

An Envisioning Manual



**A Samaritan's Purse UK
BUILD Publication**

A Curriculum to Envision Church Leaders and Churches to Partner with their Communities to bring about Transformational Change.

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah chapter 58 is an amazing chapter of the Bible. In it, God urges His people to go beyond individualistic religion and understand the central focus of His Law—to love The Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls and minds and to love our neighbours as ourselves. God wants His people to understand the importance of relationship and community. In Isaiah 58, God describes the kind of fasting that He desires to see from His people. He explains that what He requires is a practical kind of sacrifice:

(v7) Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? ... (v10) if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. (v12) ... you shall be called the Repairer Of The Breach, The Restorer Of Streets To Dwell In (English Standard Version).

This brings us to what the Envisioning Manual is all about: restoration of relationships. Seeking to restore us to proper and right relationships with God, each other, ourselves and the world on which we depend. Poverty itself can be understood as a state caused by broken relationships—a broken relationship with God that causes us to be separated from Him and act contrary to His desire for our lives; a broken relationship with each other that causes us to ignore God's desire for us to love one-another as we love ourselves; a broken understanding of ourselves, forgetting we are made in God's image, causing us to ignore God's ways and be hard-hearted; and a broken relationship with the world in which we live, abusing the resources we are to be stewards of and with which we have been entrusted.

It's time to really understand what our faith requires in terms of the way we live and conduct our relationships. We often hear the famous verses in Matthew chapter 22 about loving God and our neighbours, but we sometimes don't fully appreciate what verse 40 really means: *"On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."* Jesus is saying that all of the Biblical Law, all of the motivation behind the messages of the Prophets, is based upon this principle of love. Whether that's the Laws of the Ten Commandments in Exodus chapter 20 or the words of Micah 6 v 8, whether the law of Deuteronomy 6 v 5 or the writings of Jeremiah 22 v 16, and so our examples could go on.

The challenge to us now is to go back to God's Word, seek a fresh envisioning and humbly listen to Scripture as it says in Ephesians 5 v 14: *"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

It's time we woke up. It's time we made a stand for Christ. It's time for an Envisioning.



Stephen Gaukroger
Director, Clarion Trust International

CONTENTS

PREFACE

00. INTRODUCTION 8

0.1	Welcome and Group Introductions	10
0.2	Logistics	10
0.3	Why are We Here?	10

01. INTEGRAL MISSION 12

1.1	Jesus' Ministry	1.5 hours	14
1.1.1	Jesus' Way		14
1.1.2	More on Jesus' Life		1
1.1.3	Jesus' Mandate: Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?		16
1.1.4	Conclusion		19
1.2	In the Beginning: The Four Relational Areas	2 hours	20
1.2.1	Understanding Poverty		20
1.2.2	As the World was in the Beginning: Finding God's Intention		20
1.2.3	Consequences of Broken Relationships		24
1.2.4	Restoring Relationships		28
1.2.5	The Four Relationships in Practice; Poverty Alleviation		29
1.2.6	Conclusion		29
1.3	The Cross	45 minutes	30
1.3.1	The Cross is the Foundation of our Faith		30
1.3.2	The Centrality of the Cross		31
1.3.3	Conclusion		31
1.4	The Love of God and our Neighbour	1.5 hours	32
1.4.1	Activity: Role Play		32
1.4.2	God's Heart		33
1.4.3	Group Work		33
1.5	God's Intention for People	1 hour	36
1.5.1	More on Jesus		36

02. THE CALL OF THE LOCAL CHURCH 38

2.1	The Call of the Church	1.5 hours	40
2.1.1	Israel's Call to the Poor		40

2.1.2	The Establishment of God's Church	41
2.1.3	Conclusion	44
2.2	How Do We See Our Church? 1 hour	45
2.2.1	Looking Round in Our Communities	45
2.2.2	Conclusion	47
2.3	Jesus and the Disciples 30 minutes	48

03. THE SOLUTION LIES IN THE COMMUNITY 50

3.1	Activities	50
3.1.1	Community Solutions 20 minutes	52
3.1.2	A Secret Box 20 minutes	53
3.1.3	Crossing the River 20 minutes	54
3.2	Recognising What We Have to Give 2.5 hours	55
3.2.1	Needs-Based Development	55
3.2.2	Asset-Based Development	58
3.2.3	Talk	58
3.2.4	Conclusion	63
3.3	God's Abacus 45 minutes	65

04. THE CHURCH WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY 68

4.1	God's Church in the world 30 minutes	70
4.1.1	Some Church Models	70
4.1.2	Conclusion	71
4.2	Engaging the Community 2 hours	72
4.2.1	Note about Engaging with the Community	72
4.2.2	The Continuum	73
4.2.3	What is the Impact of these Different Approaches?	74
4.2.4	Jesus' Intention for the Church	74
4.2.5	Conclusion	76
4.3	Seed projects 1 hour	78
4.3.1	Group work	78
4.3.2	Conclusion	79

05. THE WAY FORWARD 80

5.1	What Does this Mean for You and Your Church? 1 hour	82
-----	---	----

5.1.1	Outline the Next Steps for the Church Leaders	82
5.1.2	Activity	82
5.2	Feedback and Conclusion	83
5.2.1	Group Summary and Closure	83
5.2.2	Final Challenge	83

06. APPENDICES 84

Appendix 1:	DIGGING DEEPER - 1 hour (Optional Exercise)	86
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Look among the nations and watch—Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days you would not believe, though it were told to you. *Habakkuk 1:5*

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The following Bible studies and discussion questions can be used as an initial point to envision Church Leaders and churches to understand how God is calling the Church to be His hands and feet in their communities. Terms like holistic ministry, transformational development or integral mission will be used, defined as the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel.¹ The Bible studies and discussions in this manual are designed to facilitate discussion and allow church leaders to explore what this actually means for them and their churches. The process is focused on leading churches to explore the effects of broken relationships upon communities and to challenge them to respond to it, and by so doing, to restore relationships with God, with oneself, with others and with the environment.

Please Note: Envisioning is the second stage in the Church and Community Mobilisation process, the full process can be found in the BUILD publication titled 'Mobilising the Church and Community'.

It may be beneficial to bring a group of Church Leaders and lay leaders together in a village or region and envision them together. You may also need to meet with Church Leaders at a regional or national level in order to inform them of what you will be doing with their local churches. You could also take them through this envisioning material. Staff usually facilitate the envisioning curriculum; however, it may be helpful to involve a few Church Leaders who are currently active in integral ministry to lead a few sessions or speak about the work their church is doing. Church Leaders speaking to Church Leaders always has a much greater impact.

The key is not to force relationship building but rather to create an environment for fellowship and for trust to be developed in Christ. This might involve a general opening comment that acknowledges God's presence, emphasising that we are here for the same reasons—to proclaim the Gospel message in both word and deed.

Also, be aware that not all Church Leaders will be ready to move forward right away. This is not unusual, and we need to allow churches to move into this in their own time. This means that you will need to do a lot of listening and supporting of people and then work with those who are ready to move forward; God can do the rest. So work with those who are already motivated by God's Holy Spirit.

During this process, it's vitally important to listen well, to honour and sincerely respect the vision and ministries of the local church leaders, many of whom have paid high prices to humbly serve their communities for many years. Those tasked with envisioning should therefore ensure that they avoid all attitudes and comments that could be perceived as patronising. They should find ways of encouraging a genuinely participatory approach in the envisioning conversations, so as not to alienate those who have lived by a clear but possibly different vision for their communities.

Some churches may want to come together and work together in their ministries. This is fine, especially in smaller communities or with churches that have fewer resources. It also gives the church an opportunity to work in unity with others.

You can present this curriculum as a multi-day workshop or use parts of it over a number of meetings with Church Leaders and church leaders. This will depend on your own resources and approach. However, it is important to keep in mind the key objectives in each of the sections.

This envisioning process has used resources from TearFund, the Samaritan Strategy (Harvest

¹ Adapted from Corbett, Steve, & Fikkert, Brian. (2009). *When helping hurts: How to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Foundation) and Samaritan's Purse UK's own resources. A special thank you to TearFund for allowing us to use their resources, full credits can be found in the bibliography.

Objectives of this curriculum:

1. To cast the vision, to inspire, envision and motivate (not just to inform)
2. To raise awareness among Church Leaders and leaders of the Biblical basis and God's heart for engaging with and responding to the needs of the community
3. To increase understanding of what it means for the church to be involved in integral mission in its community
4. To increase awareness among church leaders of their ability to facilitate a community response to their community challenges
5. To raise awareness of the value of church partnering with the community to take action to solve the problems in their community
6. To identify and achieve the commitment of Church Leaders and church leaders to engage in this process
7. To raise awareness among church leaders of the value of this work in improving the spiritual health of their own churches

This envisioning curriculum has been designed to address five key areas:

1. Integral Mission (Holistic Ministry, Transformational Development)
2. The Call of the Local Church
3. The Solution Lies Within the Church and the Community
4. The Church Working with the Community
5. Next Steps

We have designed this curriculum as a toolkit that can be adapted depending on the context and the church's understanding of integral mission. Under each main heading is a key objective, and there are a number of ways to communicate the objective to the churches and Church Leaders. You can use all of the sessions or choose one or two, depending on your Church Leaders and churches.

Furthermore, if you are in a community where some Church Leaders and church members already understand this curriculum, then engage them to teach some of the sessions. Churches will often listen to Church Leaders or others in their community before they will listen to outsiders. Be creative and flexible depending on your context and the church.

0.1 Welcome and Group Introductions

Pray & Worship

This curriculum may take you more than one day to go through. If it does, open each day in prayer and worship. Below is an example, but feel free to improvise each day.

Open the day with a song, ask one of the Church Leaders to pray and conduct a short devotional or welcome. Read Romans 2 v 12

READ:

Read Romans 2 v 12

Thank the Church Leaders and church members for attending, and ask them to introduce themselves by name and share a little about their respective churches. Ask them to tell the group why they have come for this envisioning process and what they expect from being together today.

0.2 Logistics

Cover the following points with participants of the training session:

1. What time we will end today
2. Tea break and lunch times
3. Latrines

0.3 Why are We Here?

We have chosen to come together because we all believe one thing: Jesus is the hope of the world. We believe that God in His great love for us sent His Son to this earth to deliver us from sin and to reconcile us back to Himself and to live whole lives in Him, glorifying His name, living in peace with each other and with our community.

In our communities, we will look at how issues are robbing people of their dignity, and we will look at what God desires for all people.

We believe that the Church is God's way of restoring hope in this world, and He has called His people to go into the world and preach the good news of Jesus Christ and to act with His love and mercy to people, transforming people and communities into right relationships with Himself, with themselves, with others and with their environment.

We are here to explore the Biblical basis for this truth and to look at what this means for the Church today.

