relationship.

Initial church assessment of issues that need to be dealt with that contributed to the current problem:

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1. Will a failure to provide immediate assistance likely result in serious harm to this person?

2. Is the person largely responsible for their situation? _____

3. Will providing immediate financial assistance help or hinder such empowerment (in the 4 relationships)? _____

In addition to receiving assistance, is the person willing to discuss an action plan and way forward to make changes to their situation with the help of the church?

Initial decision made by the benevolence ministry:

Report on the response made by the benevolence ministry and the impact:

Report from future follow-up visit and conversations:

Intake form filed in records by _____ Date _____

Action Plan: An action plan is a written plan made by the person being helped together with the benevolence team. The action plan consists of goals which are changes the person wants to see in his or her life, together with activities which the person will do to see the goals achieved. There is a sample action plan form in the “Further Reflection” section at the end of the lesson.

Fact-Checking: It is important to do at least a little fact checking to find out if the person’s story is true. Sometimes this can be as easy as calling the school or hospital to find out that the person truly has a bill that needs to be paid. Other times it may necessitate a visit to the person’s home and family. Visits should be done as a team when possible.

As a member of the benevolence team, why is it important to visit someone’s home with at least one other member of the team?

Other Policies

When you go home, you should ask the members of your church benevolence ministry team these questions in order to come up with your policy statements.⁵

1. What is our purpose statement for our church benevolence ministry?
2. What is our definition of poverty?
3. Who will lead and participate in the benevolence ministry? Will they be church leaders or volunteers or both?
4. How will the money used in the benevolence ministry be raised? What percentage of the church budget or offerings will go to the benevolence ministry?
5. What percentage of the benevolence ministry budget will be spent on church members and what percentage spent on others in the community?
6. What will our intake process look like as people come with requests?
7. Will we always require the person we are assisting to make an action plan for change? Or are there some cases where an action plan is not necessary?
8. Who are the target groups that our church feels called to help?
9. Will we give assistance to those who are not Christians, like Muslims, Hindus, and those practicing African Traditional Religion?
10. In what situations will we respond with financial or material assistance?
11. How many times will we help the same person or family with financial or material assistance?
12. Will we focus on relief, rehabilitation, or development, or a little of each?
13. How will our ministry help people grow in their relationship with God? With others? With self? With the creation?

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14. When people ask for our help but they do not have a job, what steps will we take to help them find meaningful work?
15. How will we respond to people who are capable of working but are unwilling to work?
16. How will we publicise our policies to our church and discuss together in order to ensure their agreement?
17. Will we advertise our ministry to the community? Will we inform the community publicly about our policies?
18. What form will our assistance take? (cash, food, paying bills directly, etc.)
19. Will we help church members with expenses for weddings or burials?
20. Will we place a higher priority on helping church leaders in need compared to other church members?
21. How will we give regular updates and reports to the church?
22. When we say “no” to giving financial assistance, what kinds of activities can we still do with people in order to try to help them?
23. What steps will we take to confirm people’s stories before responding? Who is responsible for doing this fact-checking?
24. When and how will we utilise other ministries, churches, government program, and organisations? Which needs will we try to meet, and which needs will we send people to other organisations for?

Are there any other important questions that you think should be considered when making church benevolence ministry policies?

Listen to this example from a church in Nairobi, Kenya called Christ Compassion Ministry. Here are a few of their policies from their benevolence ministry. They call it their “Church Welfare Policy”.

- One policy states that money is raised for the fund by having each church member pay 100 Kenyan shillings (\$1 USD) to the fund per month. They give to church members in times of crises such as during the death of a loved one and hospitalisation due to sickness.
- One policy states that the amount of financial support given to a family who has lost a spouse, children, or parents will be 20,000 Kenyan shillings.
- Another policy states that the amount given to a family who has lost a brother or sister will be 14,000 Kenyan shillings.
- For times of sickness and hospitalisation, the policies state that in addition to financial support, church members will visit the sick person in the hospital and pray for healing.

- Another policy states that church members will all be encouraged to enrol in health insurance on a regular basis. The total written set of policies for this church is 6 pages long.

Each of our churches will have different policies depending on their context and how God leads them by his Word and his Spirit. The important thing is that you go home and discuss together with your church members and prayerfully set policies for your benevolence ministry.

Concluding Advice

- Remember to try to help people identify the gifts and resources God has given to them.
- Give to people in a way that will avoid creating dependency.
- Remember to help holistically. Even in situations where you don't give money, you can still teach people job skills, watch their children while they work, invite them to a small group at church, pray for them, help them reconcile with people they have hurt, help them plant their gardens, invite them to your home for a meal, etc.
- Celebrate change, and encourage people who have followed through on their action plans.
- Sometimes, even after all we have learned in *Helping Without Hurting in Africa*, it is still really hard to know what to do in a given situation. Should we give or should we not give? In such difficult situations, it is better to make a mistake of giving than to make a mistake of not giving. As Christians, God calls us to love people and give generously even to people who don't deserve it, just like God loves us and gives generously to use even though we don't deserve it. It is better to make a mistake on the side of generosity.
- Remember the most important thing is to point people to Jesus Christ. Do not neglect this when caring for people's physical needs. Take time to pray with people and speak to them the gospel.

Take-Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church, or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned.

1. If your church has a benevolence ministry:

Find out whether there are any policies written down. If you are able, join the benevolence ministry team and help them to write detailed policies using this lesson as a guide, or to improve on the policies which are already there. Set a good example by contributing financially to the benevolence fund yourself.

2. If your church does not yet have a benevolence ministry:

Consult with the leaders of your church and with church members, and suggest the idea of beginning a church benevolence ministry. If the church agrees to start a benevolence ministry, offer to take the lead by joining the team and helping the team to write detailed policies using this lesson as a guide. Set a good example by contributing financially to the benevolence fund yourself.



Small Group Discussion Questions

Discuss the following scenarios. What would be the best way to respond and help as a church benevolence team? What benevolence policies would it help to have in place to be ready for such scenarios?

A. Michael is a 20-year-old member of your church. He lost both of his parents to HIV when he was five years old and was raised by his grandparents. They have always struggled to be able to provide for his needs. Michael has been admitted into university to study engineering. He asks the benevolence team if the church might be willing to pay for his school fees. Though he has been working as a casual laborer doing construction work in town, the little money he gets he uses to take care of buying food for himself and his grandparents.

B. Amit and Geeta are a married couple in your church. They are involved in a land dispute with a neighbour who they say is trying to change the boundaries of their land. They do not have money for a lawyer, so they ask the church to give them financial assistance for the lawyer fees. Their neighbour in the land dispute is a member of another church in the area.

C. Grace is 35 years old and not a member of your church. One day she shows up at your church, crying and scared, to talk to the pastor. She is asking the church to take care of her. She has no money with her. Her husband has been abusing her, and you are able to see the injuries to her body. She is worried that if she goes home, he will kill her. Grace admits she has a drinking problem and her husband is angry at her for using money for alcohol.

D. Francis and Rose are a married couple, and faithful members of your church who serve in various ministries. They are well respected. Rose's brother and sister-in-law have a daughter who was born deaf. The daughter has an opportunity through an NGO program to get a cochlear implant that will allow her partial hearing. The heavily subsidized price is \$5,000 USD. Francis and Rose ask your church if the church can contribute financial assistance through the benevolence fund or a special freewill offering for the family.

E. Roland and Divine are an unmarried couple who just began attending your church six months ago. Roland talks to your pastor and asks if the church can help him and his family over the next few months. He says he recently lost his job at a phone company when he reported a colleague involved in corruption, but the matter was covered up. He says he is looking for another job, but in the meantime, he doesn't know how to feed his family or pay for his children's school fees.



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning).

Below is a sample “Action Plan Form”. This is what you could use with a person who will be helped by the benevolence ministry, but who has agreed to make an action plan to work on changing his or her situation. You are allowed to modify the form as needed.

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BENEVOLENCE MINISTRY ACTION PLAN⁶

SECTION 1: Reflection

A. Your Future

How would you like your life situation to be different or improved four to six months from now?

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

B. Abilities and Resources:

What are some abilities and resources you have that could help you get to where you want to be four to six months from now?

