

STEWARDSHIP 101-10

TAUGHT BY BARRY MCWILLIAMS
CHAPEL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ADULT CLASS FALL 2003

Development : Redeeming the Steward

What is Development?

Secular vs Christian approaches: Growth Centered, People Centered, or Kingdom Centered?

“Responsible well being for all in the whole range of human experience
– social, mental, material and spiritual”

“Development should aim at a blessed life, a life at peace with itself, others,
the environment and with God”

“Restore men in all their relationships.”

“Moving towards God’s Intentions in all areas of life”

“Restoring people to their identity and enabling them to realize their roles
as stewards of creation and as servants of others”

What is the
nature of the
“better future”
to which
the community
and we aspire?

A Vision for “Christian” Development needs five key attributes:

- A belief in the necessity for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- The contention that Christian Development must have its foundation in a Biblical worldview.
- Should include the Church (both global and local).
- Should work for the holistic development of people and communities – moving beyond basic human needs to deal with economic, psychological, and political elements in addition to spiritual concerns.
- Reflects an understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of deprivation.

What is “Holistic” thinking?

A Biblical Model: The Luke 2:52 Development Plan – a personal starting place

A Strategy for getting involved:

1. Work on your personal stewardship – the Luke 2:52 Plan
2. Pray for the poor (and the non-poor) – Increase your awareness of needs.
3. Get further training. (See below) Find a mentor. Do volunteer work.
4. Support a relief organization with regular prayer and contributions
5. Get involved in a “developing ministry” of your local congregation, or in your local area.
6. Become an “advocate” of development ministry.
7. Participate in a Short Term Mission/ Vision Trip or help send someone else.

What is Christian Microenterprise Development (CMED)? –

Beginning in the 1990's, **MED** has become an increasingly popular approach to development practitioners. By creating small financial institutions (**MFI**) that extend loans, savings and credit to the poor to enable them to start up and operate productive economic activities, aimed particularly at the bottom 50% of those below a nation's poverty line, with a particular focus on those who are marginalized. (Such as women, often only \$250 will enable someone to establish themselves in an ongoing economic activity.) Monies repaid on loans are then recycled in the program. Savings programs enable the poor to deal with life events, illnesses and disasters to which they are particularly vulnerable.

While in excess of 1200 Christian organizations (about 2/3 of those involved in relief and missions worldwide) are currently implementing at least some **MED** in the **2/3 World** (low income and developing nations – about 2/3 of the world's population) mainly in the **10/40 Window** (where 95% of the world's least evangelized poor are found); **MED** is also a major secular strategy being used to reach millions. **MED** is also being implemented among the poor in the US. Christian organizations often tie their **MED** activity into a witness to a holistic Gospel aimed at transformation development; often working through and seeking to strengthen the local church. **MED** is also being used as a strategy to get Christians into countries closed to open missionary work. Sometimes Christian organizations work in partnership with others, both secular and religious, in implementing **MED** which may create some tensions. There are dangers that **CMED MFI's** may become focused on merely meeting economic needs, or drift away from their vision for evangelism and holistic transformation; or they may neglect to strengthen or harm local churches. A key concern for any development ministry is sustainability.

(for more on CMED see <http://www.eldrbarry.net/ug/stewbibl.htm#med>)

“Development” Training and Ministries:

- **Chalmer's Center for Economic Development, Covenant College** offers a variety of teaching and training opportunities and has several projects underway. <http://www.chalmers.org/>
- **The Samaritan Strategy** <http://www.samaritan.fhi.net> is a joint project of
 - **Food for the Hungry** <http://www.fh.org/> and
 - **The Harvest Foundation** <http://www.harvestfoundation.org/>

Other Major Christian Relief Organizations:

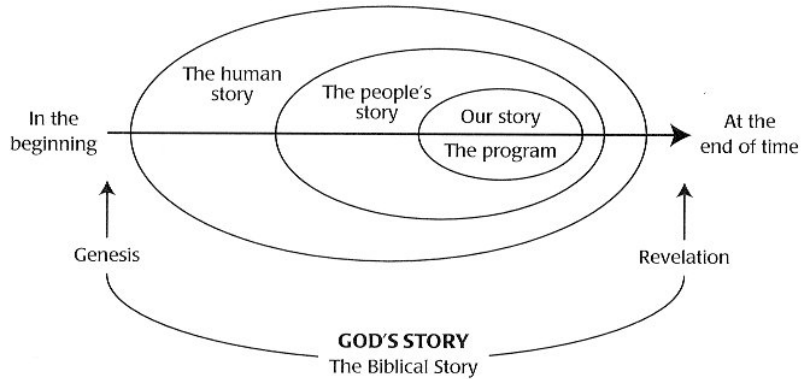
- **World Vision** <http://www.wvi.org/home.shtml>
- **World Concern** <http://www.worldconcern.org/>
(a part of locally based **Crista Ministries** <http://www.crista.org/>)
- **Alliance of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations** <http://www.aerdo.org/>
has 48 Members.

Thinking “Holistically” (From Walking with The Poor, by Bryant Myers, pp 134-136)

The need for this way of thinking about and viewing the world should now be clear. As we take on the challenge of working for human transformation, we will have to learn to think and act holistically in a variety of ways.

The whole story

We have to keep the whole story in mind and avoid the temptation to reduce it to the gospel story only. The biblical narrative is a whole story that spans creation, the call of Israel, the exile, Jesus and his death and resurrection, the church, and the end of history with the second coming. The biblical narrative is a story of a seamlessly related world of material and spiritual, of persons and social systems. If we truncate this story, we rob it of much of its life and meaning. The full story of Jesus begins at creation and ends with his second coming.



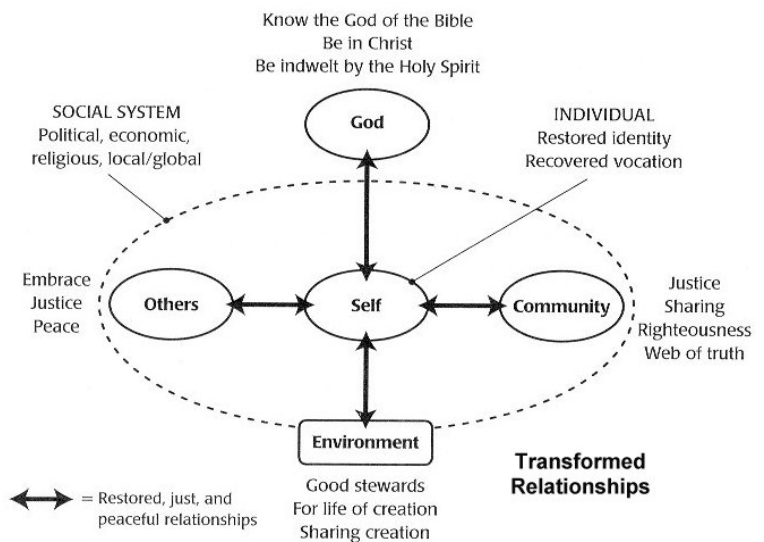
The whole gospel message

The gospel message is an inseparable mix of life, deed, word, and sign. We are to be with Jesus (life) so that we can preach the good news (word), heal the sick (deed), and cast out the demons (sign). This holistic gospel addresses all three of Hiebert's levels: the word of truth, the act of power, and the deed that works. Each dimension of the gospel message adds to the meaning of the others. Our life and deeds make our words intelligible; our words help people understand our life and deeds. Life, word, and deed are signs of the living presence of someone greater than ourselves.

While we should reveal the gospel message in whatever way best speaks to the immediate needs of our audience, over time all the dimensions of the gospel must be revealed for the good news of Jesus Christ to be understood in its fullness. Often the transformational development process begins with witness through good deeds. As relationships develop, the way we live our lives and treat people becomes a witness of life. Prayer, reminding people that God is the source of any good that is emerging in the community, and the occasional miracle are the witness of sign. When we answer the question "Why are you here?" or "Why are you making a sacrifice for the likes of us?" the answer is the gospel. This is the witness of word. Limiting our work of transformation to only one aspect of the gospel message impoverishes the message and obscures the person of Jesus.

A holistic view of people

We need a holistic understanding of a human being. There can be no meaningful understanding of a person apart from his or her relationships—with God, self, community, those he or she calls "other," and the environment. People as individuals are inseparable from the social systems in which they live.



A holistic view of time

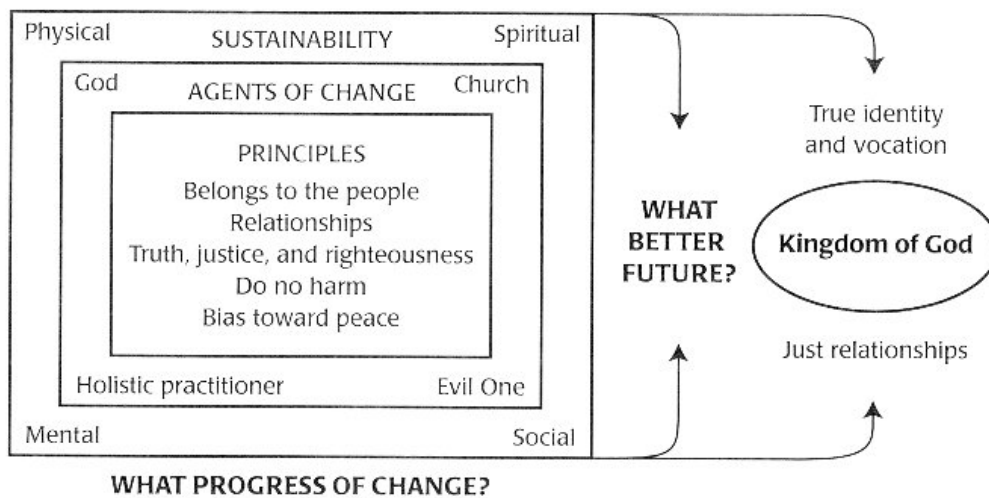
We need to understand time holistically and not separate past, present, future, and eternity. People's past can be a barrier to transformation. Inability to imagine a future that is different from today is a transformational frontier. Separating the time of our story (past, present, and future) from the time of God's larger story (eternity) is also a mistake. Transformational plans for the next fifteen years must be made in light of all of human history and its ultimate destination.