Provide an outline for the sessions:

1. **Integral Mission** (Holistic Ministry, Transformational Development)
 2. **The Call of the Local Church**
 3. **The Solution Lies Within the Church and the Community**
 4. **The Church Working with the Community**
 5. **Next Steps**
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01

INTEGRAL
MISSION

OBJECTIVE:

To understand that transformation of people and communities occurs when we focus on ministry that is integral.

This can be done by the following sessions:

- 1.1 Jesus' Ministry
- 1.2 In the Beginning: The Four Relational Areas
- 1.3 A Second Look at the Cross
- 1.4 Loving God and Others
- 1.5 God's Intention for People

1.1 JESUS' MINISTRY**1.5 HOURS****1.1.1 Jesus' Way****READ:**

As one big group:

1 Samuel 16 v 7
Mark 1 v 40–44
John 9 v 2

DISCUSS:

Talk about your thoughts on the passage from Mark

Facilitator Notes:

- Here you have a man humbly come to Jesus and say, *"if you are willing make me clean"*. Jesus essentially forgives the man's sins (regardless of his leprosy) because *"Man looks at the outward appearance and God looks at the heart"* (1 Samuel 16 v 7).
- Then Jesus has compassion and heals the leper (the 'I am willing' means both physical and spiritual), sending him directly to the priests. When the leper meets the priest, his healing is a holistic action, as not only is he physically and spiritually healed, but he is also restored in his community—socially, spiritually and economically. We know from John 9 v 2 that physical deformities were often culturally regarded as a result of sin. If this leper has been healed, in the priest's minds, he must have also been forgiven for his sin.
- According to the Bible, no one had ever undertaken the ceremony written in Leviticus chapter 14 (a cleansing ceremony if someone is healed of leprosy) as no Jew had been healed of leprosy other than Moses' sister Miriam. The miracle signalled Jesus' compassion, inseparable physical and spiritual healing and the arrival of the Messiah to the priests.

1.1.2 More on Jesus' Life

Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven you, rise up and walk". There can be no mistaking the inseparability between physical and spiritual.



READ:

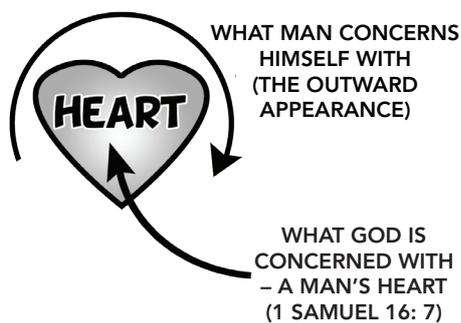
As one big group:

Matthew 9 v 1-8

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

- What would becoming able to see and walk mean economically to the blind and lame in the time of Jesus?
- What would be the greatest blessing to the deaf if they were able to hear?
- Why did Jesus have compassion on the widow and her son?



**BEING BLIND REGARDED AS
A RESULT OF SIN
(JOHN 9: 2)**

1.1.3 Jesus' Mandate: Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?

READ:

As one big group:

Luke 4 v 14–21

Why did Jesus come to earth? This passage describes the start to Jesus' ministry.² The verses relate to Isaiah's prophecy that a King would come that would usher in a new Kingdom. Isaiah described a King that would bring healing to the parched soil, the feeble hands, the shaky knees, the fearful hearts, the blind, the deaf, the lame, the mute, the broken-hearted, the captives and the sinful souls and would proclaim the year of jubilee for the poor (Isaiah 35 v 1-6; 53 v 5; 61 v 1-2). Jesus said that this prophecy was now fulfilled by His arrival.

In Luke 4 v 43 Jesus summarised His ministry: *"I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God, to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent"*. The mission of Jesus was and is to preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God, to say to one and all, *"I am the King of kings and Lord of lords, and I am using My power to fix everything that sin has ruined."* Of course, there is both a 'now' and a 'not yet' to the Kingdom. The full manifestation of the Kingdom will not occur until there is a new heaven and a new earth. Only then will every tear be wiped from our eyes (Revelation 21 v 40). But 2,000 years ago, Jesus clearly stated that there is a 'now' to the Kingdom, saying, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"* (Luke 4 v 21).³

DISCUSS:

Ask the whole group:

Why did Jesus come to earth?

- Many people will respond by saying that Jesus died on the cross to save our souls from sin and reconcile us back to God. This is true, but saving souls is only a subset of the comprehensive healing that Jesus' Kingdom brings and that was the centrepiece of His message.

READ:

As one big group:

Colossians 1 v 15–20



LUKE 4: 43
I MUST PREACH THE
GOOD NEWS...



JESUS' DEATH
BROUGHT HEALING

² Reproduced from TearFund, PILLARS: Mobilising the local church by permission Copyright © Tearfund UK [2004] (www.tearfund.org)

³ Adapted from Corbett, Steve, & Fikkert, Brian. (2009). When helping hurts: How to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

In this passage, Jesus is described as the Creator, Sustainer and Reconciler of everything. Yes, Jesus died for us, but He also died to reconcile, that is, to put into right relationship all that He created.

DISCUSS:

Break into small groups:

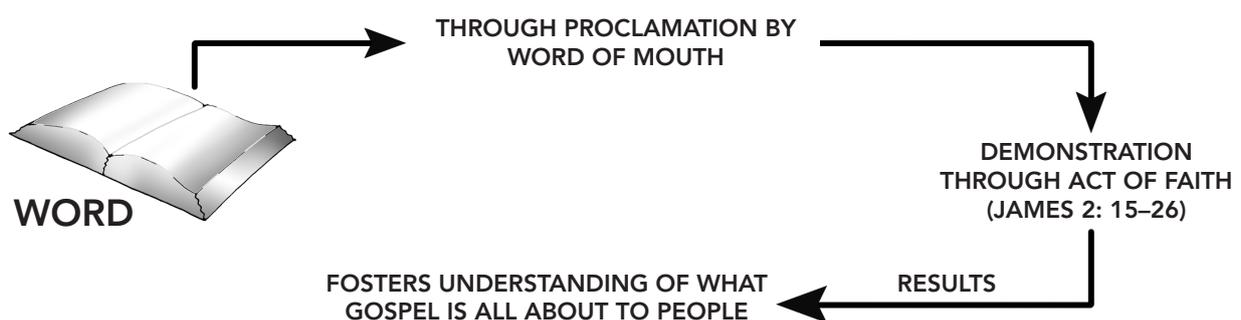
Discuss the different roles that Jesus came to fulfil that were spoken of in Luke 4 v 14–21. Give examples of how Jesus put His words into action.



THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE
(MATTHEW 3: 17) – BAPTISM



JESUS HEALING – RAISING THE DEAD
(LUKE 7: 11–23)



Facilitator Notes:

- Jesus went out to people in the towns and villages with His eyes open to their needs. He brought healing and released people from the power of demons.
- He challenged the authorities over unjust or hypocritical practices and preached the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
- He healed the sick as He preached and taught. Jesus' ministry was to the whole person.

READ:

Luke 7 v 11–23

This passage describes some of the great wonders of healing that Jesus did. It also tells of His response to John the Baptist's question about whether He really was the Messiah.

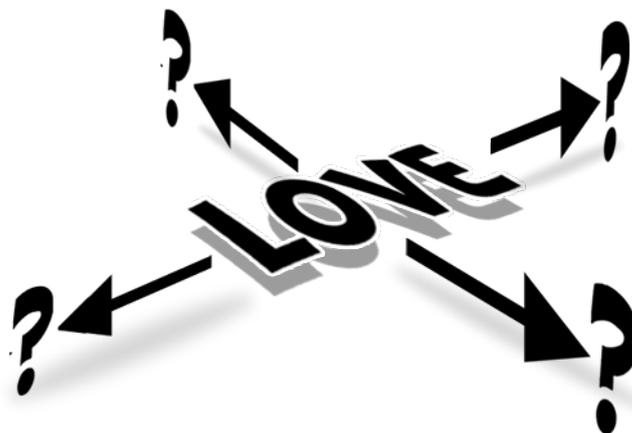
We know from Luke 1 v 41–44 that John the Baptist leapt in the womb when his mother Elizabeth met Mary, Jesus' mother. John knew who Jesus was (John 1 v 34), even being told by God (Mark 1 v 11) after John baptised Jesus. They were related. So why did John send his disciples to see if Jesus was the Messiah?

John may have been in need of encouragement as he was in prison when he asked Jesus this question, but John also knew that the best way for his disciples to learn was to watch Jesus. Jesus didn't answer John's disciples question but carried on ministering and then sent the disciples back to John without specifically answering their question. He interacted with them rather than just telling them straight out that He was the Messiah.

And what was Jesus' response to John's question? He could have pointed out that His birth in Bethlehem from the line of David was consistent with prophecies about the Messiah. Or He could have referred to His remarkable knowledge of the Scriptures and to His unparalleled teaching abilities. Or Jesus could have reminded John that they had both witnessed the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus in the form of a dove and had heard God the Father say, *"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17). But Jesus chose something else to say: Luke 7 v 22–23. Jesus said to John and his disciples that they could be sure that Jesus was the Messiah because of what John and his disciples heard and saw Jesus do. Jesus was preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and He was showing the Good News of the Kingdom, just as Isaiah said He would.⁴

Jesus showed John's disciples His integral ministry. Notice that this included *"the poor have the Gospel preached to them"*. Integral Mission is not purely demonstration, nor is it parallel ministry where proclamation and demonstration are done together; Jesus proclaimed and demonstrated naturally and seamlessly. Jesus ministered integrally. Jesus and John helped their disciples understand the whole-ism of the Gospel.

The Gospel is an inseparable whole made up of proclamation and demonstration, not just the two done alongside each other. Without the physical healing that Jesus performed, His words may have lacked substance to the people. As James says, *"faith without works is dead"* (see James 2 v 18–26). Without words, the reason for Jesus' miracles wouldn't be clear. Proclamation and demonstration were inseparable here; they relied on each other to show Jesus' message.



HOW CAN WE SHOW LOVE PRACTICALLY?

⁴ Ibid.

DISCUSS:

The impact on the everyday lives of the people touched in such a remarkable way by Jesus.

- In the examples above, Jesus showed love practically. How can we show love to those around us? What does this mean in our community today?
- Does His way of life differ from our present way of thinking about the work of the church? If so, why?

Bring the groups back together and get them to discuss as a larger group their response to the last two questions.

1.1.4 Conclusion

Emphasise the importance of the spiritual, emotional, physical and social aspects to people.

1.2 IN THE BEGINNING: THE FOUR RELATIONAL AREAS

2 HOURS

The material in this section borrows significantly from the work of Bryant L. Myers and his book, *Walking with the Poor*. Dr. Myers is professor of international development in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary.