C. Obstacles:

It is good to be aware of things that might get in the way of you getting to where you want to be four to six months from now. It can be helpful to specifically list possible key obstacles. Doing so can help all of us be aware of them and create plans to overcome them or at least lessen their impact.

Internal obstacles (things about your personality or habits that could block or slow progress)

External obstacles (people or situations that could block or slow progress)

SECTION 2: Planning for the Future Together

A. Things You Want to Do:

Steps that will move you to where you want to be in four to six months:

Goal 1

What specific things can you do?

When will you do them?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

What specific things can the church do?

When?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

Goal 2

What specific things can you do?

When will you do them?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

What specific things can the church do?

When?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

SECTION 3: Encouragement and Accountability

A. Supportive People

It is hard for most of us to make changes alone. Therefore, as part of helping you toward your goals, we have an individual/team who would like to support you through prayers and encouragement. They have promised to:

- Pray for you every day.
- Talk with you at least once a week. This will be to see how you are doing and give you input as you desire.
- Keep information confidential as is appropriate.

Would you be willing to have an individual/team support you in your goals?

Name of supportive individual/team leader

Phone number

B. Follow-up:

Plans fail if they get lost in the busy nature of life, so staying in communication with each other is very important. Normally communication will be more frequent in the beginning of implementing the action plan to ensure that momentum is gained.

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When and where can we next get together to check how things are going?

Other conditions of agreement:

Signature of individual:

Date _____

Signature of church representative:

Date _____

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¹ Many ideas in this segment are drawn from Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert with Katie Casselberry, *Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015), 52-53, 57. Used by permission of Moody Publishers.

² Edited from *Helping without Hurting in Church Benevolence*, 53.

³ Ibid., 57.

⁴ This form has been adapted with permission from the Chalmers Center website: https://chalmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HWH_Benev_Tool_2_Intake_Form.pdf.

⁵ These questions are adapted *Helping without Hurting in Church Benevolence*, 52-53.

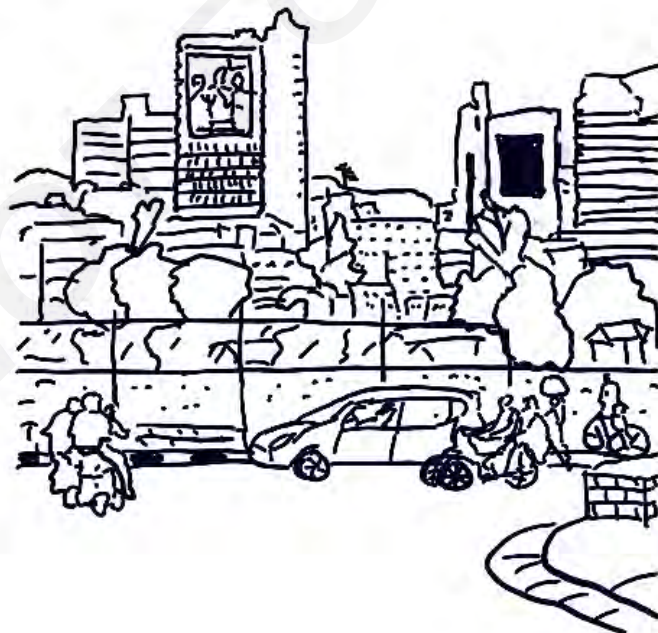
⁶ This form has been adapted from the Chalmers Center website, accessed here: https://chalmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HWH_Benev_Tool_3_Action_Plan.pdf.

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Lesson 17: Urban Ministries- Opportunities and Challenges

Opening Discussion

How does it make you feel to live in a large city or travel to a large city? Tell us your answer using only one word.

Discuss with a partner:

1. What city do you live in or what city is nearest to where you live?

2. What makes you happy about your city?

3. What makes you sad about your city?



Urban Growth in Africa

A “city” or an “urban area” is a place in which a large number of people live fairly close together.¹ Specifically, in this lesson we will look at how to spread the good news of Jesus Christ through our words and our actions in cities, and we will pay special attention to how to reach out in love to materially poor people in cities.

Cities in Africa are growing rapidly because of the continuous mass movement of people from rural areas to urban centres.

Statistics:

- In 1980, only 20% of Africa’s population lived in urban areas.² As of 2014, that number had increased to 40%.³ By 2050 it is projected that 55% of Africans will live in urban areas.⁴
- In Sub-Saharan African countries, on average 60% of the urban populations live in slums.⁵
- Only 16% of urban households in Africa have permanent roofs.⁶
- The percentage of residents in African cities who have access to piped clean water has actually been going down as urbanisation continues. Only 34% had access as of 2010.⁷
- Urban transport in African cities is 42% more expensive than in cities in the rest of the world, largely due to inefficient public modes of transportation such as motorcycles and minibuses or taxis which carry small numbers of people.⁸

- In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that 60% of the urban labour force is employed in informal work such as small-scale selling, minor services, or work in unregistered factories, at extremely low incomes.⁹



Lecture: Should Christians Care about Cities?

What does the Bible teach?

Genesis 11:1-9 and Genesis 13:11-13

From these two passages in Genesis, what do we learn about some of the first cities?

After God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, he gave them commands about how they should live in the Promised Land.

Joshua 20:1-3

How are cities in this passage pictured differently from the cities in Genesis?

The Israelite people became a kingdom and a nation.

1 Kings 14:21

Jerusalem became the dwelling place for God's Name. In Babel, people made a city in order to glorify themselves, but Jerusalem was a city God chose for his glory.¹⁰

Looking at the prophets, we remember that God called Jonah to preach judgment to the Ninevites so that they would repent and be saved from God's punishment. Nineveh was full of very evil people.

Jonah 3:10 and 4:10-11

How would you describe God's feelings toward the evil city of Nineveh?

Lesson 17: Urban Ministries: Opportunities and Challenges

Soon after the Israelite Kingdom was formed, both the kings and the people often failed to worship God rightly. The Israelites continued to worship idols, mistreat the poor, and engage in sexual immorality and corruption. Finally, God's judgement came upon Israel for their sins. God first allowed the Assyrian nation, and then later the Babylonian nation, to come and conquer all of Israel and Judah. Many of the people were taken away to Babylon in exile. The Babylonian Empire was the major enemy of Israel, and the capital city of Babylon was a city full of idolatry and sin.

Jeremiah 29:4-14

What specific commands does God give to the Israelite exiles in this passage?

Quotation from Timothy Keller:

God is still primarily concerned with his plan of salvation. He must establish his people; the gospel must be proclaimed; human beings must be reconciled to him. Yet he assures his people that serving the good of this pagan city is part of this very plan: 'If it prospers, you too will prosper' (Jer 29:7). Loving and serving the city not only shows love and compassion; doing so also strengthens the hands of the people of God, who bear the message of the gospel to the world. Because the Jews in exile obeyed this command, they accrued the influence and leverage needed to eventually return to and restore their homeland. God ties, as it were, the fortunes of the people of God to the effectiveness of their urban ministry.¹¹

We must consider that today we are in a similar situation to the Jews in Babylon. Our citizenship is in Heaven, yet we remain in this broken world which rebels against God. But instead of running away from the world by running away from cities, we should love the cities of our nations.

In the book of Acts, the gospel was primarily taken to new places through cities. Paul and the other missionaries travelled from city to city to plant churches. Paul viewed the cities as the key areas that needed to be reached in order for the gospel to also travel to the rural areas.

Romans 15:18-24

In your region, what are the key cities that need more churches so that we can reach the entire region with the gospel?

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Think about the end of the Bible in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

In Revelation, we find that the perfect home for God’s people is a city, a city where God dwells. In the biblical story, God’s people begin in a garden, but they end up in a city.

Summary

From the biblical story, we have seen that some cities are set up in rebellion against God and they can be places of great evil. But we have also seen that cities can be places of refuge or worship of God when God’s people are at work in those cities. In most cities, there will be both great evil and great good happening at once. And we have seen that God calls us to love the cities that we find ourselves in. We must not be like Jonah who preached only out of duty, but rather we must preach with a heart of love for our cities. We must pray for our cities, look for the good in our cities, engage in the life of our cities, serve our cities, and bring development to our cities so that they prosper and so that we prosper. We must not fall into the sins we see around us in our cities, but keep our Christian identities and preach the gospel without fear. And as we do so, we play a role in the overall movement of God’s redemptive plan, which moves from a garden to a city. All of this gives us the theological foundation that we need in order to do urban ministry. Urban ministry is about loving the people of our cities in our words and our deeds as part of God’s redemptive plan.

