Christian Community Development

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Percentage of population living on $1 or less per day
**Percentage of population undernourished**

- All developing regions: 18%
- Asia, Pacific*: 20%
- Latin America, Caribbean: 11%
- Near East, North Africa: 9%

**Extent and causes of land degradation**

- Overgrazing: 6.7
- Deforestation: 5.7
- Industry and urbanization: 0.2
- Fuelwood consumption: 1.4
- Agricultural mismanagement: 5.4

*Excludes China
Population density
Per capita food production

index numbers 1961=100

World

Africa
Percent of underweight children under 5

- South Asia: 51%
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 31%
- East Asia and the Pacific: 22%
- Middle East and North Africa: 18%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 10%
Six plagues of our mis-developed world

- Poverty
- Illiteracy:
  - The curse of not knowing
- Dispossession:
  - The hungry travelers
- The calamities of nature
- Urbanization:
  - The fatal lure of the city
- “The System”:
  - Hunger amidst plenty
How do we react to such huge, complex problems?

• “If they would just . . .”
• “It’s not my business”
• “There’s nothing I can do about it”
• “I want to think about it in the light of the gospel”
Should we be involved?

• Shouldn’t we be pouring all our resources into saving souls for eternity?

• Is there any mandate beyond that of announcing the Good News?
Biblical basis

- Old Testament
  - Examples?
- New Testament
  - Examples?

- http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/poor.htm
“Are you the Messiah?”

- Tell John what you see
  - Blind receive sight, lame walk, lepers are cleansed, dead are raised and Gospel is being preached to the poor
How can we be the “light” of a mis-developed world?

• Motivation
  – “Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God”
    -- Bob Pierce, World Vision

• “How”
  – Inappropriate
  – Appropriate
Christian Community Development

- What is it?
- What it is not.
What community development is not . . .

- 1. Redistribution of wealth
  - “Eat your broccoli!”
- 2. A multitude of “projects”
  - Enthusiasm and goodwill are not enough
What community development is not . . .

- 3. Simply an increase in the gross national product
  - Haiti’s economic problem: “Too much capital” to absorb
Community development aims

• 1. Meeting minimum standards
  – Food / nutrition
  – Health
    • Preventable diseases
      – Every 8 seconds, child dies from water-related disease
  • Pollution
    – Education
Community development aims

- 2. Empowerment
- 3. Giving dignity and respect
- 4. Promoting peace and harmony (the *shalom* of God)
The most successful development efforts are directed at single communities

- Successful ones I’ve been involved in:
  - Vegetable gardening
  - Well drilling
  - Pigs
  - Roads
  - Tree planting
7 pitfalls and detours

• 1. Demagoguery based on myths
  – Myth: Food production is lagging behind population growth
  • Some say: “There simply isn’t enough food.”
Myth: Global overpopulation is the main cause of famine

Truth: Famine’s causes are complex
Myth: The amount of “X” is finite and fixed.

– We’re in a zero-sum game. What one person gets/uses of “x” means there is less for every other person

– Result: brief guilt trips for developed nations
  • Example: Boycotts of Haitian industries
Myth: We have to solve people’s material needs before spiritual needs can be addressed.
Pitfalls and detours

• 2. Ethnocentric attitudes of aid-givers themselves
  – We can solve your problem. We have the answers.
    – Railroad car of corn
  – Authoritarianism
    • Whoever pays the bills calls the shots
      – Village relocation after flood
      – Rainwater catchment systems
Pitfalls and detours

• 3. Expectations of easy answers and immediate results
  – “Crash” programs tend to crash
  – Relief and development are different strategies
Pitfalls and detours

• 4. Temptation to bulldoze through local opposition

• 5. Inflexible administrative systems
Pitfalls and detours

• 6. “Rice Christians”
  • How serious a problem?
• 7. “Compassion fatigue”
I'D LIKE TO GET RID OF HUNGER ON EARTH, LORD, BUT WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?
WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE CHURCH DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE NATION DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?
Sometimes I’d like to ask God why He allows poverty, famine and injustice when He could do something about it.

What’s stopping you?

I’m afraid God might ask me the same question.