1.2.1 Understanding Poverty

If we accept that Jesus' ministry was holistic, embracing the spiritual, emotional, physical and social, then it is important to look at what causes poverty in these areas. In order to understand poverty, we need to look at its causes, starting from the very beginning of time. To understand poverty, we must understand who God is and what He intended for the world. This is because poverty was not what God wanted.

1.2.2 As the World was in the Beginning: Finding God's Intention

READ:

Genesis 1 v 26

Notice from these verses that God is talking to Himself. Why? Because God existed and will always exist in relationship with Himself. John 1 v 1–5 tells us that the Son was with the Father at the beginning of time, and Genesis 1 v 1–2 tells us that the Spirit of God was also present.

God is relational by His very nature⁵. Being made in God's image, human beings are, therefore, relational as well. Before the Fall, God established four foundational relationships for each person: a relationship with God, with oneself (or 'self'), with others and with the rest of creation. These relationships are the building blocks for all of life. When they are functioning properly, humans experience the fulness of life that God intended because we are being what God created us to be.⁶

"Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'" (John 10 v 10).

According to Bryant Myers:

Life in its fulness is the purpose; this is what we are for and what Christ has come to make possible. To live fully in the present relationships that are just, harmonious and enjoyable, that allow everyone to contribute; and to live fully for all time; a life of joy in being that goes beyond having. While shalom and abundant life are ideals that we will not completely see this side of the second coming, the vision of a shalom that leads to life in its fulness is a powerful image that, must inform and shape our understanding of any better future.⁷

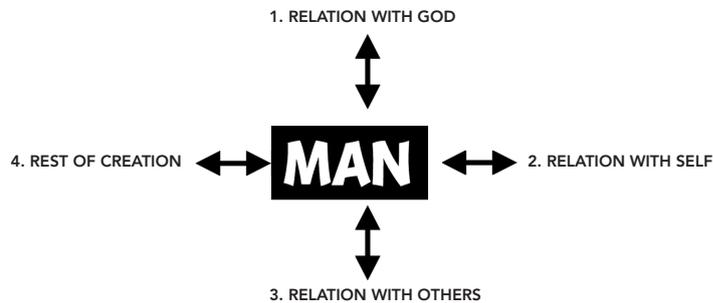
This can be best examined by looking at the biblical image of shalom. We often translate shalom to mean 'peace', but it means something much deeper. Shalom is a word that appears almost 400 times in the Old Testament, but it is a difficult word to translate. Shalom is a relational concept that is manifest through our relationship with God, ourselves, others and creation. While shalom and abundant life are ideals that we will not see this side of the second coming, the vision of shalom leading to life in its fulness is a powerful image that must inform and shape our understanding of any better future. Shalom suggests a wholeness and completeness where all relationships are in harmony with one another.

⁵ Based upon the work by Colin Smith from Centre for Urban Mission, Kenya.

⁶ Corbett, Steve, & Fikkert, Brian. (2009). *When helping hurts: how to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

⁷ Myers, Bryant L. 2011. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Revised and updated ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, p.59.

THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS



SHALOM IS A RELATIONAL
CONCEPT MANIFEST THROUGH
OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Read through the passage and try to identify all the possible relationships that seem to be working together. Mark them down on a sheet of paper.

READ:

As one big group:

Genesis 2 v 4–9 & v15–24

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

What do you observe about God's intention for our relationship:

- With Himself?
- With ourselves?
- With other people?
- With the environment or creation?

Discussion Notes: How God intended it to be
(You can use Matthew 22 v 36–38 as a useful reference here)

1. **Our relationship with God:** This is our primary relationship; the other three relationships flow out of this one. Our primary purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. We were created to serve and give praise to our Creator through our thoughts, words and actions. When we do this, we experience the presence of God as our heavenly Father and live in a joyful, intimate relationship with Him as His children.⁸
2. **Our relationship with Self:** We are made in God's image and, therefore, have inherent worth and dignity. God has created us with certain gifts and abilities, and He wants us to know why we exist and what our purpose is for living. This can become acted out through our vocation. Whatever we do, it should be done for His glory as our calling or vocation. Ask someone to re-read Matthew 22 v 39; it presumes that we should love ourselves!

⁸ Adapted from Myers (1999); taken from Corbett, Steve, & Fikkert, Brian (2009). When helping hurts: how to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself.

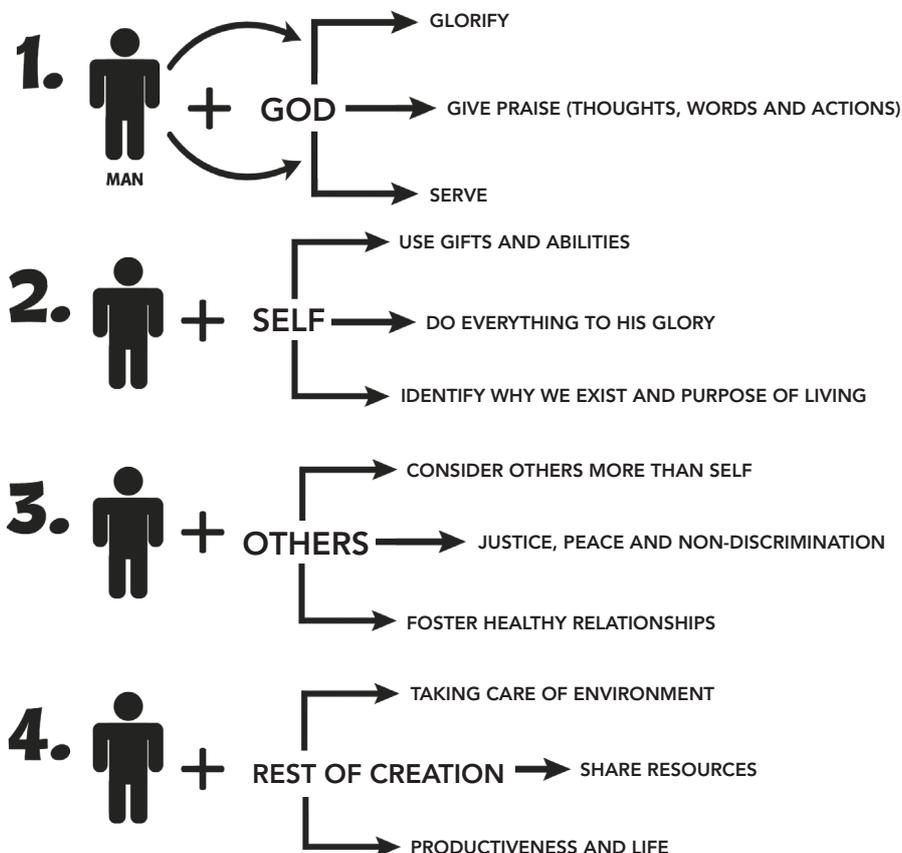
READ:

As one big group:

Matthew 22 v 39-40

Mathew 23 v 23

- 3. Our relationship with Others and Community:** God has created us to live in loving relationships with others, considering others more important than ourselves, embracing justice, righteousness, peace, sharing with others and doing away with the divide between the poor and the non-poor. While these relationships with others may be very personal in nature, they may also be communicated impersonally through the social, political and economic institutions that we create. In our relationships with others, we are to consider the interests of others as more important than our own, and we are to promote relationships that promote peace and justice.
- 4. Our relationship with Environment and Creation:** We need to care for the world in which God has placed us so that it is productive and supportive of life. This includes the way we use and share resources. We fulfil our roles as stewards by working and taking care of the world that God has created. One part of our vocation as stewards is to "be fruitful". God desired that we interact with creation, make possibilities into realities and be able to sustain ourselves through the fruits of our stewardship.



Draw the following figure on a whiteboard or large paper. Explain that this figure illustrates the way these four relationships interact with our larger economic, political and social system. However, the areas go both ways: people affect systems and systems affect people.

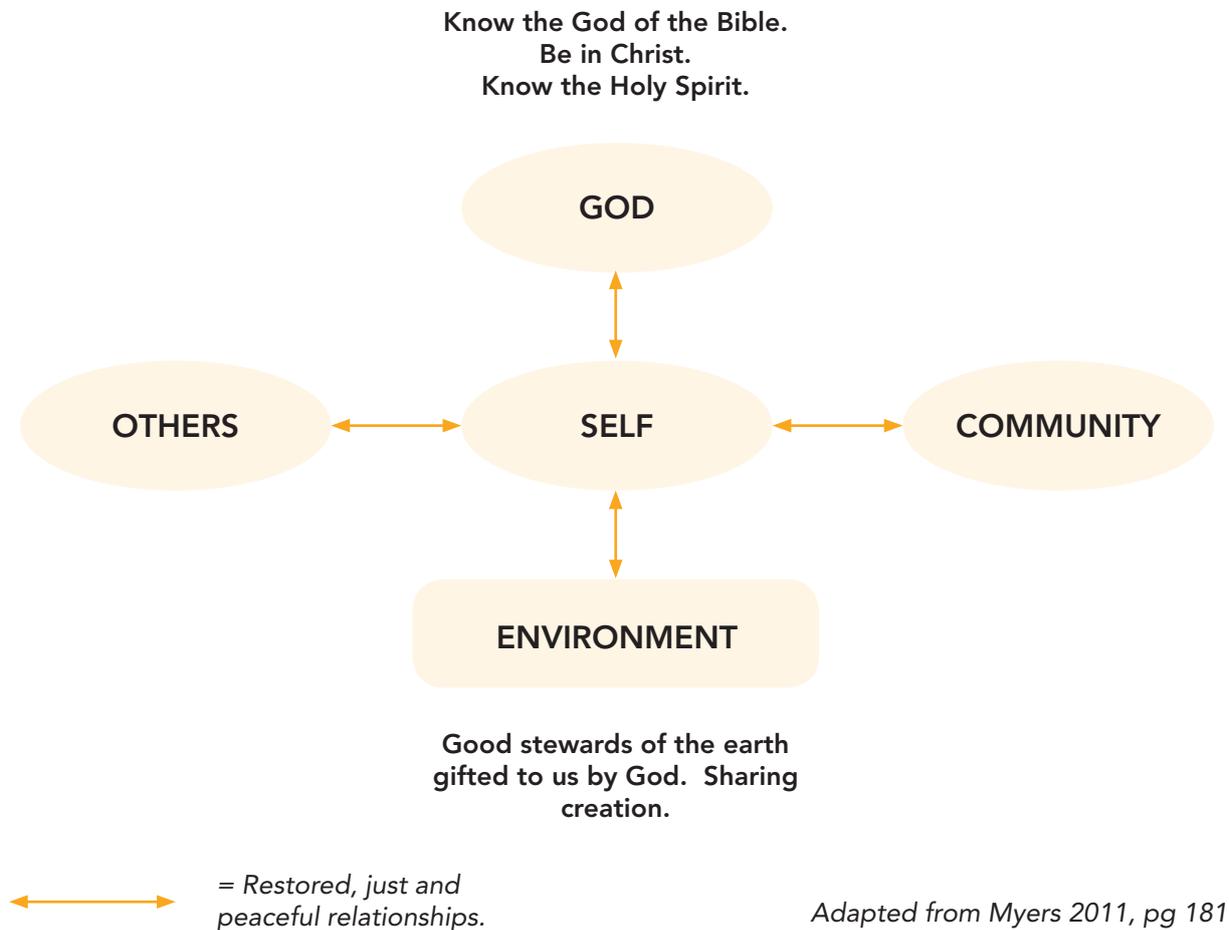


Figure 1: Living without Shalom⁹

Chapter 3 of Genesis tells the story of the Fall, where Adam and Eve disobey the one command which God gave them. In the story, we see the consequence of that disobedience in each of the four relationships:

- **Broken relationship with God:** The relationship with God was damaged as their intimacy with Him was replaced by fear (3 v 7–9).
- **Broken relationships with self:** We see their relationship with self was marred as Adam and Eve developed a sense of shame.
- **Broken relationships with others:** We see blame and accusation enter Adam's relationship with Eve (3 v 12) and the possibility of loving relationships being exchanged for broken ones (3 v 16).
- **Broken relationship with the environment:** The harmony with creation is destroyed with the prospect of "toil" being required to grow food and the land bringing forth "thistles and thorns" (3 v 17–19).