1. What would it look like specifically for your church to seek the peace and prosperity of your city (or the city nearest you)?

2. If your church suddenly disappeared from your city, would anyone notice? Would anyone say, “How is our community going to survive without this church?”¹²



Urban Ministry: Opportunities and Challenges

1. What are some specific challenges that urban churches and leaders face in ministry because of being in the city?



Orphans and Vulnerable Children

There are over 52 million orphans in Africa as of 2017.¹³ Many of them are in our cities. Some are homeless, some beg to drivers stuck in traffic jams, and some are stealing in order to survive. Living in the cities in this way has exposed these orphans and vulnerable children (also known as OVCs) to many risks.

1. Briefly explain the risks faced by orphans and vulnerable children in the city?

2. What is the best way for local churches to support orphans and vulnerable children in the city?

Orphanages

There has been a lot of recent criticism against orphanages. Some African countries are working to reduce the number of orphanages in their countries and care for orphans in other ways. For example, Rwanda has pledged to be the first African country which has no orphanages.¹⁴ Since 2012, Rwanda has closed 25 of 39 orphanages.¹⁵ They are working to place orphans within families of their relatives or in foster families.

Arguments Against Orphanages

1. Some argue that orphanages are a foreign idea that does not fit in well with African culture and family systems. Traditionally, in many African cultures, relatives would take in and care for orphans if their parents died. The child is considered to have many mothers and fathers and many homes to live in within their community.¹⁶ Then these orphan children grow up with family structures and remain a part of their clan. Orphanages instead remove children from their relatives and clan, and if adopted by foreigners, these children can be lost to the community forever. Over time, orphanages can cause communities to neglect their responsibilities to care for their orphans and become dependent on outsiders to raise these children.
2. Orphanages require much more money to raise each child compared to the cost of families taking in orphans to raise along with the rest of their children.
3. Some people argue that orphanages bring division and conflict in the community because the orphans may be raised at a different standard of living compared to the surrounding community. Orphanages that are understaffed and underfunded may neglect the children and not care for them well. Other orphanages that are well-funded may give the orphans a far better standard of living than children in the community. This can result in the community feeling envious. It is also not uncommon for healthy parents to drop their children at orphanages because they want a better life for their children or they want their children to get the free education that the orphanages provide. In these cases, orphanages are dividing families rather than building them up. Instead of building more orphanages, we need to spend our resources and time caring for parents so that they have better jobs and are better able to take care of their children. Working for community development will help children a lot more than building orphanages will.
4. Growing up in an orphanage can be very problematic for a child's development.¹⁷ Children can grow up with various psychological problems due to neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse. It is estimated that institutionalised children are six times more likely to be exposed to violence than children in a family setting.¹⁸ On average, children growing up in orphanages have an IQ of 20 points lower than those in foster care, and are far less likely to find employment as young adults. When children eventually leave, they are 10 times more likely to enter prostitution and 40 times more likely to gain a criminal record.¹⁹ Many children in orphanages suffer from attachment disorders as they often cannot form long-term relationships with caregiving adults. This is due to regular turnover of the orphanage staff, as well as the fact that many orphanages operate by using national or foreign volunteers who may only serve for a couple weeks or months at a time.
5. Some people claim that governments may become dependent on orphanages funded by churches and NGOs and neglect the hard work of reuniting missing children to their families or finding homes and safe places for children on the streets.
6. Some orphanages and adoption agencies make children more vulnerable to human trafficking. Traffickers can emotionally manipulate the lonely children and coerce them to leave the facility. Some ill-managed facilities even intentionally cooperate with traffickers. Some orphanages "facilitate child trafficking rings by using false promises to recruit children and exploit them to profit from donations."²⁰

Arguments in Favour of Orphanages

1. Most people agree that it should be the relatives to care for orphans, but the reality is that this is not always happening. Street children are in reality already separated from their home communities. Some street children and orphans are being ignored and neglected by their relatives. In other cases, children are living on the street in the city because they ran away from violence or sexual abuse in their homes. Other orphans don't have traceable families. Orphanages fill the gap for children in these situations.²¹
2. Some people agree that many orphanages provide a better standard of living than children receive in the rest of the community, but they argue that orphans deserve our special attention. In many places, the Bible mentions the need to give special care to orphans. Orphans have had enough suffering and difficulties already, and their future life as an adult will remain difficult with no support from parents. We should do as much as we possibly can for them while they are in the orphanage.
3. Christian orphanages give orphans and street children a chance to hear the gospel and experience the love of Christ. Many orphans are coming from communities where people do not know Jesus.²²
4. Orphanages offer protection, care, shelter, education, and food to vulnerable children who might have no other place in society to go.
5. Orphanages save the lives of many children who would have otherwise been aborted or killed after birth. It is very common throughout Africa for newly born babies to be dropped off at orphanages by desperate mothers who feel they don't have the ability to care for these children, or they are ashamed of having a child out of wedlock.
6. Orphanages as institutions help to facilitate the process of adoption so that orphans can be placed within loving families.

What do you think? Should we be working to close orphanages and care for orphans in alternative ways? Or are orphanages a necessary and effective way to care for orphans?



The Role of the Urban Church in Fighting Poverty

- Preach the gospel in word and deed. The church is the centre of transformation in any society. Jesus brings transformation to people's lives and people's relationships that no

Lesson 17: Urban Ministries: Opportunities and Challenges

program can achieve and no money can buy. Teach people a biblical worldview. Disciple them and walk with them as they grow in Christ.

- Work for reconciliation. Help people to grow in their relationships with God, self, others, and the rest of creation.
- Help people to discover their assets and skills and use them to do meaningful work to support themselves and their families.
- Give generously to people in need in your community through your church's benevolence ministry.
- Work to overcome and change broken systems in your city. Advocate and lobby for justice on behalf of those who are oppressed. The church should be a voice for the voiceless. Hold leaders to account in order for people in your neighbourhood to receive good governance and quality service delivery.
- Form partnerships with other nearby churches and organisations and work together to address poverty and challenges in the community. For example, churches can work together with government officials or organisations to construct a school or a medical centre.
- Plant new churches in other areas of the city, especially materially poor neighbourhoods which other churches may be avoiding. Avoid competing with other churches for members, but prioritise preaching to those who do not yet know Jesus.
- Urban churches should lead by example. They should be role models of transparency and integrity in the community. They should lead the way in loving and embracing people of other cultures and backgrounds.
- Seek the good of your city and your neighbourhood. Clean up the rubbish and plant trees in your neighbourhood. Repair holes in the roads nearby. Volunteer to help in the schools and clinics. Look for ways to serve people in your community. Even small acts of service can make a big difference and give people hope.



Urban Churches Making an Impact

Can you mention a specific urban church in your country that is making a positive impact in its city? Explain what the church is doing and why you think it is successfully making an impact.

Other Stories

1. There was a church of about 20 people in Kagishu, a slum community in Nairobi, Kenya. Meshack, a young man from the church, attended a Christian conference about development, and went back home to challenge his pastor that their church should be

doing more holistic ministry in their community. The pastor wondered how they could meet the needs of others when his church members were already so poor. There were children in the community who were not able to afford going to school. So the pastor's wife and Meshack started teaching children without pay and later opened a school that started with 30 students. Within only one year the school enrolment grew to 313 students, and six staff members. Because the community saw how the church cared for people in need, the church grew and doubled in its membership. Today the school has about 450 students with 20 paid staff, and three additional primary schools and a secondary school have been started.²³

2. God bless Nigeria Church, in Lagos, Nigeria, has been intentionally trying to reach out to commercial sex workers. The church leaders go out to the streets and invite the young women to the church. The church established a 42-bed residential house called Genesis House to help the women stay away from the sex markets. In some cases, the church helps these former sex workers to pay off the men who managed them and even the hotels where they had rented rooms. The recovering prostitutes are mentored and given training in various skills. Pastor Akinnola reports that about 40 percent of the women who pass through the program avoid prostitution on a long-term basis. Some have gotten married. Others have used their new skills to pursue hair-dressing, catering, tailoring and other legitimate professions.²⁴



TAKE-HOME ACTIVITIES

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. All participants should try to do both of the activities below.