A state of mind

One final word on holism. Holism is for the most part a state of mind or attitude. Holism must be in the mind of the practitioner as a habit—a way of living, thinking, and doing. Creating this mindset is very important since it is difficult to demand holism in the form of the program itself. No transformational development effort can do everything and work at every level of the problem. This means that the best test for holism is a negative test. If there is no work directed at spiritual or value change; no work involving the church; no mention of meaning, discovery, identity and vocation, then one should be concerned that the program is not holistic. The next step is to talk to the development promoter and the people. If they show no thinking that is holistic, then there is a problem.

A Framework

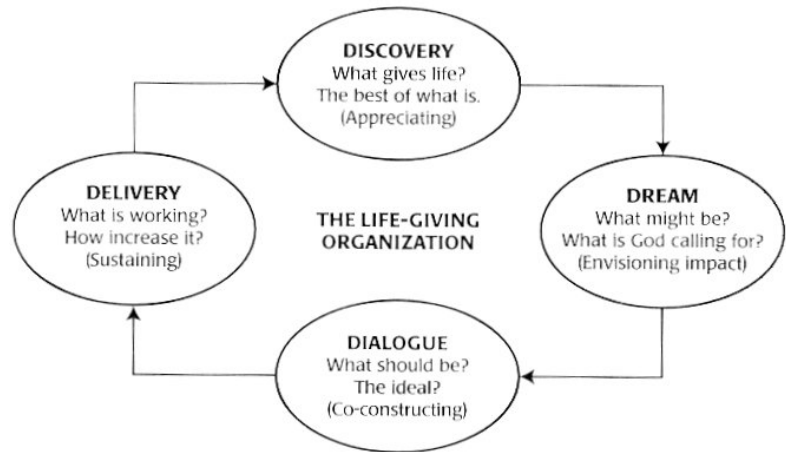
Putting all of these ideas together, we have a framework for transformation that points us toward the best human future—the kingdom of God. This future is framed by the twin goals of transformation: changed people who have discovered their true identity and vocation, and changed relationships that are just and peaceful. These goals are sought with a process of change that is principle-centered. The development process belongs to the people; relationships are the critical factor for change; we need to keep the end of transformation in mind; we promote truth-telling, righteousness, and justice; and we are careful to do no harm. These principles are expressed through persons or groups of persons working in the community: God, the church, the holistic development practitioner, and the Evil One. Three of these are working in favor of a better human future, while the mission of the fourth is to distract, divide, and destroy. Finally, these transformational development principles and positive active agents seek to move a community toward the goals of transformation in a way that is sustainable physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: a TOOL for looking ahead

In contrast to Problem Solving approaches, this method of thinking and viewing the world presumes that God has created a life-giving social world; wherever we find good in our world, we are seeing evidence of God's work and gifts. (Phil 4: 8-9). Instead of looking for what is wrong or missing and then developing problem-solving responses, it looks for what is working, successful, and life-giving, and attempts to see additional possibilities.

Appreciative visioning begins with the discovery of what might be if the good of today or the past is expanded and built upon. The next step is a dialogical one about what should be. What is best for us? This is where the view of the promoter comes in as he or she participates in this step of the co-construction of a vision. Asking about the ideal also opens the door to ethical considerations. Is this right for us? Is it fair? Will we be proud if we are successful? Finally, as a development vision is pursued, the evaluative step, often called valuing, inquires into what is working. What is surprising us that we like? How might we enhance these positive things? While a problem-solving frame will still be needed - this emphasis on the positive could be quite useful.



(from Walking with the Poor, Bryant Myers, pp. 174-79)

Jesus' Development and the Concept of Adequacy

by Bob Moffitt (<http://samaritan.fhi.net/mentor/a7/article1a.htm>)

Jesus' life on earth gives us a model of human development that is radically different from the modern, secular view. Jesus' development can serve as a biblical model, or pattern, for our own lives. However, modern Christians often make the tragic mistake of ignoring or neglecting this biblical view of human growth.

What is the modern view of development? Modern secular society defines development largely in economic and material terms. Education, science, and technology are the principal mechanisms by which poverty will be alleviated, human need will be met, and peace and happiness will be found. Higher education, advanced technology, industrial production, growing national economies, and high GDPs are synonymous with development. It is true that education, technology and other benefits of Western culture are often helpful in raising the material and intellectual quality of life. As good and helpful as these can be, they are not the basic requirements for growth toward God's intentions.

Unfortunately, many Third World Christians believe in the secular development model. They have been seduced by trinkets of materialism. Their behavior portrays their belief that "development" is measured by the ownership of Western values and things. They have believed the lie that Western education and technology are like ships, carrying them into the harbor of happiness.

Third World Christians are not at fault for this perspective. Their Western brothers and sisters were seduced first. Then, missionaries from the West carried the Christian faith to the Third World. They, as well as their message, were wrapped appealingly in a shroud of Western education and technology. Just as a virus is passed along from one person to another, Third World Christians often "caught" a materialistic view of development.

Missionaries and Christian relief and development workers don't have to use words to promote a materialistic view of development. They do it, unintentionally, by how they live. If a poor man comes to Christ through the witness of a "rich" man (one with a watch, camera, computer, car, or new clothes), what could the poor man perceive about the relationship between being a Christian and having material things? If

a Christian relief and development agency attacks human need in a poor community by using technology that costs more than the combined annual income of all the residents, what impression could the community have about the relationship between Christian faith, high technology, and development?

Scripture, by contrast, presents a very different view of the goal, process, and material requirements for human development. Modern Christians need to compare Scripture with their own beliefs about the material requirements for development. In Luke 2:52 and surrounding verses, we have one of Scripture's clearest presentations of a biblical view of human development. We see the goals and processes of development, as well as the context in which it takes place. Luke 2:52 reads:

*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature,
and in favor with God and men.*

This passage refers to the development of Jesus. Jesus Himself grew in wisdom. He also grew physically, spiritually, and socially. Christians agree that Jesus was the "perfect man." As such, He is our model; and His development can serve as a model for our own.

It is important to see that Jesus achieved His full human potential in these four areas of life in the context of relative material poverty. He was born in a stable. His first years were spent as a political refugee in Egypt. He grew up in the home of a laborer, in a town with a poor reputation—a Roman military garrison town. He, too, was a laborer. He did not have a higher formal education, but His education appears to have been adequate by local standards—He could read, and He knew the Scriptures. In Jesus' home there were none of the signs of modern technology. There was no running water. No flush toilet. No electricity. No television. He had no watch, automobile, or computer. Jesus might have had some or all of the things in the above list if He had come into the world during our era. Yet, He achieved His full potential in the absence of modern technological advantages.

We also need to be clear that Jesus did not live in abject poverty. He was poor, but not destitute. Destitution is clearly not God's intention. God made sure that Jesus had the love, community support, educational opportunities, and material possessions necessary for Him to reach God's intentions. The material context that

God provided for Jesus' development was not one of affluence-or destitution-but one of adequacy. If we look at a wide spectrum of possible conditions-with affluence on one end and destitution on the other-we see that Jesus' development occurred at neither end but at a place between the two extremes, in a condition of adequacy. "Adequacy" implies that resources are sufficient enough to meet needs. Adequacy is articulated, also, in Proverbs 30:8-9; II Corinthians 8:13-15; and Hebrews 13:5-6.

Jesus' material condition should give great hope concerning the development of many people throughout the world. It demonstrates that people can reach their full potential in the physical, spiritual, social, and wisdom areas of life without having the abundance of the material "things" of an industrialized society- including running water, electricity, high-paying jobs, or higher education.

The model of Jesus' growth also implies that those concerned about the development of others must work to see that there is a context of adequacy-that there are adequate resources to meet basic human needs. Physical destitution is clearly not God's intention, and Christians should work against it.

Yet, to believe that Western materialism is a requirement for development is to believe in the idolatry that has

crippled the spiritual vitality of Western Christians. To believe that Western materialism is a requirement for development is to focus on things, rather than God, as the source of fullness.

The biblical perspective of development can be marvelously liberating! If people have adequacy but lack access to the "things" of Western development, they are not hindered from being all that God intends them to be. Biblical development can help move people toward the fulfillment God has for them in all areas of their lives. People's energy can be directed toward becoming what God intends, rather than striving to be like those who possess more "things."

The Western worldview often embraces a dependence on "things" for happiness and fulfillment, but a biblical worldview expresses a dependence on God. "Things" are not necessarily bad; in fact, they can be great aids to development. However, when they are seen as the path for development, then our focus and expectations are looking to the wrong source. Instead, God is our source and provider, just as He was for Jesus. Those who have material adequacy but are poor-like Jesus-are able to develop and reach God's full intentions for them in every area of their lives-just as He did.

Bob Moffitt - founded the Harvest Foundation in 1981 and has served as president of the organization ever since. For over 30 years he has developed and directed Christian organizations designed to encourage and enable Christians to demonstrate God's love, especially to broken people and their communities. He writes and teaches curricula designed to enable lay-Christians, particularly in the context of their local churches, to live out their faith in practical terms.



The Samaritan Strategy is a worldwide ministry seeking to help churches practice holistic ministry in their own communities. This objective is accomplished through training, education, materials development and networking. The Samaritan Strategy was developed in 1997 as a partnership between Food for the Hungry International and the Harvest Foundation. While its roots are in these two organizations, the Samaritan Strategy seeks to develop an expanding network of alliances with individuals, churches and organizations committed to spreading the message of holistic church-based ministry to the widest possible audience.

The Samaritan Strategy is committed to making disciples of all nations. Jesus Christ has raised up His church to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God and to demonstrate the reality of the Kingdom in word and deed to a lost and broken world. God has

commanded His church to "make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey all I have commanded" (Matthew 28:18-20).

However, the church today has either abandoned her God-given purpose, or has defined it too narrowly — seeing it exclusively as saving souls for heaven. In either case, the Great Commission given by Christ to the church has not been obeyed in the sense that Christ originally intended. As a result, many churches today have been largely ineffective at impacting culture.

The Samaritan Strategy seeks to challenge the church to return to a correct understanding of her calling, and to begin to think and operate on the basis of a comprehensive, biblical worldview. Her ministry must focus on proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God, teaching the nations to obey all that Christ commanded, and providing practical demonstrations of Christ's love in neighborhoods, communities and nations.

The Luke 2:52 Development Model

A Study by Bob Moffitt

Read Luke 2:52, the key verse for this lesson, and answer the following questions.