Adam and Eve discover that they have traded the riches of their relationships with God, His creation, peace with themselves and one another for a life in which they experience poverty in each of those areas.

⁹ Myers, Bryant L. 2011. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Revised and updated ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

BROKEN RELATIONSHIP



1.2.3 Consequences of Broken Relationships

DISCUSS:

Ask the whole group:

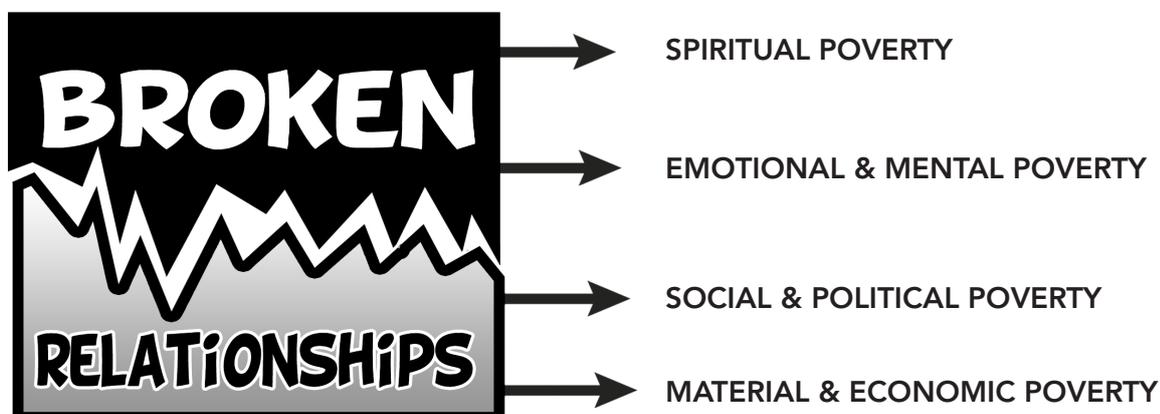
What does that mean for us today? Ask the group to look at the four relationships in their community and nation and describe how each of them is affected by the Fall.

- 1. Relationship with God leading to a poverty of spiritual intimacy:** As a result of the Fall, our relationship with God was broken. We as people often deny God's existence and authority. We've created false idols in an attempt to find purpose and meaning for our lives. This can result in us glorifying ourselves or seeking purpose and meaning in the material world—we become more focused on 'having' and not 'living for God'.
- 2. Our relationship with Ourselves leading to a poverty of being:** When this relationship was broken at the Fall, we developed an inaccurate worldview. A worldview is a way that we understand the world; how we see our society and our place in that society. It's our way of understanding our identity or who we are. When we have a broken view of ourselves or do not value ourselves, we might feel we have no purpose or meaning. This results in an unhealthy or marred identity and lack of connection with our vocation or calling from God. This is true both



for the poor and non-poor. The poor might not value themselves as much because they believe they have no hope or right to a better way of living. The identity of the non-poor is broken too, and they can act as though their gifts and position are earned because of merit and, therefore, only for themselves and their well-being rather than being a blessing from God to be used for His purposes.¹⁰

3. **Our relationship with Others and Community leading to a poverty of community:** The Fall had detrimental effects on our relationships with others. We became self-centred. We physically, socially and economically take advantage of others in order to improve our own circumstances. We become separated within our communities with some doing well and others not. Some groups become isolated from society and excluded from the system or become victims of coercion and exploitation because they lack social power and influence. Conflict, oppression and injustice become normal. This happens on the personal level as well as on the group (i.e. gender, race, age, class) and institutional levels. The non-poor can also become isolated; they might not care for others and can use their influence and position to sustain the systems of inequality.¹¹
4. **Our relationship with God's Creation (or the Environment) leading to a poverty of stewardship:** Work has become a burden for people; some people cannot provide for their families' needs through their work; others become slaves to work or stop finding meaning in work and work only because of material gain, losing their sense of purpose or God-given vocation. The abuse of creation also traps people in poverty as resources are depleted. Our environment was never meant to be this way.



WHAT IS BROUGHT FORTH BY BROKENNESS

¹⁰ Please see the Behaviour Change document for more on how people's worldview affects their behaviour.

¹¹ Micah 6 v 8.

READ:

Romans 8 v 19–21

Each of these relational areas leads to a different type of poverty, even though everything is interrelated and connected. That is, brokenness with God leads to spiritual poverty, brokenness with ourselves leads to emotional and mental poverty, broken relationships with others leads to social and political poverty and brokenness with creation leads to material and economic poverty.

Return to the figure drawn on the whiteboard and draw in the broken relationships (see below). Because the four relationships are the building blocks for all human activity, the effects of the Fall are manifested in the economic, social, religious and political systems that humans have created throughout history. The systems are broken, reflecting humans broken relationships.¹²

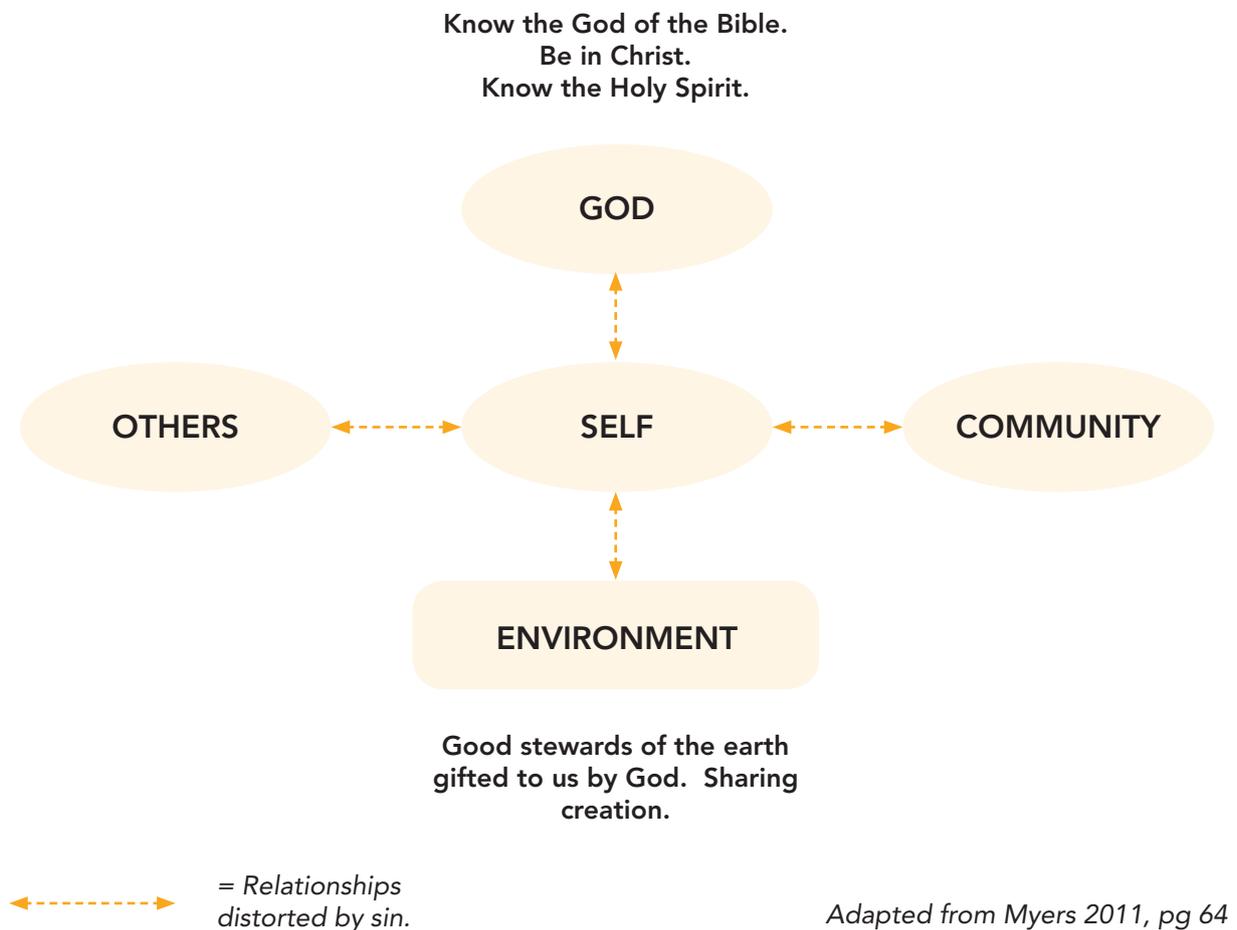


Figure 2: Broken relationships¹³

Poverty is the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom.¹⁴

¹² Corbett, Steve, & Fikkert, Brian. (2009). When helping hurts: how to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

¹³ Myers, Bryant L. 2011. Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development. Revised and updated ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

¹⁴ Myers, Bryant L. 2011. Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development. Revised and updated ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, p.59.

DISCUSS:

Ask the whole group:

If poverty is rooted in the brokenness of the foundational relationships, then who are the poor?