1. Lead a Bible study with your family or a small group from church to study what the Bible teaches about cities. Study the passages together that are discussed in this lesson. Additionally, try to find other relevant Bible passages that also relate to cities. Use a concordance to help you. Seek to learn more about how God wants Christians to view and interact with cities.
2. Research the neighbourhood near your urban church. Talk to residents of the area and find out what they believe to be the opportunities, assets, challenges, and needs of the community. Either with a few other volunteer members from church or together with the official church leadership, make an action plan for serving your urban neighbourhood. Begin with something small. It could be as simple as starting a weekly football game and Bible study with children, planting trees, re-painting houses and signs that have deteriorated, starting weekly hospital visits to encourage doctors and patients, or talking to a government official about needed repairs in the neighbourhood. Try to make at least one positive and specific change in your community.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Showing Hospitality

In addition to reaching out in love to our urban communities, we should also make sure that our churches are attractive places where people will feel welcome. Our churches should be places where people can visit and experience the love of Christ and hear the good news of the gospel.

What can we do to make our urban churches more hospitable places for:

1. Materially poor people?

2. People from other races and ethnic groups?

3. People with physical or psychological disabilities?

4. First time visitors?



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¹ City, (2019), In Vocabulary.com, access online: <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/city>.

² Marian Starkey, “African Urbanization”, (Population Connection, January 28, 2015), access online: <https://www.populationconnection.org/article/african-urbanization/>.

³ See *World Urbanization Prospects: the 2014 Revision* (United Nations, New York, 2014), 1, access online: <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/publications/files/wup2014-highlights.pdf>.

⁴ Mariama Sow, “Foresight Africa 2016: Urbanization in the African Context”, (Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 30 December 2015), access online: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2015/12/30/foresight-africa-2016-urbanization-in-the-african-context/>.

⁵ Somik Vinay Lall, J. Vernon Henderson, Anthony J. Venables, *African Cities: Opening Doors to the World*, (the World Bank, Washington DC, 2017), 38, access online: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/854221490781543956/122290272_201711346052345/additional/113851-PUB-PUBLIC-PUBDATE-2-9-2017.pdf.

⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁷ Ibid., 140.

⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁹ “Unemployment Threatens World Cities; Jobs are Needed to Check Growth in Urban Poverty”, International Labour Office, 29 May, 1996, access online: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008055/lang--en/index.htm.

¹⁰ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 4 September, 2012), Loc. 3865-67.

¹¹ Ibid., Loc. 3938-43.

¹² Timothy Keller, Twitter Post, 9 January 2014, 7:31AM. Access online: <https://twitter.com/dailykeller/status/421257802854592512?lang=en>.

¹³ *On Orphans*, (Unicef, 16 June, 2017), access online: https://www.unicef.org/media/media_45279.html.

¹⁴ Jack Graham, “Rwanda Wants to Become Africa’s First Orphanage-free Country-Here’s How”, (Apolitical, 24, May 2018) access online: https://apolitical.co/solution_article/rwanda-wants-to-become-africas-first-orphanage-free-country-heres-how/?fbclid=IwAR1Y9s5BPpsv7kkOxHP_YYZ7uu8kO45hjXSqDg4cOB9G0pW-VZEISKnTNqQ.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Conrad Mbewe, “Orphans, Adoption and the African Extended Family”, (The Gospel Coalition, 31 December, 2018) access online: <https://africa.thegospelcoalition.org/article/orphans-adoption-african-extended-family/>.

¹⁷ For summaries of the research, see the following:

Save the Children Policy Brief, *Institutional Care: the Last Resort*, (May 2014) access online:

<http://www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbefore donating/wp-content/uploads/Institutional-Care-The-Last-Resort-Save-The-Children.pdf>.

Faith to Action Initiative, *Children, Orphanages, and Families*, (2014), access online: <http://www.faithtoaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Summary-of-Research4.pdf>.

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¹⁸ Camaleo, "Orphanages Need to be Closed and Here is Why", (17 July, 2017), access online: <http://camaleoproject.org/en/orphanages-need-to-be-closed-here-is-why/>.

¹⁹ Jack Graham, "Rwanda Wants..."

²⁰ US Department of State fact sheet: "Child Institutionalization and Human Trafficking" (28, June, 2018) access online: <https://www.state.gov/child-institutionalization-and-human-trafficking/#:~:targetText=Orphanages%20have%20also%20kept%20children,sympathy%20and%20money%20from%20donors.&targetText=These%20orphanages%20facilitate%20child%20trafficking,them%20to%20profit%20from%20donations>.

²¹ In this light, some are trying to develop best practices for orphanages. See Philip Darke and Keith McFarland, *In Pursuit of Orphan Excellence*, (Credo House Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2014).

²² Conrad Mbewe, "Orphans, Adoption..."

²³ Scott Allen, Darrow L. Miller, and the African working group of Samaritan Strategy Africa, *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa* (Phoenix, Ariz., Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005), 50, accessed online: http://www.disciplenations.org/media/Against-All-Hope-Hope-for-Africa_ENGLISH.pdf.

²⁴ Danny McCain, "Addressing Urban Problems Through Kingdom Theology: The 'Apostles in the Market Place' Model in Lagos, Nigeria", (*Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 32.1 page 61-80, 2013), 68 View in PDF format pdf [Reproduced by permission of the current copyright holder]: https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/32-1_061.pdf.



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**Lesson 18: Mission Trips within
Africa**

Opening Survey¹

Romans 10:14-15

Definition of STM =

Group Survey

1. How many of you have ever gone on a STM to another community or region?

2. How many of you did evangelism on your trip? How many of you tried to serve or help materially poor people on your trip?

3. How many of you gave out resources or money on your trip?

4. What specifically did you give to people?

5. How many of you consulted the people, communities, or region before you went?

Benefits of STMs

What are the possible benefits or fruits of short-term mission trips?



Cross-Cultural Group Activity

1. *Did the missionaries do anything that confused or offended the host community?*

2. *Did the host community do anything that confused or offended the missionaries?*

3. *When you realised your cultural differences, were you able to adapt to the situation?*

4. *How did you handle the issue of gift giving?*

5. *Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. How might this passage help us to think about cultural differences while on STMs?*



Planning Fruitful STMs

Final principles to reflect on:

1. Learn as much as you can about the culture, social norms, language, and environment of the place you intend to visit. Do not allow church members to go on the trip unless they demonstrate a commitment to learn and spend time in preparation.

2. Make sure your STM has a clear and specific purpose.

3. Remember to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. Minister to people holistically by working for reconciliation in their relationships with God, self, others, and the creation.

4. A representative of your church should try to visit the area first on their own.

5. After carefully planning your trip, if you realise that it is too expensive, or that the risks outweigh the possible benefits, then be willing to say “no” to the idea of the STM, and use the money to support long-term missionaries in that region, or invest more in helping materially

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poor people in your own community.

6. Remember that your STM should bring glory to God. It is not a chance to make yourselves look good, or to build up the reputation of your church, or to glorify an evangelist or pastor.

7. Remember to pray. Prayer for your STM will also help you to confront and repent of any god-complexes you may have before leaving on the trip.

8. Focus on long term development.

9. As much as possible try to help people discover their assets, skills, and opportunities. Focus on encouraging and building people up.

10. Be flexible and be willing to adjust.

11. Request participants on the STM to invest their own resources on the trip.

12. Think carefully about who should lead the STM. It is preferable that STM leaders are already engaged in missions and are people who love and know materially poor people.

13. Be a learner.

14. Be careful about how you talk about materially poor people when speaking to your local church about the trip and when speaking to people in the host community. We don't want to always refer to the people we will visit as "the poor". Their material poverty should not define their whole identity. Remember that they are people made in the image of God.

15. Utilise the various gifts of your team members. Be creative in planning the trip. Each person has different ways that they can teach, serve, or encourage. Read **1 Peter 4:10**.

16. Generally, it is a good policy to avoid bringing resources to hand out unless the people are in need of relief because of crisis.