1. What four ways did Jesus grow?
2. What common terms describe these four kinds of growth?
3. Did Jesus' growth happen immediately, or was it a process over time?
4. What were the physical/material living conditions in which Jesus grew?
5. Did Jesus have the resources necessary to fulfill God's purpose for Him? Why or why not?

Read Luke 4:18-19 and Matthew 20:25-28 and answer the following questions.

6. What was Jesus' goal or purpose in His life and ministry? Who set it? Who was the "development agent" in His life?
7. How did Jesus' own growth (Luke 2:52) prepare Him for His ministry?
8. How did Jesus move toward God's intentions for His life?
9. Do you think that the very best human development could also be defined as "moving toward God's intentions in all areas of life"?

Read Colossians 1:28, 29 and answer the following questions.

10. To whom did Paul minister? What was Paul's goal for their development?
11. What is the similarity between Paul's goal and Jesus' ministry?
12. Who provided the labor for Paul? Who provided the strength?
13. Who is the ideal model for human development?

Key Ideas: * Jesus is our model. He grew in four areas-wisdom, stature, favor with God, and favor with man. In common terms, we can say that Jesus grew physically, spiritually, socially, and in wisdom. (These four areas are useful for planning development in our families, churches, and communities.)

* Man should grow towards a goal or purpose, just as Jesus did. (Man should not develop only to become developed.)

* Man should grow towards the purpose that God has for his life. The "agenda" should be God's, not man's.

* God insured that necessary conditions for growth were present for Jesus. His environment wasn't affluent (physical/material), but it was adequate. He didn't have running water, electricity, or the best secular education; but his environment was sufficient for Him to reach God's purpose. In the same way, the development of man doesn't require affluence. However, it requires adequacy, or sufficiency, to reach God's intentions and purpose.

* Jesus developed, became mature, and began His ministry and purpose-a life of service, proclaiming and demonstrating the Good News. Paul had a similar goal. He helped others become "perfect in Christ," mature, complete, whole-prepared to reflect Christ's life, ministry, and service.

* As God was the "development agent" in Jesus' life, we should be willing to be "development agents" for the people God brings to us in relationship, helping them move toward maturity, wholeness, service. This development is a lifetime process. We must be prepared to invest in people for a long period. He empowers us as we labor, serve, and guide others to His intentions.

* The ideal human development can be described as "moving toward God's intentions in all areas of life."

Luke 2:52-Development Plan

(An Exercise Worksheet)

Context for Growth	Area of Jesus' Growth			
	WISDOM	PHYSICAL	SPIRITUAL	SOCIAL
Family				
Church				
Community				

This exercise helps you see yourself as a development agent" for others. Carefully and prayerfully observe several development needs in your family, church, and community. Then, using "Luke 2:52-Development Plan," write down ways you could help others move towards God's intentions in each area. The top line lists the four areas of Jesus' growth from Luke 2:52. The side lists three categories of people for whom we can be "development agents." The plans you design should be specific and small. For example, you might write that you could help your family grow in the spiritual area by leading them in a specific time of family devotions.

What is microfinance?

To most, microfinance means providing very poor families with very small loans (microcredit) to help them engage in productive activities or grow their tiny businesses. Over time, microfinance has come to include a broader range of services (credit, savings, insurance, etc.) as we have come to realize that the poor and the very poor who lack access to traditional formal financial institutions require a variety of financial products.

Microcredit came to prominence in the 1980s, although early experiments date back 30 years in Bangladesh, Brazil and a few other countries. The important difference of microcredit was that it avoided the pitfalls of an earlier generation of targeted development lending, by insisting on repayment, by charging interest rates that could cover the costs of credit delivery, and by focusing on client groups whose alternative source of credit was the informal sector. Emphasis shifted from rapid disbursement of subsidized loans to prop up targeted sectors towards the building up of local, sustainable institutions to serve the poor. Microcredit has largely been a private (non-profit) sector initiative that avoided becoming overtly political, and as a consequence, has outperformed virtually all other forms of development lending.

Traditionally microfinance was focused on providing a very standardized credit product. The poor, just like anyone else, need a diverse range of financial instruments to be able to build assets, stabilize consumption and protect themselves against risks. Thus, we see a broadening of the concept of microfinance--- our current challenge is to find efficient and reliable ways of providing a richer menu of microfinance products.

Who are the clients of microfinance?

The typical microfinance clients are low-income persons that do not have access to formal financial institutions. Microfinance clients are typically self-employed, often household-based entrepreneurs. In rural areas, they are usually small farmers and others who are engaged in small income-generating activities such as food processing and petty trade. In urban areas, microfinance activities are more diverse and include shopkeepers, service providers, artisans, street vendors, etc. — Microfinance clients are poor and vulnerable non-poor who have a relatively stable source of income.

Access to conventional formal financial institutions, for many reasons, is inversely related to income: the poorer you are, the less likely that you have access. On the other hand, the chances are that, the poorer you are, the more expensive or onerous informal financial arrangements. Moreover, informal arrangements may not suitably meet certain financial service needs or may exclude you anyway. Individuals in this excluded and under-served market segment are the clients of microfinance.

How does microfinance help the poor?

Experience shows that microfinance can help the poor to increase income, build viable businesses, and reduce their vulnerability to external shocks. It can also be a powerful instrument for self-empowerment by enabling the poor, especially women, to become economic agents of change.

Poverty is multi-dimensional. By providing access to financial services, microfinance plays an important role in the fight against the many aspects of poverty. For instance, income generation from a business helps not only the business activity expand but also contributes to household income and its attendant benefits on food security, children's education, etc. Moreover, for women who, in many contexts, are secluded from public space, transacting with formal institutions can also build confidence and empowerment.

Recent research has revealed the extent to which individuals around the poverty line are vulnerable to shocks such as illness of a wage earner, weather, theft, or other such events. These shocks produce a huge claim on the limited financial resources of the family unit, and, absent effective financial services, can drive a family so much deeper into poverty that it can take years to recover.

When is microfinance NOT an appropriate tool?

Microfinance increasingly refers to a host of financial services — savings, loans, insurance, remittances from abroad, and other products. It's hard to imagine that there would be any family in the world today for which some type of formal financial service couldn't be designed and made useful. But the fact of the matter is, that in most people's mind, "microfinance" still refers to microcredit.

Microcredit is only useful in certain situations, and with certain types of clients. As we are finding out, a great number of poor, and especially extremely poor, clients exclude themselves from microcredit as it is currently designed. Extremely poor people who do not have any stable income -- such as the very destitute and the homeless -- should not be microfinance clients, as they will only be pushed further into debt and poverty by loans that they cannot repay. As currently designed, microcredit requires sustained, regular, and often significant payments from poor families. At some level, the very cause of poverty is the lack of a sustained, regular, and significant income. Even though a family may have a significant income for extended periods, it may also face months of no income, thereby reducing its ability to enter into the type of commitment demanded today by most MFIs. Some people are just too poor, or have incomes that are too undependable to enter into today's loan products. These extremely poor people at the bottom percentiles of those living below the poverty line need safety net programs that can help them with basic needs -- some of these are working to incorporate plans to help 'graduate' recipients to microfinance programs.

Often times governments and aid agencies wish to use microfinance as a tool to compensate for some other social problem such as flooding, relocation of refugees from civil strife, recent graduates from vocational training, and redundant workers who have been laid off. Since microcredit has been sold as a poverty reduction tool, it is often expected to respond to these situations where whole classes of individuals have been 'made poor'. Microcredit programs directed at these types of situations rarely work. Credit requires a 98% 'hit' rate to be successful. This means that 98% of recent vocational school graduates or returning refugees would need to be successful in establishing a microenterprise for repayment rates to be high enough to allow for a program's overall sustainability. This is simply unrealistic. Running a program with substantial default rates undermines the very notion of credit and destroys credit discipline among those who could repay promptly but who look foolish given that many do not.

Microcredit serves best those who have identified an economic opportunity and who are in a position to capitalize on that opportunity if they are provided with a small amount of ready cash. Thus, those poor who work in stable or growing economies, who have demonstrated an ability to undertake the proposed activities in an

entrepreneurial manner, and who have demonstrated a commitment to repay their debts (instead of feeling that the credit represents some form of social re-vindication), are the best candidates for microcredit. The universe of potential clients expands exponentially however, once we take into account the broader concept of 'microfinance'.

It is also important to design background interventions that build the market for microfinance clients. Such interventions can range from building infrastructure to opening up new markets for the produce of the poor to providing business development services. Often these interventions will create conditions and opportunities for microfinance and not the other way round. What needs to be avoided is directional use of microfinance to sort out developmental challenges in situations where the basis of peoples' livelihood is destroyed.

(From <http://www.microfinancegateway.org/> FAQ)

THE TENTMAKER PROJECT is a loan program to qualified Presbyterian Church in Uganda members for the purpose of boosting their micro enterprises. These loans (average loan size is under \$250) are repaid to revolving funds. These recycled funds are lent to other qualified members.

The Project is funded from the United States by interested donors, both individuals and churches and the program is showing good potential now after 3 years of operation.

In brief, about 100 loans have been extended and it looks like about 90 are sound, 5 marginal, and 5 bad. It is exciting to see and hear evidence that many of these micro-businesses are doing better, and that tithe income is increasing in each of the participating churches. It is even more thrilling to hear these dynamic Christians give the glory to God for his blessings, and for the sense of spiritual unity they express to their brothers and sisters in America. This greatly moves them in thanksgiving to God for your care and concern for them.

Wyatt George, Ministry Trip 2000 Report
Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
173 Lamb's Lane, Murphysboro, IL 62966

The Development Ethic : Hope for a Culture of Poverty

by Darrow Miller

Why do some peoples and cultures become "developed," while others continue to struggle for survival? Observation of a wide range of cultures provides insights and answers. A culture's successful development, it seems, is birthed by its religious and philosophic underpinnings. The minds and hearts of its people play a larger role in a nation's development than its circumstances or natural resources. There is an ethic -- a set of principles -- which creates fertile soil for development. In contrast, there is another set of principles which strands its adherents in a quagmire of underdevelopment.