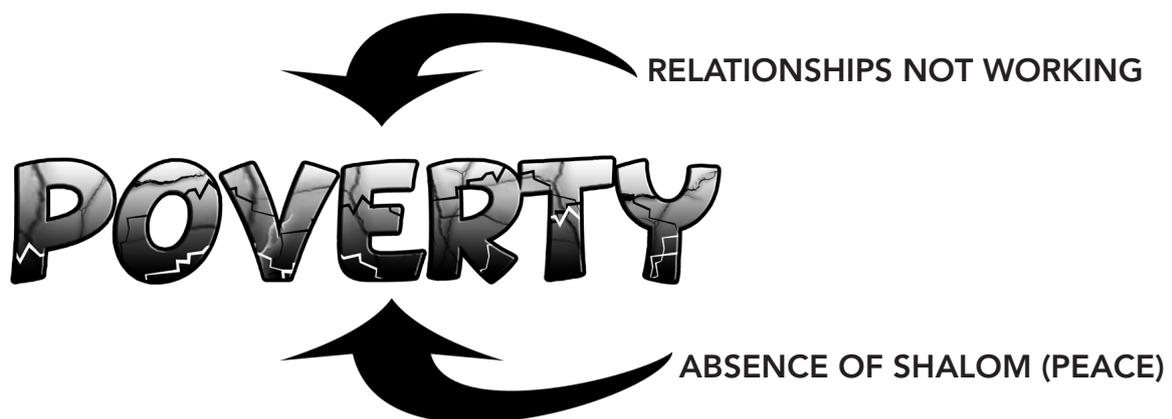
- Emphasise that every human being is poor in the sense of not experiencing the four relationships in the way that God intended. Some people are materially poor; others are spiritually poor or relationally poor.

Split into smaller groups:

- What other examples are there in the Bible of how Jesus worked to restore holistically (the four relationships)?
- Reflect on your relationships with God, self, others and the rest of creation. Discuss specific things you would like to see improved in your own key relationships.

Think back to your answers to the question, "what is poverty?"

- What differences do you see now?
- Do you look at poverty as materially only?
- How has this affected the work that you or your church has done in your community?



1.2.4 Restoring Relationships¹⁵

Rediscovering God's intention

It seems as if God's shalom is lost forever. But the rest of the Bible takes up the theme of restoring God's intention or God's shalom. In the New Testament, Jesus calls it the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. It's something that is yet to come but also something we experience here and now in our encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ.

So what is this 'Kingdom of God'? Keller (1997) says it's the "renewal of the whole world through the entrance of supernatural forces. As things are brought back under Christ's rule and authority, they are restored to health, beauty and freedom" (pp. 52–53).¹⁶ The Kingdom of God means His rule over our minds, bodies, spirits, communities, social systems, the world and the universe.

READ:

As one group: Colossians 1 v 19-20

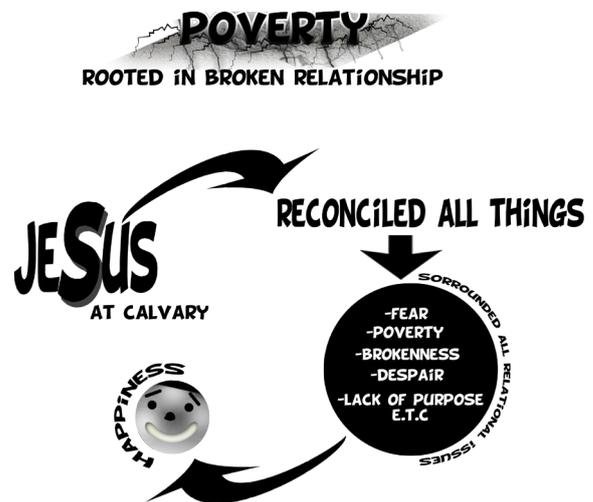
DISCUSS:

As one group:

What does this verse mean for us and for broken relationships?

Facilitator Notes:

- *All things* have been reconciled to Christ. Poverty is rooted in broken relationships, so the solution to poverty is rooted in the power of Jesus' death and resurrection to put all things into right relationships again.
- This includes the four relationships mentioned above. Jesus worked this out as He strove to heal all the relational areas while He was here on earth. His ministry was *whole* in nature, reflecting these four relational areas. Think of the leper we read about in Mark 1 v 40–44 and how he was restored with God (forgiveness), himself (his dignity), others (no more quarantine from his community due to leprosy) and his environment (physically stronger and more healthy to be able to earn a living). We will look at this story further in the next section.
- Christ came to reconcile *all things* to Himself. This includes our individual life with Christ, but also encompasses all areas of our life. This means that when we address poverty, we need to look holistically at all of the components that affect our lives.
- Christ came to reconcile *all things* to Himself, which means He came to restore all the broken relationships and all the consequences of this breakdown (The Fall). Christ came to bring restoration, transformation and change and has commissioned us as a body of believers, His church, to be the agents of this change until He returns (Matthew 5 v 13–16 & 28 v 16–20).



¹⁵ Appendix 3.

¹⁶ Cited in Chalmers Centre. Foundations and principles of holistic ministry: Theological considerations.

- Of course, the full reconciliation of all things will not happen until the final coming of the Kingdom, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Only then will every tear be wiped from our eyes (Revelation 21 v 4). However, we are still to do what Jesus did: bear witness to this coming Kingdom using both words and deed.



1.2.5 The Four Relationships in Practice; Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation is the ministry of reconciliation: moving people closer to glorifying God by living in right relationship with God, with self, with others and with the rest of creation.

Reconciliation is the guiding focus of our poverty alleviation efforts. When we are working in communities, we need to ensure that our work does not contribute to these broken relationships but works to restore them.

For instance, when we are working with the materially poor, we need to ensure that people have more than just sufficient material things; we need to ensure they earn sufficient material things through their own labour, for in doing so, we move people closer to being what God created them to be. As we consider this we must also consider those who may be unable to work through no fault of their own such as because of disabilities or illness.

Break the Church Leaders into groups or one large group and get them to choose some work of their church or of an NGO that has occurred in their community. Get them to brainstorm whether the work helped to restore (affected positively) or worked against (affected negatively) the relationships.

Once the group has analysed this work, get them to look back on the negative points.

- Ask them, how can the work be adjusted to restore the relationships?
- How could the model be changed to bring restoration or healing in those areas?

1.2.6 Conclusion

Explain that it is important to think of these four relationship areas when we are working in our communities for the following reasons:

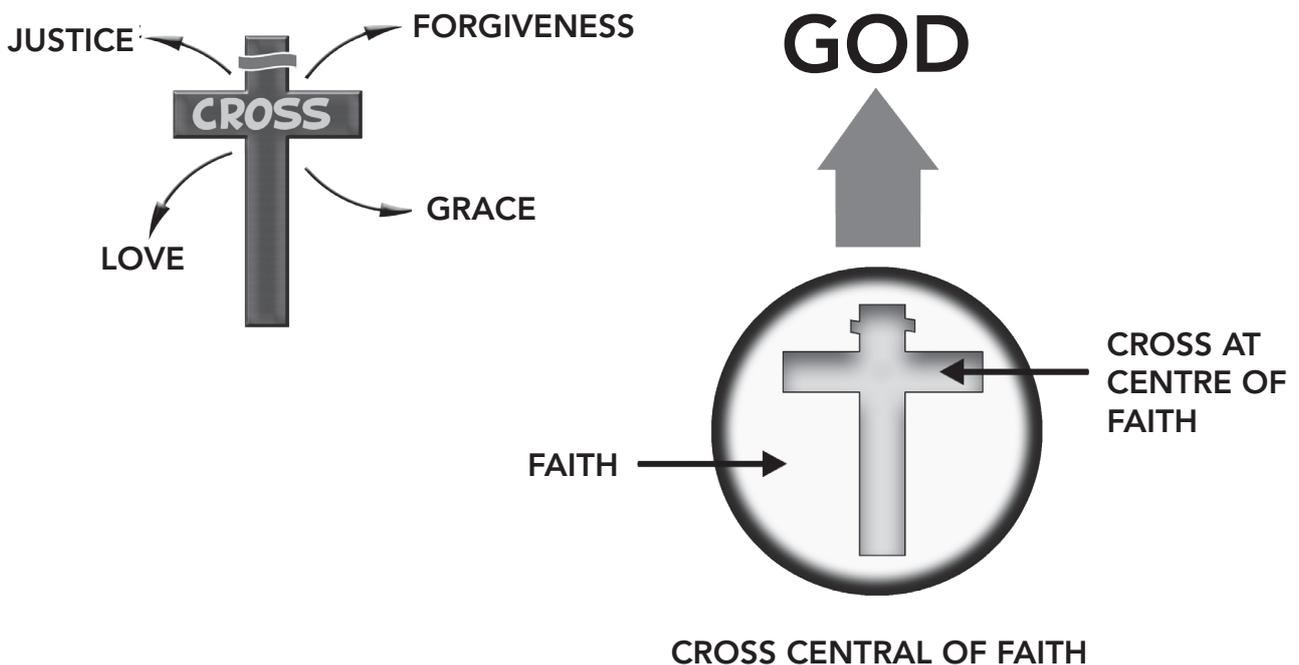
1. By focusing on these four relationships, it ensures that our work is holistic: spiritual, emotional, social, political and economic/material.
2. It ensures that our work is working for good; that we don't rely on models that work against restoration of these key areas.
3. It emphasises to us that we are all poor, and we all need healing in these four areas. It isn't just the organisation or the church that has the answer. We all need each other and the vulnerable in our community also can contribute to restoration. The goal is to work together and be changed together as we work towards transformation and reconciliation.

1.3 THE CROSS

45 MINUTES

1.3.1 The Cross is the Foundation of our Faith

On the Cross, we see God's forgiveness, mercy, grace and justice that demonstrates His love for us. Not receiving what we deserve, but receiving what we don't deserve as Christ took our punishment. God is interested in mercy and justice—key elements in our work as we seek to eliminate *injustice*.



READ:

Matthew 27 v 46-50

DISCUSS:

- What actually happened in these verses?
- What are the implications when read alongside Genesis 1 v 26?
- Jesus lived a life that was holistic in purpose. He naturally weaved the physical and spiritual realms into an inseparable whole—a single ministry (e.g. Mark 1 v 40-44). How was that reflected on the Cross?

Badly wounded, Jesus died physically and spiritually. Jesus died abandoned by everyone, alone. The physical pain of dying on the cross was insignificant compared to the pain of being separated from the Trinity—separated from the 'Us' of Genesis 1 v 26. This is incomprehensible to human beings. God's very identity of relationship was impacted. On that Cross, Jesus wholly died.

1.3.2 The Centrality of the Cross¹⁷

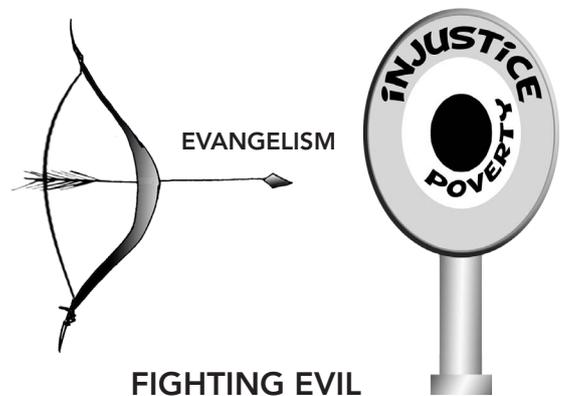
DISCUSS:

As one group:

- How has Jesus' death on the Cross affected us individually?
- How has Jesus' death on the Cross affected our integral mission into our communities and our world?