17. When visiting the host community, look for ways to work together and partner with local churches, local development organisations, and other leaders in the government and community.

18. After the trip, take time to review the experience with the whole team:

- Find out what each team member learned about their own brokenness in their relationships with God, others, self, or creation.
 - What did they learn from the people? What positive things did they observe in the local people's relationships with God, self, others, and creation?
 - How do you think you strengthened the churches and ministries that are there for the long-term?
 - Are there ways that you made things more difficult for the churches and ministries that are there for the long-term?
 - Discuss whether the trip has made you more generous, more willing to support missionaries, or more willing to make friendships with materially poor people in your area.
 - In order for these changes to become a reality, you must act on them not just talk about them. So write down action steps that you will take to change as a local church or as individuals.
 - Discuss whether a future trip might be helpful to continue the relationship with the host community over the long term.
 - Most importantly, don't forget to ask the host community members what they really thought about the trip, and whether it was helpful to them. Try to go beyond their polite thank-yous and try to figure out the host community's long-term ability to pursue lasting change.
 - Make a commitment to keep praying together for the host community. Rejoice in the privilege of taking part in God's mission to preach good news
-

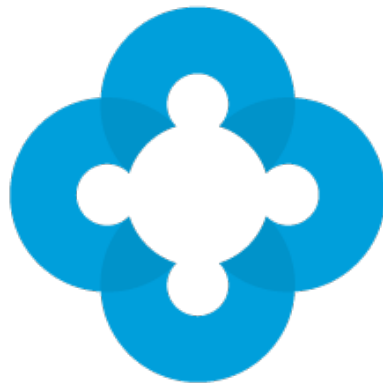


TAKE-HOME ACTIVITIES

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned. All participants should try to do both of the activities below.

1. Think about the long-term missionaries your church has sent to other communities or countries. Contact them and see how they are doing and find out if they need any more encouragement or support of any kind. Ask them if it would be helpful to their ministry and beneficial to the community for the church to send a short-term team to visit them or if there is another way that you could be of more support.
2. Next time your church plans a STM, study the principles in this lesson with the STM leadership and planning team. Use the guidelines you have learnt in this lesson to prepare your STM wisely.

¹ Many of the concepts in this chapter are based on ideas from Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett, *Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*, (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2014).



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**Lesson 19: Foreigners,
Missionaries, and Sponsors**

Opening Discussion

4 Categories of Foreigners:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

In this lesson, we will have sensitive discussions.
1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Ephesians 4:2

Ephesians 4:29

In groups of three or four, each person should briefly discuss their experiences of working with foreigners from any of these four categories.

- 1. Describe the best relationship you have had with a foreigner.*
- _____
- _____
- 2. Describe a difficult relationship you have had with a foreigner.*
- _____
- _____
- 3. If you have worked together with a foreigner, who took the leadership role and made most of the decisions?*
- _____
- 4. Do you know a foreigner who you consider to be a true friend? Explain.*
- _____
- _____

Many foreign governments, companies, organisations, missionaries, and sponsors have greatly contributed to the gradual development and improvement of lives in Africa. However, foreigners have also caused harm in the process, even if it's sometimes done unintentionally.

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Case study on cultural misunderstandings

A foreign missionary was leading a workshop for national church leaders involved in Bible translation. The missionary did not realise that in that culture the oldest man is always the first to speak, then the next oldest speaks, then the next oldest, and so on until finally, the youngest person can speak. The missionary proposed a discussion question to the whole group. Everyone was silent. The missionary asked the question again. The group was still silent. The missionary did not realise that the oldest man was unsure of the meaning of the question, and no one else dared to speak. The missionary didn't know what was going on, so she stopped using the participatory approach with this group and just presented the information herself.¹

1. What do we learn from this story?
2. What could the church leaders have done to help the missionary?



Conflicts Over Money

Remember what we learned in Lesson 13 – “African Culture and Money”. The characteristics of African cultures that we discussed in that lesson are the very same characteristics which foreigners can find difficult to understand and adapt to.

What aspects of our culture's use of money can you remember from that lesson that would be hard for foreigners to adapt to?

Specific examples of conflict between Africans and foreigners because of different views of friendship and money:

1. Some Africans may feel disappointed when foreign friends do not give them any financial or material support. A true friend in Africa is viewed as one who helps the other in times of need. Some Africans might look at the rich lifestyles of foreigners with their pets and expensive vehicles and assume that they are very rich, creating a feeling that foreigners are selfish and only care about themselves while the people living around them are in painful material poverty.

Lesson 19: Foreigners, Missionaries, and Sponsors

2. Foreigners may be frustrated when they have many African friends, but they do not know which friends truly care about them, and which friends are just looking for a financial donor.
3. Africans can be offended when a foreign visitor or friend turns down a gift. This can make some of them feel inferior or assume that the foreigner is proud. The foreigner may want to refuse the gift because they see that the person giving the gift is in more need of it and they don't want to burden materially poor people. This mistake may come from a compassionate heart, but it is very harmful as it robs Africans of the dignity, blessing, and joy of being able to give to others.
4. Foreigners may try to give generously to help their African friends and neighbours, but sometimes they are limited financially and therefore cannot help everyone. This may cause them a great amount of stress as they try to decide who to help and in what way.
5. Africans are often frustrated by foreigners who don't admit when they have needs or when they need help. Africans want to care for their friends who are foreigners, but it is hard to know how to help if foreigners try to live independently, act proud, and don't admit that they also need help sometimes.
6. Some foreigners have sacrificed to come to Africa and do not have a lot of money. Some may even be unpaid volunteers. They can be frustrated when Africans assume they are rich just because of their country of origin. Sometimes Africans do not understand their sacrifice and may think foreigners are looking for employment opportunities in Africa that they could not get at home.

What are some other common conflicts between Africans and foreigners that are about money or finance? As you answer, try to offer a helpful solution to prevent or resolve that conflict.

Speaking About the Conflicts

These issues may seem small but over time they can lead to the total breakdown of relationships between Africans and foreigners. When these issues begin to cause frustration, we are often tempted to ignore them for the sake of "keeping the peace". We act patient and don't speak up until we become so annoyed that our bitterness boils over. This boiling over can result in complete destruction of a relationship, shouting at one another, or resigning from a position.

Take- Home Activities

The take-home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned.

1. For Africans who know foreigners – Invite a foreign friend or colleague to visit you at your home for a meal. Take time to discuss your different cultures so that you can learn from one another. Tell your foreign friend some of the things you have learned about in this lesson. Ask your friend what you can do differently in the relationship to adapt to your friend’s culture in order that you have a more fruitful relationship together. If the friend is willing, pray together after this conversation.

2. For Africans who do not know any foreigners – Think about if there has ever been any foreign missionary or organisation who has worked in your community. If you think you have received any personal benefit from the work of the missionary or the organisation in your community, then take a step to show gratitude for their work. You could approach the missionary or organisation in person to thank them for the work they have done, or you could write a personal letter to thank them for what they have done and send it to them by post or through email.

3. For foreigners – Invite an African friend or colleague to your home for a meal. If you are only in Africa for a short visit, you can arrange to meet together at a different location. Take time to discuss your different cultures so that you can learn from one another. Tell your friend some of the things you have learned about in this lesson. Ask your African friend to be honest with you and tell you things you can change to better adapt to the local culture and community so that you can have healthier and more fruitful relationships. Ask if there is anything that you are doing that is seen as offensive or frustrating to your friend or other local people. If the friend is willing, pray together after this conversation.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. What were you most surprised to learn about in this lesson?

2. Is there anything in this lesson that you disagreed with, or that you found hard to understand? Let your fellow group members explain for you any topics that were difficult for you to fully understand.

3. Have you ever asked a foreigner to give you money or material resources? Why or why not? If you are a foreigner, have you ever asked Africans to give you money or material resources? Why or why not?

(Questions continue on page 224)

4. *Has a foreigner ever helped you by teaching you something new about God, or new practical knowledge or skills? Were they also willing to learn things from you? If you are a foreigner, what have you learned from Africans?*

5. *What harm have you seen foreigners cause in Africa?*

6. *Would you rather have a foreign missionary come to live in your community for a few years or have a different foreign church group come every few months for only a week at a time? Why?*

7. *What can foreigners do differently to improve their relationships with you as Africans?*

8. *What can Africans do differently to improve their relationships with you as foreigners?*



Further Reflection

(Read this section at home for further learning).