Two cultural groups in a region of the Dominican Republic illustrate this contrast in principles. The town of Constanza lies in a fertile valley, surrounded by picturesque mountains. Water is plentiful, and the climate is moderate year-round. Yet the local population suffers from physical poverty. At the end of World War II, a number of Japanese families settled near Constanza. They began with the same natural resources-- the soil, sun and rain. They had the same basic opportunities as the local inhabitants, and they had the disadvantage of not knowing the language or culture. Yet, after two generations the Japanese own prosperous farms, while the Dominicans remain in poverty. Why? One factor is the difference in beliefs and values between the two people groups. The Dominicans approached the future fatalistically, while the Japanese viewed it with imagination, hope and persistence.

Different life perspectives yield different levels of development. A similar example is examined by *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry. In a 1988 article titled "Values," Raspberry contrasts recently-arrived Asian-Americans' expectations of the United States with those of native-born American minorities. He writes: *There are two intriguing things about this group [the new Asian-Americans]. The first is that they have viewed America the way a youngster views a candy store: with nose pressed to the glass and an attitude that says, If only I could get in there!*

In short, they see America, with its free education, free enterprise and manifest rewards for serious exertion, as a land of unsurpassed opportunity. They take advantage

of the opportunity and succeed at a pace that eclipses that of privileged whites.

Our native-born minorities, on the other hand, tend to see America as the place that has treated them unfairly and that shows no sign of changing. As a result, they tend to focus not on opportunity, but on their disadvantage. Their conclusion, too often, is: What's the point of trying when the cards are stacked against you?

The second intriguing thing about the newly-arrived minorities is their notion that the key to their success is not in their special intellectual gifts, but in hard work. They seem to take as a given that anybody who works hard enough can achieve success.

How is it that this attitude has escaped our native-born minorities, particularly our low-income black and Hispanic groups? A major part of the answer, I think, is that we have, in the last quarter century, tended to view everything through the prism of civil rights. The assumption is that the absence of the good things of life is proof of discrimination. ¹

External Critique

There is no denying the deep suffering and vast despair in much of the world. Why are people poor? Why, in a world of increasing food production, are people hungry? Two common responses are based on "external critique" -- that is, the reasons for hunger and poverty are found "outside" of people and their cultures. People are hungry, external critique says, because of circumstances beyond their control.

One form of external critique blames a region's poverty on inadequate natural resources or devastation of resources by acts of nature, such as drought or flood. Somalia, in the horn of Africa, is deemed "undevelopable" by some authorities because it severely lacks natural resources. Ethiopia, with seemingly more natural resources per capita than Somalia, experienced severe drought conditions in 1988 which destroyed the nation's food supply and left seven million people at risk of starvation. The three "Z's" of Africa -- Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Zaire -- have abundant resources per capita; they have the agricultural potential to feed the

entire continent of Africa, yet they languish in poverty. In contrast, Japan—with limited natural resources per capita—prosperes. A deficiency of natural resources, by itself, is an inadequate explanation of poverty.

Another form of external critique says that some people are poor because others are wealthy and some are hungry because others are well fed. Poverty is not "nature's problem," but a human problem. For example, one hears that 6 percent of the world's population (those who reside in the United States) consumes 40 percent of the world's resources each year. The culprit, says this critique, is a colonialism or neocolonialism (capitalism). However, nations like Ethiopia and Thailand -- which never were colonized and are proud of their independence -- are relatively poor, while former colonies like Canada and the United States have prospered.

It must be admitted that limited resources and institutionalized human greed can be contributing factors to hunger in our world. But they are not, by any means, the root cause.

As long as poverty is blamed solely on external causes, people and cultures will remain imprisoned by it. If its origin is external, then there is nothing the impoverished can do to change it, for nature and other people control their destiny. Individuals, cultural groups and whole nations are seen as helpless, without responsibility. Because problems are defined in external terms, solutions -- by implication -- are also viewed as external and are imposed by well intentioned outsiders. Problems are described in impersonal, rather than personal, terms. The result? Dehumanization is reinforced; paternalism is extended. The great Russian novelist and moral philosopher, Leo Tolstoy, summarized the problem clearly: "Everybody thinks of changing humanity, and nobody thinks of changing himself." ²

Internal Critique

Why are people poor? Why are people hungry? "Internal critique" provides an often overlooked answer. Internal critique looks within a person or his culture for an understanding of his problem. It finds poverty "in" man and culture, not outside of him. Internal critique says that poverty is more than material condition or circumstance: it is a way of looking at the world, man and ultimate reality. It stifles life and leads to underdevelopment. This poverty is both personal and,

on a wider scale, cultural. Indeed, every person and every culture is faced in some way with internal poverty.

In an internal critique of poverty, it is assumed, as Richard M. Weaver said, "ideas have consequences."³ There is a logical relationship between an idea or a value and its outworking in life. Ludwig von Mises, the internationally known economist, stated: "*Action is always directed by ideas; it realizes what previous thinking has designed.*"⁴ For example, a culture which values human life will function very differently than a culture which does not. What is it that a woman carries in her womb? Is it a "baby" or a "product of conception"? The answer given reflects a person's or a culture's ideas concerning life, and those ideas result in distinct patterns of behavior. If a woman carries a "baby" in her womb, it is cared for and nurtured. If it is considered mere "tissue," it may be removed from her body and discarded.

A culture's belief system determines its progress -- or lack thereof -- in the material world. Anthropologist Oscar Lewis used the term "*culture of poverty*" to describe a "poverty" way of perceiving and integrating reality, as opposed to "poverty" as an economic condition.⁵

Personal poverty begins to be alleviated when an individual literally changes his mind and his view of reality (many call this repentance). Similarly, cultural poverty is alleviated in two ways: first, by a reformation of ideas -- the gradual replacement of values that produce poverty with a new ethic of development; second, by reclamation of structure --the application of a development ethic to create dynamic, life-supporting structures. This process is labeled "*development by discipleship*"⁶ by community development worker Alan Voelkel. A development ethic affirms that progress is possible for both an individual and a culture.

Before examining the principles of this development ethic, it is important to establish several points.

First, the development ethic is not merely wishful thinking. The strength of the ethic is that it manifests itself historically and pragmatically. The ethic is affirmed by reality.

Second, the development ethic transcends culture.

Truth is true, no matter where it is found. The development ethic is based on transcendent principles which have been manifested in cultures around the world. These transcendent principles can be found, to a

greater or lesser extent, in any culture, even in "least developed countries" (LDCs). Two examples are seen in the priority of human relationships in many LDCs, and the strong "work ethic" in the rapidly developing Pacific Rim countries. Likewise, a lack of development principles produces underdevelopment, even in "most developed countries" (MDCs). Mother Teresa proclaimed that she had never seen such poverty in all her life as when she visited New York City. She referred to the great moral and spiritual poverty she saw in one of the most materially advanced cities in the world. Crass consumerism—that which the ancients called hedonism—is evidence of underdevelopment of the human spirit, and is found in much of the Western world.

Third, the development ethic is an enhancer of culture. It affirms those elements that are eternal and stands in contrast to those which produce death. It will not—must not—destroy a culture in order to introduce modernism, or to merely bring change for its own sake. On the other

hand, the development ethic is not value-neutral, idolizing culture or arbitrarily affirming those aspects of a culture which produce death.

The task before us at the end of the twentieth century is to intentionally share the values and ideals of this development ethic with those caught in cycles of poverty. The affluent consumer, the subsistence farmer, the drug addict, the university intellectual, the illiterate, the factory worker -- all need the hope brought by the development ethic.

What is this ethic that leads to development? It is comprised of twelve principles, the most familiar being what the West calls the "Protestant work ethic." (This work ethic has a functional equivalent, according to Robert Bellah, in the Tokugawa religion of Japan.⁷) The twelve underlying development principles may be loosely categorized into three factors: the creation factor, the human factor and the "other-worldly" factor.

The Creation Factor

Nature, being the result of creative activity rather than the product of impersonal forces, is an open system, capable of being stewarded now and in the future to meet the needs of an expanding human family.

Development Principle #1: Creation is an Open System

God created a universe composed of material and non-material reality. His creation is populated by angels and men (and who knows what other beings). Though governed by natural law, the system is open to the intervention of the Creator, angels and men.

In this open system, nature is dynamic rather than static. New resources can be created by man's conceptual activity. New ideas open whole new worlds of opportunity. Oil -- that dark gooey ooze -- was a nuisance until the need for light and power established its usefulness and purpose. Suddenly, that which lay ignored under men's feet for generations became a resource. Likewise, two bicycle mechanics in an "emerging" nation dreamed of flying. As their dream become reality, it opened a new world for the human family. Michael Novak, Roman Catholic author and scholar, captured this spirit when he wrote:

Countless parts of God's creation lay fallow for millennia until human intelligence saw value in it. Many of the things we today describe as resources were not known to be resources a hundred years ago ... The

cause of wealth lies more in the human spirit than in matter.⁸

This open-system principle establishes limitless opportunity for discovering new worlds and creating expanding resources, thus making positive-sum societies. It stands in sharp contrast to a closed-system view of the universe. The closed system states: "Nature is all there is." There is no Creator; and nature is without design, order or purpose. Man is part of nature, not an intervener in it.

Based on the assumptions of the closed system, wealth and resources are static: "*What you see is what there is, and there isn't any more.*" Thomas Malthus, English economist, articulated this position in the West. Malthusian theory states that, as the world's population increases, the amount of resources available for each person decreases. The size of the pie is fixed, thus creating what Lester Thurow calls the "zero-sum society."⁹ Using an external critique, the closed system model looks to statistics for answers and concludes that some people are poor because others are rich.

Therefore, to resolve the problem of hunger and poverty, scarce resources must be equally distributed.

This same concept is called "limited good" in materially less-developed societies. Good things such as wealth, health, time, power and security are fixed. If any man's family or community seeks more than what it already has, that deprives someone else of those same resources.¹⁰ There is no way to increase what is

available, no way to develop more wealth. This "limited good" perspective generates strategies for the maintenance of the status quo.

Whether explained as a zero-sum or a limited-good society, the closed-system model breeds underdevelopment. The open system model creates a framework for development and opens new worlds of opportunity.