Facilitator Notes:

- The Cross is central to our faith—it is the only way to God, in which our individual sins are forgiven. The Cross is central to our faith and central to history, central to what it means to be a Christian—sins forgiven, the hope of an eternal future, a salvation secure.
- The Cross is also just as central to every aspect of our biblical mission—that is, of all we do in the name of the crucified and risen Jesus. It is a mistake to think that while our evangelism must be centred on the Cross (as, of course, it has to be, should be and is), that our helping of the poor, our fighting of injustice has some other theological foundation.
- When we are confronting the evils of injustice and poverty, we are confronting the powers of evil—with all their dismal effects on human life and the wider creation. If we are to proclaim and demonstrate the reality of the Kingdom of God and His justice, then we will be in direct conflict with this.
- In all such work, social or evangelistic, we confront the reality of sin. In all such work, we challenge the darkness of the world with the light—we challenge the darkness with the Good News of Jesus Christ and the reign of God through Him. How can we punch holes in the darkness—because of the Cross. How can we bring justice where there is injustice—because of the Cross. How can we challenge evil in people's spiritual, moral, physical and social lives—only because of the Cross. How can we tackle water issues, livelihoods issues, issues of disease and natural disaster—because of the Cross.



1.3.3 Conclusion

The Cross must be as central to our social engagement, our relief and our development, as it is to our evangelism.

¹⁷ This section was written by Simon Barrington, Samaritan's Purse UK.

1.4 THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR¹⁸

1.5 HOURS

1.4.1. Activity: Role Play

Choose two people for the following role play, as well as one person to read the narrator's introduction:

ACTIVITY: ROLE PLAY

The Evangelist

Narrator's Introduction: Christians sometimes have what we call a "narrow view of the Gospel." They understand that accepting Jesus is a life-and-death decision. But they don't understand something else. When they are blind to their neighbour's other needs, their message is actually lost ... Today, we'll visit a very poor home. The only resident is quite ill in bed. A visitor, a Christian evangelist on a door-to-door campaign, has just arrived.

EV (Evangelist): Hello, hello! Anyone home? May I come in? *(Enters)*

PSP (Poor sick person): *(Weakly)* In here ...

EV: Hi. I'm _____, from _____ Church. I just came today to invite everyone to our church. The Lord has been blessing us with a powerful revival. You won't want to miss it.

PSP: *(Groans, speaks haltingly)* Can't come ... can't get out of bed ... too sick to move ... lost my job ... no money for medicine ... or food ... or rent ...

EV: Those are big problems, but I know Someone who has the answer to all of life's problems. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?

PSP: *(Weakly)* My family and friends left me when I got sick and lost my job ... Could anyone from your church help me? Please?

EV: The best help you could get is found right here in this little tract. It explains God's plan for your life. You know, it isn't His will that you're lying here! Take this, read it, pray the sinner's prayer and believe!

PSP: *(Weaker)* Can't ... too weak ... *(Stops talking, lies motionless)*

EV: *(Checks pulse)* Still alive! Praise God, I got here in time to witness! I'll leave the tract. I'd better get going so I can minister to other lost souls. *(Talks loudly in PSP's ear)*

ASK:

- What did you see in the role play? What problem is presented?
- Do you or your church ever act like the Christian in the role play, freely offering spiritual advice or ministry, but not helping with other problems?
- Was the Christian evangelist effective in spiritual ministry? In any other area? Why or why not?

¹⁸ The Samaritan Strategy, Harvest Foundation. See also Bob Moffit's paper in the SS resource book for a background on this.

1.4.2 God's Heart

The Scripture is clear that God is concerned about people who are hurting (James 2 v 14–26).

One of the best 'clues' to help us understand God's heart for people is found in the commands of Jesus.

READ:

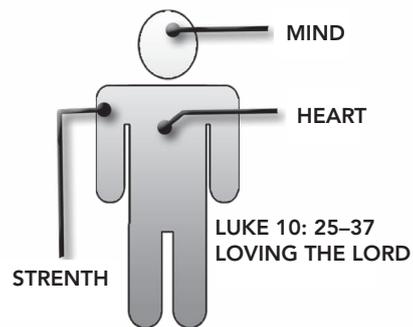
1 John 3 v 16-18

DISCUSS:

- What is the relationship between the love of God and our response to people's needs?
- Is it possible to share the love of God without helping people's needs?
- Are we disciples of Jesus if we are not ministering to the social, emotional and physical—as well as the spiritual needs of people?



WHICH IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?
(MATT 22: 36–40)



1.4.3. Group Work

Break into groups and get each group to look at the following verses:

Group 1:

READ:

Luke 10 v 25-37

DISCUSS:

- What are the two questions that Jesus answers in this parable?
- What was Jesus' answer to the first question?
- What was Jesus' answer to the second question?

Group 2:

READ:

Matthew 22 v 36-40
Luke 6 v 31

DISCUSS:

- What does Jesus call the law of love in Matthew 22 v 36-40?
- What is the term often used for Luke 6 v 31?

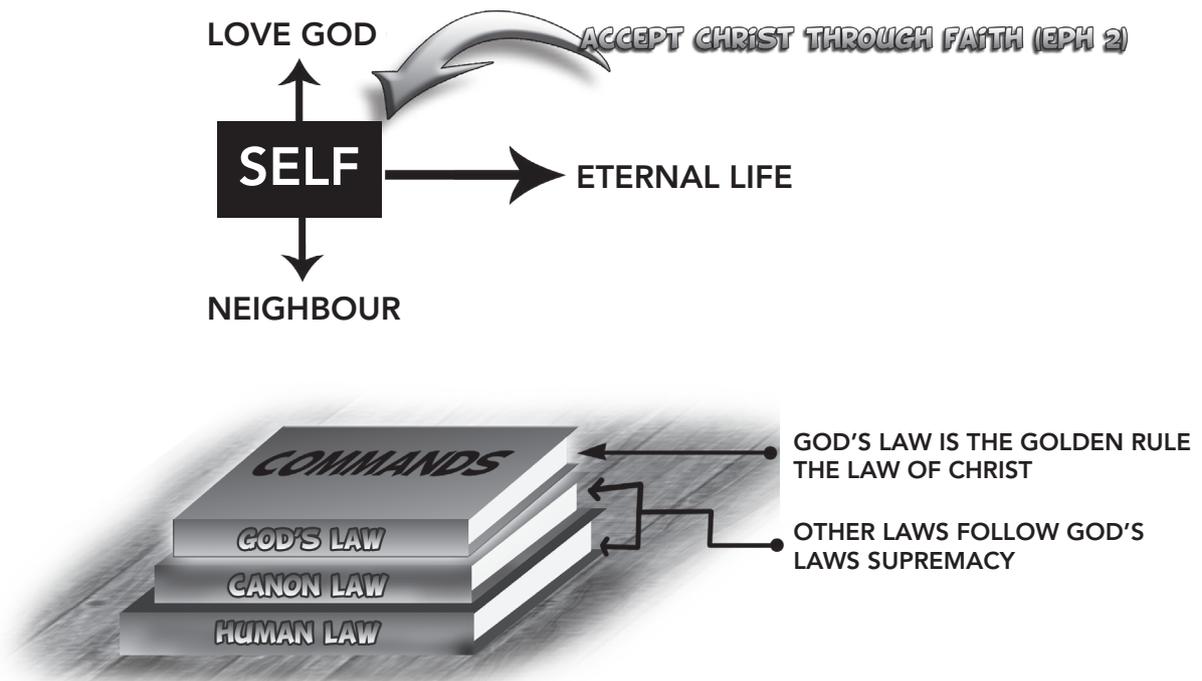
Group 3:

READ:

Matthew 22 v 36-40

DISCUSS:

- What does Jesus say is the greatest of the two commandments?



DISCUSS:

Return to one large group and share the findings from each group.

Ensure that the following is emphasised during the feedback sessions:

- God is deeply concerned about people's suffering. We must be, also. If we neglect to have compassion and to help others, God's love is not in us.
 - To inherit eternal life, Jesus said it is important to love God and our neighbour. (To inherit eternal life, we simply need to accept Christ's sacrifice by faith— Ephesians 2.) Our neighbours are those who are in need of practical acts of mercy. A neighbour is also one who shows mercy to those who are hurting.
 - The law of love is referred to as the Royal Law, the Law of Christ, the Great Commandment and the Golden Rule.
 - Jesus said that the greatest commandments are to love the Lord God and our neighbours (Matthew 22 v 37–39). On these commands hang the Law and the Prophets (v 40). The whole Bible to this point is based upon this. The Law and Prophets can be summarised by Matthew 23 v 23 (Law) and in Micah 6 v 8 (Prophets).
 - Scripture says that we really can't love God without loving our neighbour. God reminds us that loving our neighbour is the essential, practical way that we express our love for Him (James 2 v 14–26).
-

1.5 GOD'S INTENTION FOR PEOPLE¹⁹

1 HOUR

In this lesson, we will look at Jesus' development through the eyes of Luke. As we study Luke 2 v 52, let us remember that Luke was a medical doctor. Let us imagine that Luke, like all good doctors, had keen powers of observation. In fact, we see evidence of his observational skills in his Gospel (Luke) and in his history with the early church (Acts). We remember, too, that Luke wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As we consider Dr Luke's description of Jesus' growth, we will use it as a model of development for our families, churches and communities.