As we engage with each of the four categories of foreigners that were mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, there are some principles to consider that will help us as we interact with each group.

A. Short-term and long-term Missionaries

These foreigners are brothers and sisters in Christ. They are in Africa to preach the gospel and to help us in our fight against poverty. When interacting with these foreign missionaries, remember to follow the Bible’s teachings about how to relate to brothers and sisters. We should work with them as part of the same team, the body of Christ. When they make mistakes or fall into sin, we should confront them gently and try to restore them.

Some principles to reflect on:

1. Don't judge all foreign missionaries by your personal experience with one missionary. Foreign missionaries come from countries all over the world. They are extremely diverse not only in terms of culture but also in terms of doctrinal beliefs, church practices, and lifestyle practices. And be careful not to judge what people are like from a particular country based on what one missionary is like. A foreign missionary from Canada is probably very different in many important ways from the average Canadian.
2. Many foreign missionaries are trying to help in Africa. They care about the problems here and want to see change happen. But they may come with god-complexes, or limited understandings of the true nature and causes of poverty. Many of them end up hurting in Africa while trying to help. As Africans, we must be ready to gently challenge them to improve on their poverty fighting techniques, and gently challenge them to help them see their god-complexes and pride. Whenever possible, we should encourage them to participate in future *Helping without Hurting in Africa* trainings.
3. There are a lot of short-term missionary groups that visit Africa from other foreign countries. Most of these groups could greatly benefit from the principles we looked at in Lesson 18 – "Mission Trips Within Africa". The same principles that we learned for trips within Africa also apply to trips to Africa from foreign countries. Don't say "yes" to hosting every intern, visitor, or short-term team that wants to come from a foreign country. Make sure that such a team will plan their trip well and actually benefit your church or community. Be willing to tell them "no, you should not come", when necessary. This can be very hard, especially if saying "no" means we would be losing out on financial aid or gifts that would come along with the trip. Remember what we have learned in this curriculum, that the solution to poverty is not as simple as giving money. If a trip is going to cause more harm than good, have the courage to say "no" or be honest with them about how they can change their plans so that the trip will be more helpful. Consider telling foreign teams that they are required to work through *Helping without Hurting in Africa* before visiting you. Or you could tell them that they need to read the American book called, *Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions* before visiting.
4. Foreign missionaries come to Africa for different reasons. Some come to learn, and others come to minister, and hopefully even those who come to minister will also be willing to learn. For those missionaries that are coming to minister and work in Africa, we should encourage them to come when they are skilled and trained. It causes African communities a lot of frustration when foreign missionaries come to Africa with a desire to change the world quickly even though they do not have the training that they need. This is especially common among young foreigners who have just finished secondary school or university. They want to make a difference in the world. This desire is good, but we should encourage them to be fully equipped for the work that they want to do. Encourage foreign missionaries that if they want to teach pastors, they should be theologically trained. If they want to work with homeless people in Africa, they should have experience working with homeless people in their country of origin. If they want to come to Africa to help sick people, they should have studied medicine in their country of origin. Hold missionaries accountable to the work that they do, and insist that they be well-trained and skilled people.
5. Take time to appreciate missionaries for their ministry. They have left their original homes and families to preach the gospel or help materially poor people in Africa. They have sacrificed. And some of them have also given up materially rich lifestyles in their home

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countries in order to live in Africa. When you see missionaries help without hurting, thank them for their ministry.

B. Development and humanitarian organisations

Development organisations, humanitarian organisations, and charities are extremely diverse in their activities in Africa. Organisations distribute relief aid after disasters, dig wells, sponsor children for their education, rescue people from human trafficking, organise savings groups, counsel and treat people with HIV, teach new agricultural methods, teach on sanitation practices, etc. The list of activities is almost endless. Many organisations are doing great work that African countries and communities have benefited from. But there are also a lot of organisations that are making the mistakes we have looked at throughout this curriculum.

Some principles to reflect on:

1. Hold organisations accountable to doing quality work with integrity in African countries and communities. When you find out that there are corrupt staff, either foreigners or Africans, make sure you report the corruption to the highest levels of the organisation, and sometimes it may be important to report that corruption to your government leaders as well.
2. Try to encourage Christian staff at development organisations to go through this curriculum, *Helping without Hurting in Africa*. This will help organisations to do more effective work in fighting poverty by being more holistic in their approach, and looking at the deeper nature and causes of poverty, as well as common mistakes that are made. Even in cases where the staff and the organisation are not Christian, you can still try to hold them accountable to helping without hurting, by sharing with them some of the principles you have learned in this curriculum and showing them what is actually happening in your community.
3. Encourage organisations to work with local communities so that the local people will take ownership of their own development. Encourage participation of the local people at every level of planning and implementation and evaluation. Encourage the organisations to be accountable not only to donors but also to local churches, community groups, and generally to all the people of the community they are working in.
4. If an organisation offers free handouts to your community in a way that you know will create dependency or other kinds of harm, be willing to tell that organisation that you don't want the free gifts, and that their approach will not help the community. Set an example by returning the free gifts you personally received back to the organisation. Don't take things just because they are free if you know that a bad approach is being used.
5. Try to influence your government's regulation of organisations in your country. It would be helpful if governments required all organisations to be compliant with certain standards of integrity in their work. You could also encourage organisations to comply with certain international standards in their operations and work. For example, one possible standard is called the Core Humanitarian Standard. The Core Humanitarian Standard (or CHS) focuses on nine quality commitments for organisations. These include making sure that organisations are involving communities in decision making, that there are ways for staff and community members to raise complaints, and that money is used responsibly as intended.² As you connect to different organisations working in Africa, you can also consult charity evaluators that monitor the work of charities and organisations. In the United States, a couple examples are the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and Charity Navigator.³
6. When you see organisations doing good work in your community to care for the materially poor, find ways to financially support that organisation, even if your contribution is small. Don't fall into the mind-set that all development work being done through organisations in your community should be funded by foreign donors. Raise local resources to supplement the work of these good organisations.

C. Foreign companies and governments

There are many foreign countries who have government officials living in Africa as well as employees of private companies. Some of the countries with the strongest presence in Africa today include China, the United States, and the European Union. But there are many other foreign countries working in African countries as well.

Foreign governments and companies often try to help African countries, but at the same time they are also looking to benefit their own companies and governments. We should not be naïve and think that they are all in Africa only to help materially poor people. They are here to find profit for themselves as well. The relationships between foreign governments and African governments can be very complicated. In the same way, partnerships between foreign companies and African governments and African workers can also be very complicated. On the one hand, Africa has benefited extensively from these partnerships in terms of infrastructure development, loans, aid during times of crisis or disaster, and job creation.

However, at the same time, some foreign companies and governments have caused immense harm, suffering, and instability in Africa, from colonial times up to the present day. Perhaps the most tragic part is that many Africans and many people around the world are ignorant of the abuses currently happening in Africa. A large amount of Africa's resources are being shipped out to other countries and often there is very little benefit to common African people.

Some points to reflect on:

1. Use grants offered by foreign companies and governments wisely. Be careful to read the agreements carefully and see what strings are attached. Make deals with foreign companies and governments that will not only benefit you personally, but your community and country as well.
2. Be careful about taking loans from foreign governments which could make your community or country a slave to unpayable debt. Consider the impact of loans on future generations or future people in your position. It's easy to think that loans are very helpful and positive when repayment is allowed to be postponed. But consider what harm you are causing to those who will come after you who will be forced to repay those loans.
3. Reduce bureaucracy, work for stability and safety, build infrastructure, and enforce rule of law in order to make your country a favourable environment for foreign companies who want to invest in your country.
4. Remember to care for staff of foreign governments and companies as people. They are all different. Some are Christians and some aren't. Some of them are trying to make a very positive difference in Africa and some are not. Get to know them as individuals and build friendships with them. Help them to settle in well to the communities that they live in as it can sometimes be lonely living in a foreign country. Invite them to your churches.
5. Hold accountable African leaders who are making deals with foreign governments and countries in exchange for personal profit or even bribes. Many times, these leaders personally benefit while their country is looted by these foreign governments and companies. These evil practices must stop. We must not ignore what is happening. Additionally, we need to be willing to report corrupt foreign officials and hold them to account. Nobody should be above the law. Sometimes it may be advantageous to request the help of foreign missionaries in holding foreign leaders to account. During colonial times, there were many foreign Christian missionaries who stood up against their own governments to oppose slavery and protect the land rights of Africans.