Development Principle #2: Man is to Have Dominion Over Nature

God has created the universe, placed man on earth, and established him as His steward, or vice-regent. Man is to have dominion over nature, rather than be dominated by her. This provides impetus for man to harness nature and fight against such ravages as drought, disease and famine. Abraham Kuyper, the great Dutch prime minister and educator, founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, wrote eloquently on the subject: *We with our own human nature are placed in nature around us, not to leave that nature as it is but with an urge and calling within us to work on nature through human art, to enable and perfect it ... Human art acts on every area of nature, not to destroy the life of nature, much less mechanically to juxtapose another structure, but rather to unlock the power which lies concealed in nature; or again to regulate the will power that springs from it.*¹¹

It has been said that God used mathematics -- systematic, predictable order -- as the language of creation. Natural law, therefore, stands behind creation. Man's rational ability can discover the design behind nature (science) and then use those laws to intervene and harness nature for man's own benefit (applied technology). But man is also a created part of the universe; he is on the same level as nature; he is nature's "brother." Creation is to be honored, tended, nurtured and stewarded by man.

An illustration of man intervening in nature to create a hospitable environment from an uninhabitable one is the modern city of Phoenix, Arizona. Like many other arid regions, the "Valley of the Sun" is marked by high summer temperature (over 115 degrees Fahrenheit), little rainfall (7 inches per year), and massive flooding when it does rain. By harvesting the water which falls, the people of Phoenix stopped the destructiveness of floods and created the sixth largest agricultural county in the United States. By utilizing insulation and cooling

systems, the people were able to create a comfortable environment which attracts tens of thousands of residents and visitors.

In the open-system view of the world, disease, death and natural calamities are aberrations. They are the consequences of man's rebellion against the Creator. Therefore, man must stand against the destructive forces of nature and fight disease, suffering, hunger, poverty and death.

The open-system view of life stands in contrast to naturalism, which perceives man as merely a part of nature, living in harmony with whatever fate it delivers. Animistic cultures are strong examples of naturalism. All of nature is inhabited by spirits and is controlled only by appeasing those spirits. The people of such cultures have no concept of the laws behind nature -- for example, the reality of microscopic germs. Diseases, death and hostile environments are normal. The goal is to live in harmony with nature and thus attempt to survive. Such a survival mode usually engenders sense of resignation or fatalism.

Food for the Hungry, an international relief and development agency, was responsible for the nutrition program at the camp hospital in the Hmong refugee camp located in Ban Vinai, Thailand. One day, in a small back room of the hospital, three young mothers stoically watched their newborn children slowly die from tetanus. What had happened? Someone had cut each of these precious children's umbilical cords with a rusty knife. The knowledge of disease and germ theory, which is so common in the West and painfully missing in many Third World cultures, would have saved the lives of those children.

Underdevelopment is spawned by the mindset that nature has dominion over man. Man's goal is merely to survive. But to live in harmony with nature is to live in

harmony with death. The development ethic, on the other hand, begins with the assumption that man is to

have dominion over nature and that hunger, disease and death are abnormalities that are to be conquered.

Development Principle #3: There is Progress in the Material World, or History is Going Somewhere

History is purposeful because the "Lord of History" has purpose. The development ethic, as spawned by Judeo-Christian theism, introduces a radical, new perspective on the concept of time. Time is lineal. It has a past, a present and a future. Time had a beginning, and it will continue forever into the future. This open-system viewpoint creates an expectancy and introduces the concept of progress in the material world. It provides a place for human activism, ambition and discovery. Things may not only be different in the future -- they may be better.

In the development ethic, life is purposeful, progressive and hopeful. Man is the creator of history, not its slave. He is not to be mastered by his environment; rather, he is to master it. He is not a cog in the machinery of the universe; instead, he is the developer, the secondary creator and the dramatist. Michael Novak relates the spirit of adventure and excitement that prevailed in North America during its growth years: *Making history is an appropriate vocation, DeTocqueville commented, on the spirit of the future that seemed to sweep through every family in the new world. Individuals broke out of the ancient sense of imprisonment within eternal cycles and began to work towards, save for, and invest in the future. Migrants poured from the countryside, immigrants crossed frontiers and set sail upon forbidden oceans.*¹²

In contrast, the ethic that spawns underdevelopment assumes that time is one endless cycle, with history going nowhere. In this view, time is defined by nature's cycles. The two most prominent cycles are the seasons - - spring, summer, fall and winter -- and life cycles-- birth, life and death.

John Mbiti, Kenyan theologian and educator, studied 270 of the thousand-plus language groups on the continent of Africa. Not one of those 270 language

groups contains a world pertaining to the future. Instead, the long-term past and the present are the key realities. The past is filled with tradition and ancestral values. The present is the "now," almost as if there is no other time and definitely no long-term future. Mbiti wrote: *It [time] moves "backward" rather than "forward"; and people set their minds not on future things, but chiefly on what has taken place. This time orientation, governed as it is by the two main dimensions of the present and the past, dominate African understanding of the individual, the community and the universe ...*¹³

Where, in this scheme, is there room for development? Development is, by its very nature, an activity of the future. If there is no future, how does one proceed with development?

This view of time has a profound impact on people's concepts of history. Life is "on the wheel." History simply repeats itself over and over.

The Pakkred Children's Home in Bangkok, Thailand, is a poignant example of life "on the wheel." The home is filled with children who are physically or mentally handicapped. For the most part, they have been abandoned by their families and their culture. After all, as Buddhism teaches, handicapped persons are simply being punished for sins in their previous lives -- the bad *karma* from previous existences. Being handicapped is something they deserve and must suffer through in order to have hope for the next life. There is to be no improvement in this life.

In contrast, the development ethic assumes a world in which there is a past, a present and a future. History is going somewhere, and progress can be made in this material world. In the ethic of underdevelopment, however, history is going nowhere. Time has no future. Progress in the material world does not exist, and there is no time frame in which development can take place.

Development Principle #4: Bounty is to be Created and Stewarded

Development is practically impacted by ideas and values. This was illustrated by a professor at a school in Israel. As his class sat on a hill overlooking the Judean hills, he stated that the land of Palestine has historically

been fought over by two opposite sets of ideals. The Arabs have believed that Allah had put a curse on the land; the Jews have believed that Jehovah had promised that the land would flow with milk and honey. The same

geographic location, the same climate, the same land, the same "natural resources" -- but conflicting ideals and, thus, vastly different "realities." For centuries under the Arabs, Palestine had lain dormant, resulting in subsistence-level living for its inhabitants. Today, under the vision of the Jews, it is among the most bountiful arid regions in the world.

The development ethic postulates that bounty -- abundance-- is found in the cornucopia of personal creativity. The "Primary Creator" has fashioned a universe in which the rational mind and the creative intuition of man as a "secondary creator" may operate. New bounty and new horizons wait only to be envisioned by an artist, a scholar, a writer, a poet, a discoverer or an explorer. Michael Novak writes: *Creation left to itself is incomplete, and humans are called to be co-Creators with God, bringing forth the potentialities the Creator has hidden. Creation is full of secrets waiting to be discovered, riddles which human intelligence is expected by the Creator to unleash. The world did not spring from the hand of God as wealthy as humans might make it.*¹⁴

Likewise, Daniel J. Boorstin, writing in the introduction to *The Discoverers*, states: *My hero is Man the Discoverer. The world we now view from the literate West -- the vistas of time, the land and the seas, the heavenly bodies and our own bodies, the plants and animals,*

*history and human societies past and present -- had to be opened for use by countless Columbuses. In the deep recesses of the past, they remained anonymous. As we come closer to the present, they emerge into the light of history, a cast of characters as varied as human nature. Discoveries become episodes of biography, unpredictable as the new worlds the discoverers open to us.*¹⁵

Human beings are among the greatest of our resources. The next child born may be the Bach, Einstein or Mother Teresa of our future.

In contrast, the ethic of underdevelopment believes that wealth is limited to the physical or natural resources currently observed. These, by definition, are limited. Man is seen as part of nature, and the increasing size of the world's population is viewed as part of the problem. Rather than developing an environment that would stimulate the discoverer, artist or poet in each human being, the ethic of underdevelopment creates structures that stifle the human spirit and arbitrarily limit population growth.

The development ethic affirms that bounty is to be created by human discovery and innovation. The ethic of underdevelopment, by contrast, defines resources strictly in material terms and believes that those resources are limited.

The Human Factor

Man, bearing the image of God, is the greatest resource for development and, as a rebel against God, is also its prime hindrance of development. The next four principles may be summarized into two thoughts: man's significance and corruption, and the unity and diversity of the human family.

Development Principle #5: Human Life is Sacred

What is man? What is his purpose in life? In a sophomore sociology class, a professor posed the question, "What is the purpose of the life of a Third-World baby that dies in infancy?" After a pregnant pause which gave his students time to think, the professor responded, "The purpose of the life of a child that dies in infancy is to be fertilizer for a tree." Students were shocked by such callousness. The professor was absolutely correct, if one employs naturalistic premises. In the ethic of underdevelopment, life is cheap. Man came from dust; to dust he returns.

The clash of the ethic of development and the ethic of poverty can be clearly illustrated by a 1985 trip to Ethiopia by Dr. Tetsunao Yamamori, president of Food for the Hungry. Dr. Yamamori found a child who had been left alone and was having difficulty breathing. He picked the child up and carried it to the mother. The mother's response? "Put the child back; it is meant to die." Dr. Yamamori replied, "The child is not meant to die." He took the baby to a clinic for medical care. Death was thwarted for yet another day. The two opposite ethics have very dramatic consequences in terms of life and death.

The development ethic affirms the sanctity of human life. Man, made in the image of God, has a primary identity pointing "upward," towards his Creator -- not "downward," towards nature. Being thus made, each individual has intrinsic worth and personal dignity. Life is sacred and, therefore, is to be preserved, even in the weakest, most broken, vulnerable or wretched human being. The measure of the development

potential in any society is found, not in the way its members treat the greatest in that society, but in the way they treat the least.

The development ethic advances the significance of human life. In the ethic of poverty, life is of much less value.

Development Principle #6: Man is a Rebel

While man is wonderful -- the highest of all creatures-- he is also in rebellion. He stands autonomously against his Creator; his soul has been corrupted; he is prone to evil and not to be trusted. The development ethic remembers that man is rebellious. It acknowledges that evil is real, personal and abnormal.

This contrasts with the values of underdevelopment expressed in both modern and primitive cultures. Modern underdeveloped society categorically denies evil. Man is basically good, it says. If there is a problem, it is due to a lack of good manifesting itself in ignorance, or to an environmental or social condition. Utopian models of society are based upon this thinking. In primitive underdeveloped cultures, however, there is no denying the power and personification of evil. Evil spirits inhabit the world and bring flood, famine, disease and death. Evil is normal. It is not to be fought against, but merely appeased through ritualistic practices and sacrifices.