1.5.1 More on Jesus

Break into groups and study the following:

READ:

Luke 2 v 52

DISCUSS:

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

READ:

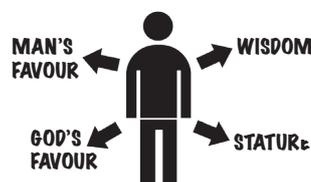
Luke 4 v 18-19
Matthew 20 v 25-28

DISCUSS:

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

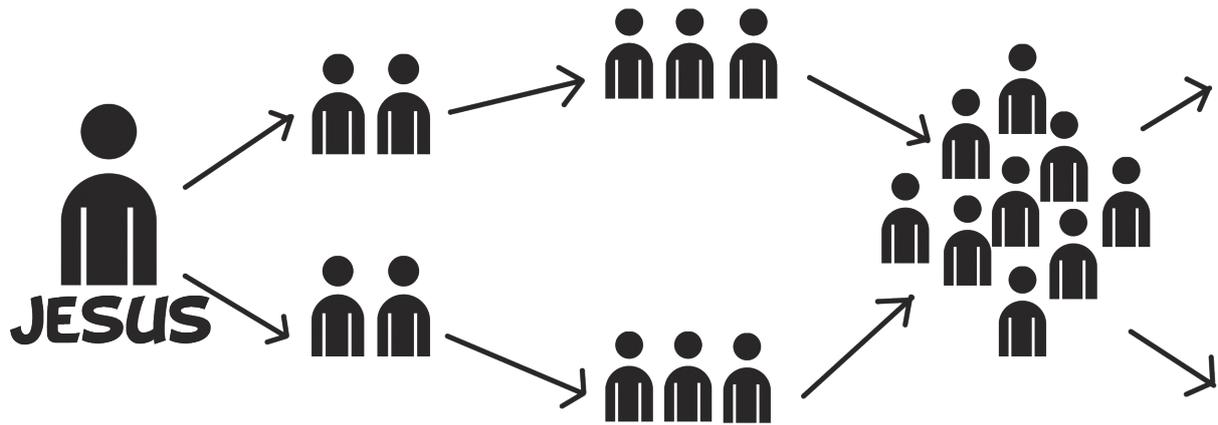


A DOCTOR'S STETHOSCOPE,
AS LUKE IN THE BIBLE,
OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS ARE
NEEDED IN A MINISTRY



LUKE 2: 52 AND JESUS
GREW... HE IS OUR MODEL
TODAY

¹⁹ The Samaritan Strategy (not the same as or produced by Samaritans Purse).



HE PREACHED AND ENLARGED HIS MINISTRY

Key points to emphasise during the feedback sessions:

- Jesus is our model. He grew in four areas—wisdom, stature, favour with God and favour with others. 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.)
- People should grow towards a goal or purpose, just as Jesus did. People should grow towards the purpose that God has for their life. The 'agenda' should be God's.
- God ensured 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 people 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.
- 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 and service. This development is a lifetime process. We must be prepared to invest in people for a long period.
- He empowers us as we labour, 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".

02

THE CALL OF THE
LOCAL CHURCH

OBJECTIVE:

To understand that God has placed His Church in the world to carry on this transformational message.

This can be done by the following sessions:

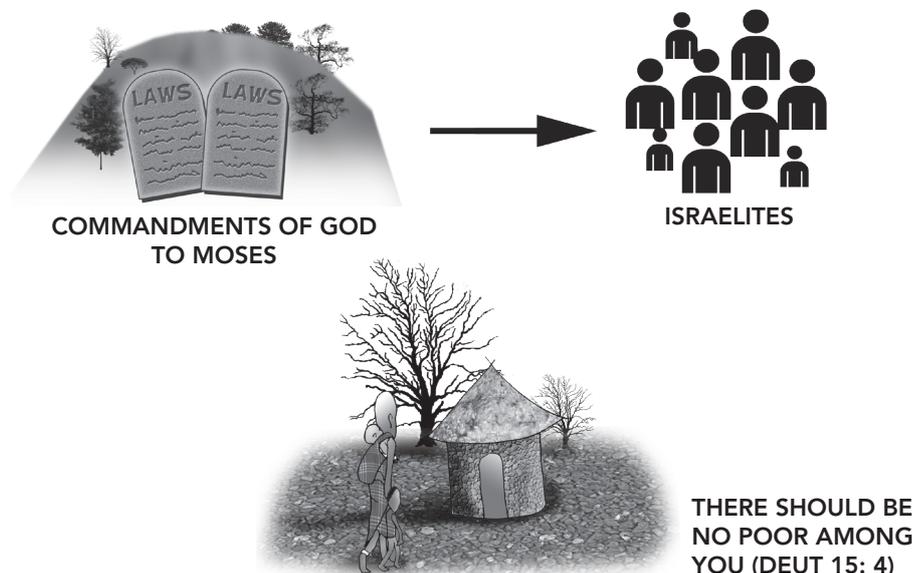
- 2.1 The Call of the Church
- 2.2 Activity: How do We See Our Church?
- 2.3 Jesus Sends out the Disciples

2.1 THE CALL OF THE CHURCH**1.5 HOURS****2.1.1 Israel's Call to the Poor²⁰**

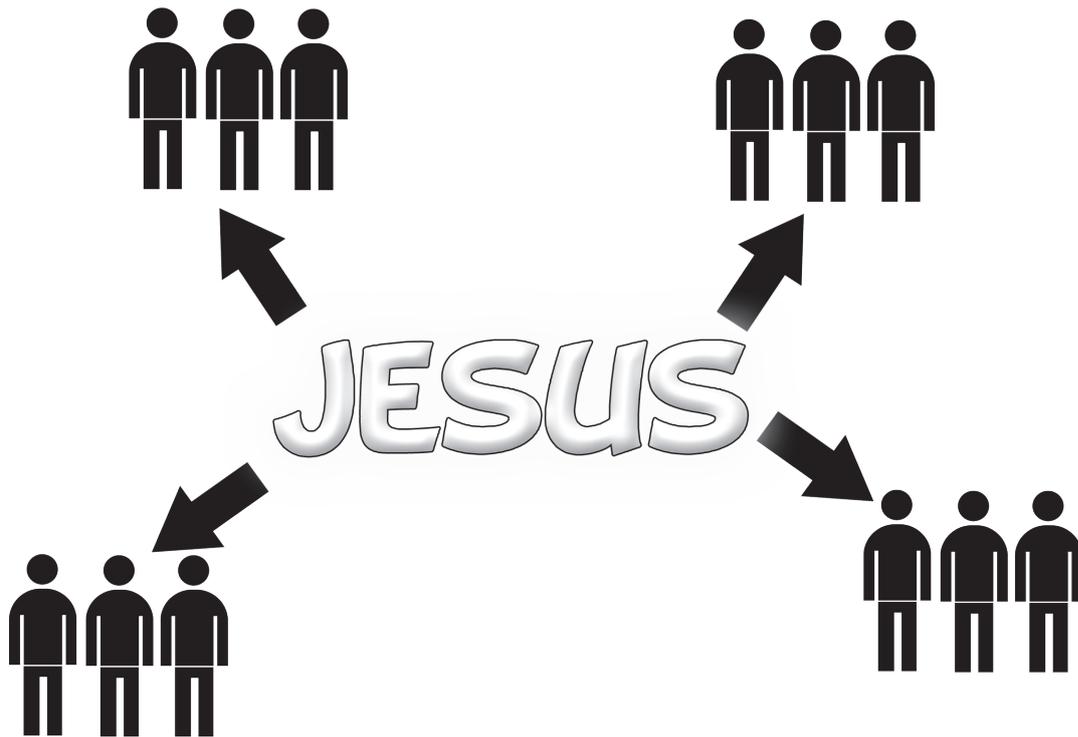
In the Old Testament, God's chosen people, the nation of Israel, were to point forward to the coming King by foreshadowing what He would be like (Matthew 5 v 17; John 5 v 37–39, 45–46; Colossians 2 v 16–17). Hence, since King Jesus would bring Good News for the poor, it is not surprising that God wanted Israel to care for the poor as well.

In fact, God gave Moses numerous commands instructing Israel to care for the poor. The Sabbath year cancelled debts for Israelites, allowed the poor to glean from the fields and set slaves free, as well as equipping the slaves to be productive (Deuteronomy 15 v 1–18). The jubilee year emphasised liberty; it released slaves and returned land to its original owners (Leviticus 25 v 8–55). Other laws about debt, tithing and gleaning ensured that the poor would be cared for each day of the year. The commands were so extensive that they were designed to achieve the ultimate goal of eradicating poverty among God's people: "There should be no poor among you", God declared (Deuteronomy 15 v 4).

Unfortunately, Israel did not fulfil its task, and one of the results was that God sent His chosen people into exile.



²⁰ Corbett, Steve, & Fikkert, Brian. (2009). *When helping hurts: how to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.



MATT 16: 18
CHURCH DESCRIBED GATHERING OF PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN JESUS

In the New Testament, God's people, the Church, are more than just a representation of Jesus. The Church is the body, bride and very fullness of Jesus (Ephesians 1 v 18–23; 5 v 25; 5 v 30). When people look at the Church, they should see the One who declared—in word and in deed to the leper, the lame and the poor—that His Kingdom is bringing healing to every element of the universe.

Jesus spent a lot of time with the twelve disciples, teaching and training them and showing them how to live through His own example. When Jesus sent out His twelve disciples to minister to others, He commanded them to heal the sick, being concerned for the physical needs of others as they preached the Good News of Jesus Christ (Luke chapter 9).

It's not enough for the Church to preach the Good News of the Gospel in the hope that people will come to hear it. Jesus wants us to go out into our towns, cities and villages, declaring the Good News and to *"be Good News"*. Jesus' challenge to the disciples (Matthew 10 and 28) was to *"go and do the same"*.

We are His Church today; therefore, we also need to be challenged by Him to share in His work of caring for the needy, to teach others about all that He has commanded and to make new disciples.

Whom should we care for?

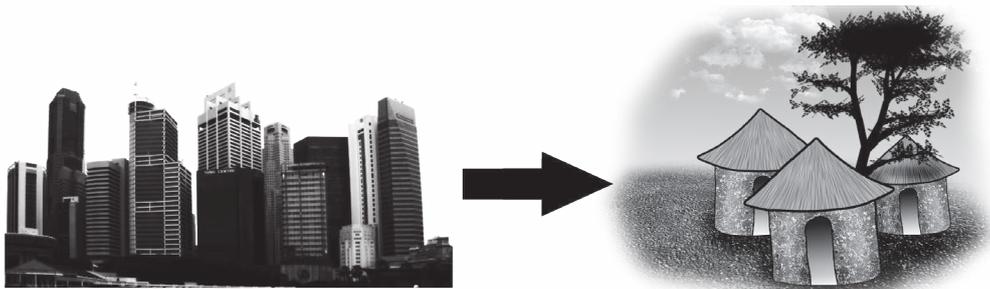
What is God's heart for the poor? What does the Bible say about whom we should be caring for in our community?

READ:

Ask the group to look through their Bibles and suggest some verses.