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A few examples of what is happening today in Africa involving foreign governments and companies:

- “Nigeria in West Africa has pumped more than 400 billion dollars’ worth of oil since it was discovered there in the 1950s – enough to cancel all of Sub-Saharan Africa’s debt. However, more than 80 per cent of oil revenue has accrued to just 1 per cent of the population, while the majority of the population have got poorer, leading to a violent rebellion in the oil-rich Niger Delta.”⁴ The Niger Delta “is the poorest region of the country and there is only 1 secondary school per 14,000 people.”⁵
- “Around 70 per cent of Gabon's timber exports are sent illegally to China, while the figure for Equatorial Guinea is thought to be 90 per cent.”⁶
- “During the 2000s, up to US\$300 million a year in tuna, shrimp and lobster were being stolen by foreign trawlers in Somali waters each year.... The plundering of Somali territorial waters by foreign fishing fleets gave rise to an armed response by local fisherpeople. This ‘piracy of the rich’ was what sparked the ‘piracy of the poor’ in response.”⁷

D. Sponsors, donors, and partners living outside of Africa

The money being spent in Africa by foreign organisations and missionaries mostly comes from donations given by ordinary people in foreign countries. People sacrifice money that they could have spent on themselves. They choose to give so that they can see the gospel spread in Africa, or they give to help materially poor African communities. These are foreigners we might never meet in person, but they have a huge impact on our lives in Africa, in positive ways but sometimes also in negative ways.

Some points to reflect on:

1. Stop using the term *donors*, because it reinforces god-complexes and feelings of inferiority by classifying everyone into either a giver or a receiver. It is better to refer to people as *ministry partners* or *financial resource partners*.⁸
2. When possible, communicate to these financial resource partners and thank them for their sacrificial giving. You can do this through email or social media or phone calls, but this can also be done by communicating to the missionaries or organisation’s staff workers who are on the ground in Africa. Remember that there is poverty in every country of the world. Every dollar or shilling given to Africa is money that could have been spent on fighting poverty in the foreigner’s home country. Sometimes it is hearing a simple “thank you” that will encourage people to continue to give generously.
3. Hold financial resource partners accountable. It is common for those who are giving money to dictate what will be done through organisations and missionaries. They have a plan and an agenda and sometimes this gets forced on African communities and churches. Be willing to speak up to these partners directly, or indirectly through development workers and missionaries. Push for the involvement of the local community in every aspect of any project or ministry plan. Remind financial resource partners that they do not fully know what things are like on the ground, and therefore it is very important for foreign partners and African community and church members to listen to each other well and learn from each other. Encourage them to learn about African culture and to consider African solutions to African problems.
4. Communicate clearly and regularly to avoid misunderstanding. Share accurate and unexaggerated stories with foreign partners. Always tell the truth. It is tempting to make a situation sound terrible so as to make people feel pity and give more. It is also tempting to exaggerate success stories so as to make people give more. This is lying, pure and simple.

We must be people who tell the truth. Remember what we learned in Lesson 11 about corruption. When we tell the truth, we and foreign partners can work together to overcome new challenges so that ministries and projects can be successful.

5. Communicate your expectations clearly to foreign partners, and ask them to also communicate their expectations clearly to you.
6. Try to remember that your particular church or ministry is one of only thousands of ministries that God is using to advance His kingdom in Africa. Other ministries are not in competition with us. They are part of our family in the body of Christ. If God has called a foreign partner to be involved in X activity, and your ministry does Y activity, then help the foreign partner to connect to another organisation near you that engages in X activity rather than trying to make your ministry sound like it is really about X.⁹
7. Encourage foreign partners to come and visit your country regularly. This will help them to learn about African life and culture and to learn more about the ministries that are happening in your communities. This is also important in order to build stronger relationships with these foreign partners. Foreign partners need to be reminded that fighting poverty is about reconciling relationships, not just giving money. Visits bring the foreign partners face to face with the people they are trying to help. And these visits are also important for accountability. There are corrupt organisations in Africa who are receiving donor money and lying about their programs. We should always encourage foreign partners to visit so that they can see what is actually happening, and in turn so that they will support the organisations that are honest and doing good work.



¹ Mary Crickmore, "Shalom: A Manual for Christian Workers", (self-published, 2011), 45-46.

² For more information on CHS go to <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>.

³ For more information on the ECFA go to <https://www.ecfa.org/>. For more information on Charity Navigator go to <https://www.charitynavigator.org/>.

⁴ Carmody Pádraig, *The New Scramble for Africa*, 2nd ed., (Polity; 24 October, 2016) Highlight Loc. 3069-72.

⁵ Ibid., Highlight Loc. 3077-81.

⁶ Ibid., Highlight Loc. 4412-13.

⁷ Ibid., Highlight Loc. 4535-39.

⁸ Brian Fikkert and Kelly Kapic, *A Field Guide to Becoming Whole*, (Chicago, Moody Pub., 2019), 86.

⁹ Ibid., 87.



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Lesson 20: Seed Projects and Further Resources

Opening Discussion

Many of the ideas in these twenty lessons can be simplified to a few basic principles that can help us in our day to day lives:

1. God has called us to have compassion on materially poor people. As God has loved us and been generous to us, we should also love materially poor people and give generously of our time and resources.
2. When you want to help materially poor people, consider if your action will move both you and the other people closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others, and the creation.
3. As much as possible, work *with* materially poor people, not *for* them. Don't do for people what they can do for themselves.
4. Encourage people to use their assets and skills to work hard to support themselves and their families and to share with others who are in need.
5. Pray continually and seek God's guidance as you go out to try to help the poor. Don't try to do it alone. Depend on the Lord to empower you through his Holy Spirit.

We will make some mistakes.

We will disagree sometimes.

We should be humble and not judgmental.

Don't leave from here feeling paralysed with fear.

2 Timothy 1:7

Have faith in our living God that he can work through you today, this week, and this year. You can see real change in your community. We echo the words of Obiageli Ezekwesili, the Nigerian co-founder of Transparency International,¹ "There's absolutely nothing that the God I believe in cannot do!"

Now that we have finished this training, give specific examples of possible next steps you can take as an individual to follow up on what you have learned and to help materially poor people.

1. Reflect on your God-given gifts, skills, knowledge, and resources.
2. Consider doing a resource map or asset map with your family or your community as we discussed in Lesson 15.
3. Try to carry out any take-home activities that you have not already completed.

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4. Be intentional about spending more time building strong relationships with materially poor people in your family, church, and community.
5. Begin to preach and teach in your local church what you have learned in this curriculum.
6. Give even more generously than you did before, but use wisdom and creativity in your giving following what you have learned in this curriculum. Here are some ideas:
 - Support your local church by giving more generously financially or materially.
 - Rarely give things to people for free unless it's a personal gift to a friend. Instead, offer items at a reduced rate. Then people will feel ownership of what they purchase from you, and you will know if they truly value what you are offering to give to them. Additionally, you will be able to save money and help even more people. For example, instead of distributing water filters to a whole community for free, charge people at least 10% of the actual price of the filters.
 - Invest in the development of other people by helping them pay for education.
 - When giving a gift to someone or to an organisation, consider making it a matching or proportionate gift. For example, you could say that your church will contribute one shilling towards a project in another community for every one shilling raised locally in that community.
 - Help people start new businesses through a one-time investment gift, or by giving them a loan.
 - Give financial gifts to local organisations that are doing good development work in your community.



Seed Projects

Seed projects are small initiatives that local churches or communities can do in their local area to fight poverty. These actions should demonstrate God's love and help materially poor people.² Seed projects are like a seed planted in the ground. The goal is that the small seed grows up and bears large fruit. A seed project is a small beginning of your church's ministry to help the poor and fight poverty in your community.