The development ethic acknowledges that evil is abnormal and, thus, has grounds to oppose it. Knowing that evil is real and personal, the development ethic takes precautions not to give too much authority to one individual because of the human "thirst for power." Michael Novak, in *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, articulated a classic historic critique of the development experiments in North and South America. At the time North and South America were settled by Europe, each continent had nearly

identical ratios of native populace and European settlers. The wealth in natural resources favored the South. Five centuries later, the North is economically and politically more developed. Why?

Different ideals drove each experiment. The governments of South America were structured similarly to those of Southern European countries and Roman Catholicism. The Catholic church was governed by one-man, the Pope, and through a hierarchical political structure. Likewise, the governments of the South were oligarchies headed by a single man or family with highly centralized dictatorships. In contrast, the North American experiment was based on the Northern European and Protestant models which recognized that man is sinful and not to be trusted. These governments did not want power to reside in one individual and, therefore, created democratic governments with checks, balances and political pluralism -- which produced very different results.

The development ethic recognizes man's corruption, and it builds structures based on that reality. The cultures of poverty, however, either produce a utopian idealism or a pessimistic fatalism.

These last two principles -- the significance of human life and man's state of rebellion -- may be seen as a couplet: significance and corruption. Man is "the wonderful rebel." Both aspects are true of man. To create a framework for development, they must be jointly considered.

Development Principle #7: All Men and Nations are Equal

Recognizing that the image-bearers of God are both male and female produces one of the foundation stones of the development ethic: All people, as they stand before God, are equal in value and worth. This equality may sometimes be acknowledged, as in the

Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This profound truth

counters bigotry, which says, "Because we are different, I am better than you!"

The ethic of underdevelopment establishes inequality as a virtue. It endorses one person as better than another. Autocratic caste systems are the result. Examples abound. In Hinduism those in the priestly class (the Brahmins) rule all others, while those in the

lowest class (the "untouchables") are deemed subhuman. Similarly, the former apartheid system of South Africa institutionalized one race of people as superior over another.

While the ethic of development sets men and nations free before the law, the culture of poverty imprisons people and ethnic groups into rigid caste systems.

Development Principle #8: All Men and Nations are Unique

The ethic of development, recognizing diversity of person, function and role within the Godhead, appreciates God's creative diversity and expects individuals and cultures, also, to be unique in character. Diversity is real and is to be celebrated, says the development ethic. It marvels at the variety of creation, and it sets people free to be all they can be. The individual is wonderful!

The ethic of underdevelopment, however, establishes conformity and numerical equality as virtues. Its social order is one of utopian egalitarianism: People are equal and should be insured of equal outcome or equal results. Coercive structures and raw power are used to implement this uniformity.

The development ethic recognizes human, cultural and national uniqueness; it celebrates diversity. The ethic of underdevelopment spawns uniformity.

The last two development principles -- that all men are equal and yet unique -- may be seen as a "unity among diversity" couplet. Patterned after the Trinity, unity among diversity is the foundation for human community. Diversity without unity is the libertarian ideal, but unity without diversity is the communal ideal. Understood together, unity and diversity uphold both the social rights and the individual responsibilities of each member of a society.

Development Principle #9: Work is Sacred

The "Protestant work ethic" is probably the most familiar of the development ethics. It stems from the representation of God as "the Divine Worker, the Creator and the Great Developer." Man, standing as God's vice-regent over creation, was designed to work. Work is a sacred task. To deny a person's work is to attack his dignity. One's life work is a life calling which affirms our dignity and glorifies the Divine worker. Abraham Kuyper framed this eloquently: *Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, or his mind, in the world of art, and science, he is, in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before the face of God, he is employed in the service of his God, he has strictly to obey his God and above all, he has to aim at the glory of his God.*¹⁶

The "religious worker" is not the only person called to the sacred task. So, too, is the farmer, painter, maintenance worker, scientist, educator, homemaker, plumber, writer or carpenter.

This work ethic is defined in an "other-centered" context. It differs from the self-centered escape mechanism of a workaholic or the lust for things of a hedonist. The work ethic is tempered by an internal asceticism and, thus, must also be termed a savings ethic and a giving ethic. In the "Protestant work ethic," work is service-oriented, serving God, the future and one's fellow man. The cry of this ethic is: Work as hard as you can (capital development), save as much as you can (capital accumulation) and give as much as you can (capital sharing).

Within the ethic of poverty, only certain types of work are sacred; for example, services performed by a priest, pastor, religious leader, medicine man or "politician." These positions are considered high callings. For all others, work is a curse to be endured. Work is not sacred in modern consumer-oriented cultures, either, where it is merely a means to an end, the price to pay in order to obtain personal pleasure and "toys."

In less affluent societies, people work to put daily food on the table. A peasant may work hard when work is available and resources are needed. However, the spirit of fatalism fosters dependency -- first on nature, then on the government, and finally on the larger community --for survival. Well intentioned

outsiders can reinforce this dependency by acting paternalistically.

In cultures of poverty, work is conceived merely as a means to an end. In the development ethic, work is a sacred task. Its fruits, while privately owned, are aesthetically stewarded.

The "Other-Worldly" Factor

Perhaps nothing provides a greater contrast between the ethics of underdevelopment and development than the factor known as "other-worldliness." The development ethic assumes that man exists in a personal universe, where spiritual, moral and rational forces and absolutes are present. This is starkly contrasted with the ethic of poverty, which posits a uni-dimensional, "flat-earth," pantheistic or monistic model of the universe. It is important to remember that if one denies the existence of a personal, infinite God, then one must cease being worshipful and must also deny everything that has its existence in Him. Ultimately, love, morals and rationality disappear -- and underdevelopment of the spirit, the heart and the mind reigns. What does the ethic of development teach about man's spirit, ethics and intellect?

Development Principle #10: The Spirit -- The Universe is Ultimately Personal

The development ethic assumes that we live in a personal universe. Man's aspirations of personality, love, communion, creativity and volition are encouraged, not denied. Man's primary identity is founding his relationship with his Creator. This relationship defines the context and the ultimate purpose for both of the major areas discussed previously-- the creation and the human factor.

Because ultimate reality is personal, the system is open to opportunities for liberality and an optimistic future. Love -- self-giving love -- reigns. Man is called to love God and to "love his neighbor as himself." It was said of the early Christians that they were a new breed of man: they not only cared for one another, but they also cared for those outside their ranks. The Emperor Julian (332 - 353 AD) wrote: *Atheism [i.e. Christian faith] has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers, and through their care for the burial of the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar, and that the godless Galilaeans care not only for their own poor but for ours as well; while those who belong to us look in vain for the help that we should render them.*¹⁷

In contrast, the ethic of underdevelopment leaves man adrift in an impersonal universe, one without love and charity. Human aspirations of significance are

denied, creating a climate of insufficiency and a pessimistic future. An English poet, Steve Turner, describes this stark scene in "The Conclusion":

*My love she said
that when all's considered
we're only machines.
I chained her to my bedroom wall
for future use, and she cried.*¹⁸

A classic distinction between the ethics of development and underdevelopment is in their demonstration of charity. As Ethiopia faced massive famine during 1984 and 1985, who was there to help? Those who responded were agencies from the West, where the great reserves of compassion and charity run deep in the culture. The majority of the agencies had their beginnings in Judeo-Christian institutions. Conversely, charity from Buddhist, Hindu, Marxist, animistic or Muslim cultures was almost completely absent.

The ethic of development is personal, extending compassion and creating a mind for liberality and hope for the future. The ethic of underdevelopment, stemming from impersonal roots, creates a climate of indifference, insufficiency and despair for the future.

Development Principle #11: The Ethical -- The Universe is Ultimately Moral

God's character provides the standard for moral absolutes. There are values of right and wrong, good and evil. A culture supports either development or underdevelopment, depending upon which of these values it chooses.

Not only are there moral absolutes, but there is also moral freedom in the development ethic, allowing for man to make significant choices in life and also to be tolerant of the values of others.

A companion to the concept of moral absolutes and moral freedom is the recognition of personal evil in the universe. Both man and angels have rebelled. The ethic of development understands this rebellion and man's resulting need for both a rule of law to govern corporate life, and self-discipline to govern personal life.

In contrast, the culture of poverty recognizes no moral absolutes. Cultural or historic determinism replaces personal freedom. Survival of the fittest is the ultimate personal and societal value.

The culture of poverty either denies evil or assumes that evil is normal. The result is usually the same. In modern "value neutral" societies, as in more fatalistic societies, evil imprisons people with poverty and underdevelopment. A classic example of life without

morals is the genocide that took place in Cambodia following the rise to power of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. It is estimated that three million of Cambodia's seven million people died during Pol Pot's brief reign. David Aikman, then Eastern Europe bureau chief for *Time* magazine, wrote: *In the West today, there is a pervasive consent to the notion of moral relativism, a reluctance to admit that absolute evil can and does exist. This makes it especially difficult for some to accept the fact that the Cambodian experience is something far worse than a revolutionary aberration. Rather, it is the deadly logical consequence of an atheistic, man-centered system of values, enforced by fallible human beings with total power ... By no coincidence the most humane Marxist societies in Europe today are those that, like Poland or Hungary, permit the dilution of their doctrine by what Solzhenitsyn has called "the great reserves of mercy and sacrifice" from a Christian tradition.*¹⁹

The culture of development acknowledges moral absolutes and moral freedom, thus providing the foundation for government by law and self-discipline. The culture of poverty denies both moral absolutes and moral freedom, thereby contributing to a cultural "death wish."

Development Principle #12: The Intellectual -- The Universe is Ultimately Rational

The development ethic believes that the universe is rational. It is orderly, purposeful and governed by natural law. Objective truth exists because there is an Objective Standard for it which is revealed in the created order. It can be known objectively and is open to all who will pursue it.

Francis Bacon, writing in *The Advancement of Learning*, artfully stated it: *Nay, this same Solomon the king, although he excelled in the glory of treasure and magnificent buildings, of shipping of navigation, of service and attendance, of fame and renowned, and the like, yet he maketh no claim to any of those glories, but only to the glory of inquisition of truth; for so he sayeth expressly, "The glory of God is to conceal a thing, but the glory of the king is to find it out"; as if, according to the innocent play of children, the Divine Majesty took delight to hide his works, to the end to have them found out; And as if kings could not obtain*

*a greater honour than to be God's play-fellows in that game.*²⁰

We are the play-fellows of God, included in the grand discovery of the universe.