Seed projects should be done using local financial and material resources. And churches should always try to work alongside of other community members in their seed projects so that there is community participation.

Examples of Seed Projects

What are other possible seed projects that local churches or communities could do?

Consider the words of Desmond Tutu, former Archbishop in South Africa: "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."³



Action Planning

What happens to many of our good intentions?

Action Plan – It is a document that highlights the steps that must be taken in order to achieve a specific goal.

A simple action plan can consist of two parts: one goal and several activities.⁴

1. The goal is what you want to see happen, or the positive change that you want to see.
2. The activities are things that we need to do in order to see that change happen.

It is important that every activity includes the person responsible for the action and the timeframe in which the activity must be completed.

Examples of Goals

1. Three unemployed people in my church will find daily work that will allow them to support themselves and their families by March 28th.
2. Four trees will be planted in my church by June 5th.
3. My community will have a new well for obtaining clean drinking water by August 1st.

Examples of Activities (These three example activities could all fit with goal #3 above.)

1. On Sunday the 10th, I will host a meeting for other church leaders and community leaders in our area to discuss about our idea for making a new well. If they agree, we will elect committee members who can lead this project.
2. On Thursday, the 14th, the elected committee will speak to our local government officials and see if they can permit us to build a well or participate in the project with us.
3. On a Sunday next month, each of the local churches involved in this well project will have a fundraiser within their churches. The pastor of each church is responsible to see that this is done.

Has anyone ever done an action plan for yourself as an individual, or with your family? If yes, please share about your experience and the benefits of your plan.



Activity – Make an Action Plan

As an individual, local church, or community:

My Action Plan:

Goal:

Activity 1

Activity 2

Activity 3

Activity 4

Activity 5



Resources, Trainings, and Books

What other resources, trainings, and books can you recommend to the group as helpful next steps after completing this training? What tools or programs would help local churches and communities as they try to fight poverty and see development?

Trainings in Microfinance Ministries

Microfinance enables low-income households to access financial services such as savings, loans, and insurance. Poor households use these services to meet a wide range of economic needs, and when combined with evangelism and discipleship activities, microfinance can be a powerful tool for holistic ministry, addressing people’s economic, social, and spiritual needs.

Unfortunately, poorly designed microfinance initiatives can do considerable harm:

In particular, it is extremely risky for churches and small ministries to operate microloan programs, **as their cultures are not conducive to enforcing loan repayment**. An alternative that has proved highly successful is for churches and small ministries to promote savings and credit associations in which poor people save and lend their own money to one another.

Resources for Microfinance Ministries

- Before trying to launch a microfinance ministry, read the following book written by the Chalmers Center: Brian Fikkert and Russel Mask, *From Dependence to Dignity: How to Alleviate Poverty Through Church-Centered Microfinance* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015).
- For help in promoting church-centred savings and credit associations, the Chalmers Center’s *Restore: Savings* curriculum can be downloaded from the Chalmers Center’s website at <https://chalmers.org/restore-savings/>
- The Chalmers Center’s *Business, Home, and Health* curricula can be used to provide additional training in the context of microfinance ministries. Download from the Chalmers Center’s website at <https://chalmers.org/bhh/>

Trainings to Mobilise Churches and Communities

- **Restore: Innovation** – A process for training churches to be ambassadors of reconciliation. Church members are guided through a repeatable process of designing and implementing initiatives to share Christ’s love in their communities. Available at www.chalmers.org.
- **Timothy Leadership Training** – Practical ministry training created by Raise Up Global Ministries to equip church leaders to make action plans for church and community transformation. <https://www.raiseupglobal.org/leadership/tlt>
- **Truth-Centered Transformation** – A program of Reconciled World designed to equip rural churches to apply God’s truth to their lives, reach out and serve their communities and learn basic life skills. <https://tctprogram.org/>

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- **Church and Community Mobilization Process** – A comprehensive manual produced by *Tearfund* that equips churches to mobilise their communities to pursue asset-based community development. [https://learn.tearfund.org/~media/files/tilz/churches/ccm/2019-tearfund-ccmp-facilitators-manual-en.pdf](https://learn.tearfund.org/~/media/files/tilz/churches/ccm/2019-tearfund-ccmp-facilitators-manual-en.pdf)
- **Shalom Manual: A Manual for Christian Workers** - A one-week workshop using participatory adult education principles to teach Christian leaders how to engage in transformation of their communities. Contact Mary Crickmore at info@worldrenew.net
- **Community Health Evangelism** – A program of *Medical Ambassadors International* that seamlessly integrates discipleship and church planting with disease prevention and community-based development. <https://www.chenetwork.org/>
- **Vision Conferences** - These events, by Disciple Nations Alliance, provide an opportunity to unite the local body of Christ around a biblical vision for church-based social transformation and to receive practical training and tools for immediate application. <https://www.disciplenations.org/resources/vision-conference-2/>

Trainings in Business

- **Kingdom Business: Christ-Centred Business Education** – A resource produced by *Surprised by Hope* that covers the basics of starting a business. <https://programs.surprisedbyhope.org/>
- **Business, Home, and Health** – A series of courses by the *Chalmers Center* to equip microenterprises and the low-income households in which they are embedded. <https://chalmers.org/bhh/>

Books for Personal Study

- *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (Moody, 2012)
- *The Challenge for Africa* by Wangari Maathai (Pantheon Books, 2009)
- *Prosperity? Seeking the True Gospel* by Michael Otieno Maura, Conrad Mbewe, and Ken Mbugua (Africa Christian Textbooks- Registered Trustees, 2015)
- *Walking with the Poor* by Bryant Myers (Orbis Books, 1999)
- *Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo and Niall Ferguson (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009)
- *African Friends and Money Matters* by David E. Maranz (SIL International)
- *The New Scramble for Africa* by Pádraig Carmody (Polity, 2016)
- *Against all Hope: Hope for Africa* by Darrow L. Miller with Scott Allen (Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005)


Take- Home Activities

The take home activities include assignments or activities to be carried out in your communities, church or place of work, applying the lessons you have learned.

1. Continue to finalise your action plan in discussion with your family, church, and community. Once the action plan is finished, be diligent in carrying out the activities you planned. Be sure to pray for your plan regularly.
2. Decide with church leaders and community leaders about what other curriculums or programs might be helpful for your church or community (such as those discussed in this lesson), and make a plan for how you will get access to those resources.

Feedback, Testimonies, Evaluation, and Prayer

Testimonies



Evaluation Questions

1) *Is there anything we have discussed that you are confused about? Is there anything I can help you understand better?*

2) *What lessons or activities did you appreciate the most?*

3) *What changes will you make in your ministry based on what you have learned?*

4) *What can be improved in this training or in my facilitation?*

5) *Would you recommend this training to a friend? Why or why not?*

***Please also feel free to email the authors with questions and testimonies directly:**

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¹ Quote taken from a speech given by [Obiageli Ezekwesili](#) at the Time 100 Gala, 21 April 2015. Speech can be heard here: <https://praisephilly.com/2669383/bring-back-our-girls-founder-obiageli-ezekwesili-gives-emotional-speech-at-time-100-gala/>.

² Adapted from *If Jesus Were Mayor* by Bob Moffitt (2006, Monarch Books), chapter 13: "Seed Project Planning", page 1, Adaptation by Disciple Nation and can be found here: <http://www.disciplenations.org/media/Seed-Projects-Overview-and-Planning-Guide.pdf>.

³ Desmond Tutu, Quote re-published by the Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation, (7 October, 2015). Access online: <http://www.tutufoundationusa.org/2015/10/07/10-pieces-of-wisdom-from-desmond-tutu-on-his-birthday/>.

⁴ Timothy Leadership Training, *Caring for God's People* 6e, (Timothy Leadership Training Institute, 2016), 13.

***OPTIONAL* Written Testimony and Evaluation**

(Give this page to your facilitator after the training or email HWHAfrica@chalmers.org)

Testimony

Evaluation

1) *What lessons or activities did you appreciate most in the lessons?*

2) *What changes will you make in your ministry based on what you have learned?*

3) *What can be improved in this training or in my facilitation?*

4) *Would you recommend this training to a friend? Why or why not?*

Additional Comments