The principle of the rationality of the universe establishes a foundation for science, discovery and education. Accumulated knowledge may be passed on from generation to generation and from one culture to another. Education prepares people for life and provides tools for solving present and future problems.

This stands in stark contrast to the ethic of underdevelopment, in which the universe is ultimately irrational and unknowable. Objective truth does not exist. The universe and all of life is mystery; it is unfathomable. There is no foundation for science and, consequently, for exploration of the universe. The ethic

of poverty stifles man the discoverer, the explorer. It robs him of the tools needed for solving present and future problems. An example of life without rational knowledge is the Zen practice of conceiving the impossible: "Talk without tongue; play your string less lute; clap with a single hand."²¹

The ethic of development establishes and affirms the rationality and purposefulness of the universe, and man's ability to explore and learn from it. The culture of poverty stifles the spirit of discovery and problem-solving.

Why are people poor? Why are people hungry? Some argue that poverty is primarily a state, a condition, a set of circumstances. People are poor, they say, because there are not enough resources in the external world. At first glance this may have some merit; and, in some parts of the world, this is indeed true.

However, there is a much more profound factor: Underdevelopment, and its corresponding hunger and poverty, has its root in the minds and hearts of individuals and in the moral and ethical ideals of cultures. Value-neutral critics imprison people in poverty, as do cultures which embrace values that produce underdevelopment.

Two opposing sets of values exist. One set of values supports development, creating a "life wish" for its people; the other hinders development, producing a cultural "death wish."

The development ethic acknowledges a God of the universe. His supernatural existence provides the ultimate framework for development. Man, bearing the image of God, is both the greatest resource and the greatest obstacle to development. Nature -- being the result of God's creative activity rather than the product of impersonal forces -- is an open system, capable of being stewarded both now and into the future to meet the needs of an expanded human family.

While elements of the development ethic may be found in many cultures around the world, the ethic has been most clearly articulated and strongly manifested in the Judeo-Christian culture of the West. May we of this culture, at the close of the twentieth century, have the courage to acknowledge the development ethic. And may we have the vision to take its principles to those who hope for freedom from cycles of poverty. We will not create development by paternalistic intervention or mere formal instruction. Rather, true development will occur when its ethic is conveyed through the process of discipleship -- as the members of the human family work, live and play alongside one another.

Endnotes

¹ William Raspberry, "Values: Curse of Low Expectations Hampers Black Underclass," *The Arizona Republic*, March 12, 1988, A31.

² Frank S. Mead, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations* (London: Peter Davis, Ltd., 1965), p. 400.

³ Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁴ Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (Chicago, IL: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1963), p. 188.

⁵ David Stravers, "World View, Religious Conversion and Poverty" (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, March 8, 1983), p. 5-6.

⁶ Personal discussion with Alan Voelkel, development worker, Food for the Hungry, March 12, 1988.

⁷ Robert Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1985), p. XIII.

⁸ Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Pub., 1982), p. 103.

⁹ Lester C. Thurow, *The Zero-Sum Society: Distribution and the Possibility of Economic Change* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1980), p. 24.

¹⁰ Edward Stock and others, *The Third World Development: Problems and Perspectives* (Chicago, IL: Nelson Hall, 1981), p. 121.

¹¹ Abraham Kuyper, *Christianity and the Class Struggle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Piet Heir Publishers), p. 19.

¹² Novak, op. cit., p. 99.

¹³ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1970), p. 23.

¹⁴ Novak, op. cit., pg. 39.

¹⁵ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself*, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1983), p. XV.

¹⁶ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1983), p. 53.

¹⁷ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 42.

¹⁸ Steve Turner, *Up to Date* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), p. 24.

¹⁹ David Aikman, "Cambodia: An Experiment in Genocide," *Time* magazine, July 31, 1978, p. 39 - 40.

²⁰ Boorstin, op. cit., p. IX.

²¹ Lit-sen Chang, *Zen-Existentialism: The Spiritual Decline of the West* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1969), P. 45.



Food for the Hungry

1224 E. Washington St. Phoenix, AZ 85034-1102

(480) 998-3100 (800) 2-HUNGERS

<http://www.fh.org> hunger@fh.org

Reviving the Reformation

We live at an exciting and challenging time in history.

Communism is crumbling worldwide, its foundations cracked, and the structures built upon it crumbling. The post-Christian West is engaged in a civil war of ideas between the proponents of the old heritage (Judeo-Christian values) and the new, humanistic values of materialism. For the first time in history, we have the technical capability to end hunger.

Will Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union emulate the modern hedonism of the West, or will the Church provide a non-materialistic, Judeo-Christian alternative? Will the West return to the foundations laid by Judeo-Christian values and resist the slide into a culture of death? Will the Church respond to the crying need of physically and spiritually hungry people?

The Roman Catholic scholar and author Michael Novak has written extensively on the influence of ideas and values on economic development, including the following in a recent book: *Not long ago, the United States was a colony of Europe's greatest power. Not long ago, it was trapped in the same immemorial poverty and underdevelopment as other nations. At its founding, it was at least as poor as the colonies of Spain in Latin America. These two Americas, North and South, equally colonies and equally underdeveloped, were founded upon two radically different ideas of political economy. The one attempted to recreate the political-economic structure of feudal and mercantilist Spain. The other attempted to establish a novus ordo seclorum, a new order, around ideas never before realized in human history.*¹ (Emphasis mine.)

The outcome of the two sets of ideals was radically different. North America ended up far wealthier and with more freedom than South America! Why? Novak's answer is that the principles of the Protestant Reformation, as manifested in the political-economic life of northern Europe and North America, produced a very different result than the values and ideals of the Roman Catholic Church, as manifested in southern Europe and South America. Novak calls this underlying driving force the "spirit of democratic capitalism." Similarly, the 19th-century German sociologist and political scientist Max Weber calls this unique principle the "Protestant ethic."

In the United States of America, government was established "of the people, by the people, for the people." The people are responsible for their own lives, actions and governing. The principle of self-government assumes an educated, moral and self-disciplined people.

The form of government resulting from the reformers' understanding was contrasted with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church, in which the Pope or the Patriarch sits atop a pyramidal church structure and exercises authority from the top. The civil government in these societies mimicked the church in that it was oligarchical, in which a small group controls the government. Often the church and civil governments were wed to an oppressive economic structure in which the people were little more than slaves.

The Reformation of the 16th century responded to the humanistic Renaissance of the 14th and 15th centuries. This and subsequent reform movements launched northern Europe, and later North America, into an unparalleled era in history. A culture was established and values articulated and embodied that ultimately ended hunger and poverty for the average citizen of these reformation countries. The era was marked by freedom and opportunity, the rise of science, the unparalleled generation of wealth and the corresponding impact in health, literacy, education, agricultural production and general development.

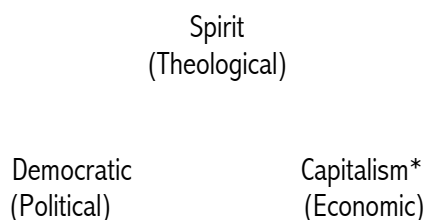
What are these values and ideals? What are the principles of the Reformation? Can they not be applied in our generation? May they not be adapted to the current needs in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, North America and the hungry world?

I would argue that they can and should be revived. A revolution to change structure is not sufficient to bring freedom and prosperity. To simply change the guard or the structures that they manipulate will not solve the problem. The problem lies deeper, in the minds and hearts of the people that build and control the structures. A new reformation is needed. The transformation of people's hearts and minds is foundational for any lasting change in the practical areas of politics and economics.

Triadic Model for Reform

Past Protestant reformations made an impact in three areas: theology, economics and politics. These three spheres form a triadic model that is dynamic in its interaction.

The theological sphere provides a solid foundation for the economic and the political. Each sphere interacts with the others and provides a synergistic effect that is greater than the sum of the parts. The arrows in the diagram below indicate the interaction that takes place between the spheres.



* By "capitalism," I mean the ethically-based economic system described in this article, and not the amoral, Western consumerism we know today.

In contrast, the dynamic is removed if the three elements are separated in either a purely materialistic or spiritualistic way.

The modern world is atheistic and materialistic in its assumptions, robbing the political and economic spheres of their theological and moral grounding. The result is a tendency to define problems in solely physical terms, and solutions in mere material terms.



Likewise, the dynamic is lost if things are viewed in primarily spiritual terms. The Greeks separated the world into physical and spiritual elements in which the physical is profane and the spiritual is sacred. Many evangelical and fundamentalist churches in the West today think like the Greeks and separate the spiritual from the physical. Concentrating solely on "spiritual things" and neglecting the physical reality in which we live renders the Church utterly irrelevant in the world today.

Spirit (Theological)

As A. James Reichley pointed out in *Religion in American Public Life*. *The single most influential cultural force at work in the new nation was the combination of religious beliefs and social attitudes known as Puritanism. At the time of the Revolution, at least 75 percent of American citizens had grown up in families espousing some form of Puritanism. Among the remainder, more than half had roots in related traditions of European Calvinism.* ²

The new political and economic system of the United States succeeded because of a Judeo-Christian worldview and values. Reichley's thesis is that atheistic-humanistic metaphysics is not sufficient to establish or maintain democratic capitalism. John Adams, one of the United States' founding fathers and its second president, wrote of the United States Constitution: "Our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."³

East and West are in a crisis. The current metaphysics is not sufficient to support democratic institutions, economic development or even life itself. Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union should not look to the West, but to Christ. Likewise, a hungry world should not gaze too long at the West's opulence and materialism, but to the freedom and opportunity provided by "the spirit of democratic capitalism."

The Three Rallying Cries of the Reformation

The principles of the Reformation have been articulated in three very simple mottos or "rallying cries":

THEOLOGICAL RALLYING CRY
Solo Christo = "Christ Alone"
Sola Fide = "Faith Alone"
Sola Scriptura = "Scripture Alone"

ECONOMIC RALLYING CRY
 "Work as hard as you can;
 save as much as you can;
 give as much as you can."

POLITICAL RALLYING CRY
 "All men are sinners."

We will examine each of these in turn.

Theological Rallying Cry

Solo Christo = Christ Alone

What is the cornerstone of our salvation, the source of our reconciliation with God? It is Christ alone. In John 14:6, Jesus states clearly and absolutely, "I'm the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (New International Version/NIV -- emphasis mine).

This is an absolute claim that cuts against all other religious claims and against all forms of relativism. Jesus is not one of many ways to God. He is God's means of saving man, as opposed to the religious attempts of other philosophies, such as those expounded in Hinduism, animism or Buddhism.

This also contrasts with any admixture with Christ (i.e. "Christ plus anything": Christ and Caesar, Christ and the state, Christ and Mammon). Caesar did not burn Christians at the stake because they worshiped Christ, but because they refused to worship Caesar. To choose Christ is to reject all else. The Reformers understood "Christ alone."

Today, the temptation (and often the reality) in the Western church is to worship Christ and materialism. We are wanting to be Christians just so long as it enhances and does not challenge our materialistic lifestyle.

Sola Fide = Faith Alone

The Reformers understood the message of Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast" (NIV -- emphasis mine).

When we approach the throne of grace, we come with "empty hands." There is nothing we can bring. Our salvation is in Christ and His finished work and not in our works.

This stands in contrast with belief systems that say that the sacraments save, penances save, good intentions save, good works save, or even that "theological correctness" will save.

Likewise, faith alone stands in contrast to the modern humanistic notion that "man is good." The optimistic faith of humanism is that human wit, will and technology will insure the evolution of a new man and a perfect society.

Sola Scriptura = Scripture Alone

The Scripture, God's written word, is the final authority for all matters of faith and practice. God's revelation provides the foundation for knowledge and human reason. Without a transcendent revelation, knowledge, history and morals would have no meaning.

The apostle Paul understood this when he said: "*All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*" (II Timothy 3:16, NIV). Likewise, the Bereans "*examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*" (Acts 17:11, NIV -- emphasis mine).

This stands in contrast to the authority of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church, or the Patriarch in the Eastern Orthodox Church, or the pastor in the Baptist church. When we have questions of faith and life, the scriptures are given to us for an authoritative answer.

This also stands in contrast to modern man's relativism: "man is the measure of all things." In Communist societies, the state is the measure of all things. In the West, "experts" are the final authority for all practices, including the raising of families.

The theological rallying cry lays a strong moral, metaphysical and spiritual foundation for life and the human disciplines of politics and economics.

Economic Rallying Cry

The economic rallying cry, "Work as hard as you can, save as much as you can, give as much as you can," was articulated by Charles Wesley during the reformation of the Church of England.

Work as Hard as You Can

One of the characteristics of God is that He is a creative God. The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning God created..." This pattern was passed on to man when He made us in His image. In Genesis 1:28 we find these words: "*God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground'*" (NIV -- emphasis mine).

Work is a calling; it gives man dignity. It is a critical part of our mimicking and worshiping our Creator. The Reformers

understood that each person had a "calling." The farmer was to milk his cows and plant his field "as unto the Lord."

A woman expressed this well when she made a plaque for her kitchen that read: "Worship services held here three times a day." She understood that the meal preparations for her family and the hosting of guests were acts of worship of her Creator.

This stands opposed to the thought that it is only the clergy or missionaries who have a sacred calling. Aside from the professional religious calling, all other work is secular and mundane. As pointed out earlier, this division between secular and sacred is more Greek than Hebraic in thinking.

This also stands in contrast to the mindset that work is part of "the curse," or that we work to survive, a mere hand-to-mouth existence.

In Western materialistic society the motto is, "work as little as you can, to gain as much as you can." This is hedonism or consumerism at its best.

Save as Much as You Can

Working hard produces a profit from our labors. But what should one do with this "surplus?" The Reformers said "Save it." This mindset is as old as ancient Israel.

God revealed to Joseph and then to Pharaoh the meaning of Pharaoh's dream in Genesis 41. There would be seven good years and seven lean years. The way to prepare for the seven lean years was to save during the good years. This famine-relief plan was centuries ahead of its time. In fact, it was not until the 19th century that starvation-plagued India had such a famine-relief plan in place.

The Bible also espoused a non-materialistic philosophy, neither idolizing or disdaining wealth. This is articulated in Proverbs 30:8-9: *Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God* (NIV -- emphasis mine).

The Reformers understood, articulated and lived an "external asceticism," a simple lifestyle. This stood in contrast to the extravagance of the Roman Catholic Church and the motto of hedonism: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." The modern counterpart is expressed

by the bumper sticker: "He who dies with the most toys wins."

It is hard work and living a simple lifestyle that leads to the generation of capital. But, what is one to do with this capital?

Give as Much as You Can

The creation of wealth combined with a non-acquisitive, non-consumptive and simple lifestyle provides capital for others. The biblical mindset of charity and edification (read "development") makes this accumulated capital available to meet the needs of others.

The apostle John wrote: *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with action and in truth* (1 John 3:16-18, NIV).

The resources, that for me are bounty or excess, are to be stewarded to meet the needs of others. This obviously applies to material resources, but it may also include the capital of knowledge, time, talents, spiritual gifts, insights and friends.

Even being financially poor does not lead to an exemption, as we witness in the Macedonian spirit. The apostle Paul wrote: *And now brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity* (II Corinthians 8:1-2, NIV).

Capital established through hard work and savings is to be used to meet the needs of others. This occurs in two primary ways. The first is through charity for the deserving poor, the "widow in deed." God's people have a responsibility to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. However, charity is not for the undeserving poor --those who have the ability to work, but who refuse to take responsibility for themselves or their families. To give to these people is to further strip them of their dignity and create paternalism and dependency.

The second use of the capital is to provide seed money for the creation of new businesses or for investment in such things as education, health care, the arts, scientific research which will benefit the larger society, and ministry

activities. In other words, capital is used for the purposes of development, the building up of people, institutions and the community at large.

Saving as much as you can stands in contrast to the miser's hoarding and the hedonist's increased consumption.

These three virtues (working, saving and giving) create the moral foundations of Reformation capitalism. It takes all three to provide the dynamic economic factors that generate wealth and drive market economies. If any one of these factors is removed, the equation will change and the dynamic will be lost. We must be careful not to confuse Reformation capitalism with the mercantilism of oligarchical and feudal societies, or with the consumerism of the West today.

Political Rallying Cry

The political rallying cry is founded on the understanding that all men are sinners.

The apostle Paul stated this most clearly when he said" ... For all have sinned [in the past] and [continue moment by moment in the present to] fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, NIV). Similarly, it is recorded in Genesis 6:5-6: *The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*" (NIV -- emphasis mine).

The depth and comprehensiveness of man's rebellion against God was known to the Reformers as "total depravity." Sin touches every area of every life. This, however, does not imply that man is nothing or that he is worthless or insignificant. On the contrary, man is still the "prince" of all creation; he still bears the image of God.

Because of their understanding of the depravity of man, the Reformers saw that it was imperative to protect against the opportunity for one man to have unlimited power in the church or society. As the English historian and philosopher Lord Acton (1834-1902) has so succinctly stated, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."⁴

To counter this tendency, the Reformers emphasized the "priesthood of believers" in the Church and developed a system of "checks and balances" in political life.

In the Church, every member is a minister. Two key passages illustrate the importance of the diversity of

individuals within the larger unity of the Church. Peter speaks of the temple of which we are individually "living stones," while Paul speaks of us as distinct parts of the body of which Christ is the head.

I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10: *As you come to him, the living Stone - - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him -- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light* (NIV).

Ephesians 1:22, 4:11-13: *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church ... It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ* (NIV).

With emphasis on this teaching, the Reformers stressed the importance of the "laity" within the Church to be a ministering body. There was to be plural leadership under the lordship or headship of Christ. The pastor-teachers are "enablers" of the membership, that they might be a congregation of ministers.

In the larger society, the reformers wanted to protect against one man gaining too much political power. Thus, a system of checks and balances, or democratic pluralism, was established. Typically, three branches of government (the executive, the legislative and the judicial) were formed; each branch had its own role and each was to act as an anchor against the abuses of the other.

The Swiss were so concerned about the propensity of sinful men to corruption that they placed each branch of government in a separate city. Not only would these men not work together, but they also would not fraternize together.

The pattern of the Reformation stands in contrast to that of modern, optimistic humanism. In humanism, man is good and structures are corrupt. Man's problem is "outside" himself. A utopia is possible as man evolves and creates more and better human structures. This is the

failed dream of the Communist system. It failed because it was based upon faulty premises.

Thus, the political rallying cry of "all men are sinners" recognizes the need to protect man from himself in practical ways in church polity and national governance.

Conclusion

The world and the Church are at a crossroads.

The world is in the midst of unprecedented change. Post-Communist Eastern Europe and the dissolved Soviet Union are looking for new beginnings and, I hope, new foundations. Post-Christian Western Europe and the United States have abandoned the Judeo-Christian heritage that made them great, and are sliding into a culture of death -- an abyss that the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union know only too well. The hungry world stands on the edge of death -- but with the promise of the resources and agricultural methodologies to put an end to persistent hunger.

The Church has a vital message to bring to this hurting world. It begins with "Christ and Him crucified." But it does

not end there. We are to articulate a biblical world and life view to challenge both ancient animistic ones and modern atheistic ones. We are to proclaim vital biblical principles that will create a solid foundation upon which to build societies of unprecedented freedom and opportunity.

Will the Church challenge existing models and call for reformation of minds and hearts? Or will we succumb to humanistic models that view the problems of our world only in material terms? Worse yet, will the Church abandon the world, stick her head in the sand, and live in the Greek world of a spiritualized dichotomy?

Hope springs from the transformation of the heart and mind-- and the corresponding revolution of life and culture.

The foundation upon which the new reformer in the Americas, Europe or the Third World must build is the triadic model of the Spirit of Democratic Capitalism.

Will the Church lead or follow?

The choice is ours!

Darrow L. Miller Email: millerd@fh.org August 1993

A people's worldview contributes to their poverty.

Food for the Hungry offers solutions to help people lift themselves out of physical and spiritual need.

For more information, please contact: Food for the Hungry 7729 E. Greenway Road Scottsdale, AZ 85260
(800) 2-HUNGER (602) 998-3100 (within Arizona) (602) 998-4806 (fax) hunger@fh.org