Examples (note: the group does not need to read all of these verses):

- Zechariah 7 v 9-12
 - Isaiah 61 v 1-3
 - James 1 v 27
 - Matthew 25 v 34-40
 - Luke 10 v 30-37
 - Luke 15 v 1-7
- In the Old Testament, the prophets are clear in declaring what God has in mind for the proper treatment of the poor and needy.
 - Zechariah 7 v 9–12: *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor.'"*
 - Isaiah 41 v 17: *"The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, their tongues fail for thirst. I, the LORD, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them."*
 - Isaiah 61 v 1–3: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."*

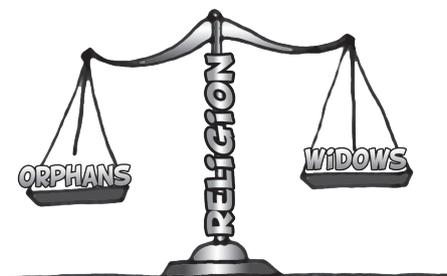


FROM CITIES TO VILLAGES SPREADING THE WORD



**PROVIDE FOR THE HUNGRY GIVE FOOD AND WATER
(ZECH 7: 9–12)**

- In Isaiah 58 v 5–8, God gives His people an awakening as well as the prescription for restoring vigour to her ministries: *“Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bullrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.”*
- In case there was any doubt about all of this, the Spirit of God saw fit to reiterate these Old Testament truths in the New Testament writings. Taking care of the poor cannot be regarded as Old Testament ‘legalism’ or simply be spiritualised away. Care for the needy (in word and deed) is a part of the true religion of the whole of Scripture.
- The apostles were no less concerned about these matters. Paul indicates that having a regard for the poor, especially of the Church, was every believer’s business: *“For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem”* (Romans 15 v 26). The first council in Jerusalem made a special point to Paul that he *“should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do”* (Galatians 2 v 10).
- James also speaks directly to our responsibility to minister to the needy of this world. *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world”* (1 v 27). He gives the ground of this principle a few paragraphs later: *“Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”* (2 v 5).



CHRISTIAN SHOULD BRING BALANCE

2.1.3 Conclusion

Isn't it time we started taking the commands of Scripture to heart, as our forefathers did? It doesn't matter how much money you have; it takes no money to show an act of kindness and speak the truth of the Gospel's hope to a person who is destitute. For those with means, God has given you those things in stewardship. Let us take seriously the Lord's burden for the poor.

This message to love and care is meant for our communities. Most of us would find it easy to do these things for Christ, and even for our own family or church members, but Jesus says we must even do them for the lowliest of people, including those we don't know or may even despise. We are called to serve all people.

2.2 HOW DO WE SEE OUR CHURCH?

1 HOUR

2.2.1 Looking Round in Our Communities

DISCUSS:

- Who are the vulnerable in your community or churches?
- Brainstorm these groups: orphaned, widowed, people with disabilities, children, old people, etc.
- What makes them vulnerable? (Do not go into detail; the idea is just to get an overall sense of who the vulnerable are and what makes them vulnerable.)
- In looking at the previous verses, on the call of the Church, what does this mean for your church?
 - How can our church respond to Jesus' challenge to the disciples and, therefore, also to us?
 - What opportunities does our church have to impact people's lives as Jesus did? How can we show love to those who are rejected by our society?

NOTE:

You do not need to talk about HIV, Water or Livelihoods if the group has not mentioned it themselves. If they have, then speak about it. If they haven't, it'll come up during the mapping of needs. The key objective at this point is to get people to understand that the call of the Church is to care for those who are vulnerable in their community.²²

Choose one of the following activities:

ACTIVITY 1: HOW DO OTHERS SEE OUR CHURCH

Work in small groups and think about your own church. Describe what your church is like, using a picture or symbol. Draw this inside a large circle on a big sheet of paper. Draw arrows coming out from the circle around the church to show each positive influence of the church within the community. Use thicker arrows for the most important influences. Label each arrow. Use dotted lines to show possible future influences.

Share and explain your drawing with your group.

- Thinking of the pictures drawn, what sort of church do the people around us think we are?

In your Groups:

READ:

James 2 v 14–17.

DISCUSS:

- Discuss how well our faith is shown through practical action and caring.
- What are some practical things that our church is doing to express our faith?
- What are the key practical needs experienced by people in our church and in our community?
- What does this teaching challenge us to do in our community?

²² Activity 2.2.2 from TearFund, PILLARS: Mobilising the local church.

ACTIVITY 2: HOW DO OTHERS SEE OUR CHURCH?

The direction of Church and Community Mobilisation

Purpose of the exercise

Through light-hearted sketches, the leader facilitates learning from the group itself, enabling them to act out and articulate for themselves some of the typical approaches to mission and community-engagement they might have encountered from different types of churches. As an outcome, the leader facilitates the group in encouraging a shift further across the spectrum towards the third group, which is the Church and Community Mobilisation (i.e. Shalom) approach.

Activity

Divide into three groups of 5-6 people each, giving them 15 minutes to prepare a five-minute light-hearted sketch which typify and illustrate one of the three following approaches to local church (each group prepares a sketch of a different approach):, 'words-only', , 'aid' and 'development', based on the paragraphs below. *If possible ensure that one or two people with development experience are placed in the 'development' group, as this one will be the most challenging group to model.*

When the sketches have been played out in front of the whole group, ask each group how they approached the exercise and what they learned from it. Ask those watching the sketches what they noticed and what they felt about what they'd seen. Whilst being faithful to the purpose of the session, the facilitator should be careful to find some positive things to say about each of the five approaches (e.g. they could be described as 'the prayers', 'the preachers', 'the welcomers', 'the activists' and 'the enablers').

Timing and resources

The session requires a minimum of 40 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes.

To begin with the facilitator outlines the purpose and activity, and briefly talks through the three approaches (5 up to 10 minutes). Pre-selection of group leaders (particularly group three) would enable the facilitator to simply brief them beforehand)

Ten (up to 20) minutes for the three groups to simultaneously prepare their sketches. Facilitator moves around the groups to give clarity, support and direction where necessary.

The three group presentations of four (or 5) minutes each
Up to 15 minutes to debrief on lessons learned

End

Group 1: Church Responding to Spiritual need: Words-only approach

The church that wants to see more people saved, but that sees its mandate as only verbal; to preach, rather than to be involved in any actions of kindness or good work. Think about the words it uses, the positive and negative impact of the way it communicates with outsiders, how outsiders would react to this words-only approach, and how the church would respond when faced with extreme poverty, or the need to engage in social action.

Group 2: Church responding to physical needs: Aid approach

The church that sees its mandate as reaching out to the whole person; body, soul and spirit, and is ready to speak and act in the community as well as from their church buildings, but limits its social action to programmes that *give things away and do things for people*, rather than developing people into maturity and self-sustainability. Think positively about some of the things it could provide and do, but also think about the limitations of a programmatic approach. Think also about how beneficiaries would feel in the long term about purely being the recipients of hand-outs, and think about some of the attitudes that can develop and problems that can occur when people in the neighbourhood become dependent on the church's activities and provisions.

Group 3: Church responding holistically: (Shalom or Development) approach

The church that sees its mandate as reaching out with an integral mission to the whole person; body, soul and spirit, and is ready to act within the community as well as from their church buildings base, but which also has a real understanding of the need to empower and develop people – offering a hand-up rather than a hand-out. Think positively about how it disciples, empowers and develops people and communities, how it uses its resources, what challenges it faces, what it says no to (i.e. what it *won't* do), how and at what levels it engages with its society (e.g. who it partners with), and how it determines root problems and solutions.

2.2.2 Conclusion

We, as God's Church, are to be used for God's plan as He works to restore all people from the brokenness caused by sin to the biblical shalom of God's intentions for all of life.

What then is God's plan for the Church? First, God's plan is that the Church itself be the bearer of God's image. Second, that the Church serve as God's agent of reconciliation and restoration. The Church is God's hands and feet to bring healing to our broken world.

2.3 JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES

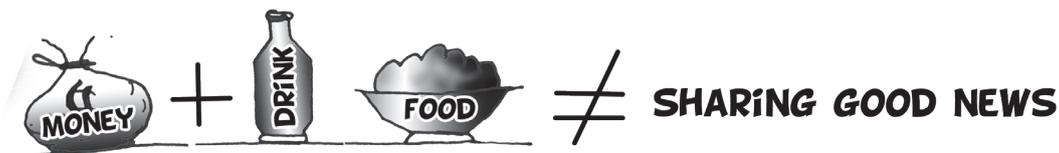
30 MINUTES

READ:

Mark 6 v 7–13

Jesus sent out His disciples to preach and live the Gospel. However, He provided them with little formal training and no resources. Most of the disciples had little education— they included fishermen and labourers. Jesus did not train experts in understanding people’s problems. He trained ordinary people of faith to continue His work—people who longed for the Kingdom of God to come on this earth.²³

Jesus inspired the disciples by His teaching and example and then sent them out to share the Good News without their own food, money or equipment. In the same way today, ordinary Christians can share that same inspiration and go out to transform their communities.



WITHOUT ANYTHING, GOOD NEWS CAN STILL BE SPREAD

DISCUSS:

Equipping the Disciples

Break into groups.

Discuss how Jesus equipped the disciples before sending them out in Mark 6 v 7-13.

- Did the disciples understand who Jesus really was when they were first sent out? How well did they know Him?
- How did Jesus prepare them for this work?
- What resources did they need?
- Why do we think the disciples were sent out in pairs?
- What would have happened if the disciples had waited for someone more experienced or trained than them to arrive? Where would the Church be today?
- As a church, do we sometimes delay taking action and showing genuine love?
- Why do we wait?
- What might be the results of such a delay?

At this point, you can turn to Appendix 1 on page 62 for an optional one hour activity entitled 'Digging Deeper.'

²³ Reproduced from TearFund, PILLARS: Mobilising the local church by permission. Copyright © Tearfund UK [2004] (www.tearfund.org).

03

THE SOLUTION LIES
IN THE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE:

To illustrate to the Church that they have the ability to transform their communities starting with the resources they have.

This can be done by the following sessions:

- 3.1 Activities: The Solution Lies With Us/Secret in the Box/ Crossing the River
- 3.2 Recognising What We Have to Give (asset-based approach)

Explain that the Church needs to see that God has given His people, all of His people, the ability to change their own communities. It isn't up to the trained, the outsiders or the experts to make changes in communities.

3.1 Activities²⁴

The following section is best explained through practical activities. Over the following pages, we can look at a number of activities to undertake with the group being envisioned.

You can choose one of the following activities:

ACTIVITY 1:**3.1.1 Community Solutions****20 minutes**

Break the group into groups of 8 to 10 people. Choose one person from each group and send them away so they cannot see what the group is doing. Get the remaining people to hold hands in a circle. Get them to tangle themselves up without letting go of their hands.

Call the people in from outside. Get them to come back to their group and try to untangle the group.

Then, once they are untangled, get the group to tangle themselves up again. Get them to untangle themselves without any help from the person.

COME TOGETHER AND DISCUSS:

- What was it like for the outsider to come in and untangle the group? Was it easy, difficult? What helped?
- What was it like for the group to untangle itself? Was it easy, difficult?
- Was it more helpful to do it yourself? Why?

Conclude by saying that often the problems are known in the community and, therefore, the solutions are also known. When an outsider comes in, perhaps they can give some input, but the real solutions should be found in the community.

OTHER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THIS SECTION:

- Ask the group for an example of what NGOs have done and whether there has been any long-lasting impact of the work. Ask why the changes in the community were not long-lasting.
- Ask the group why people in the community expect change to come from outside the local area.
- Ask the group, can people develop themselves?

²⁴ 3.1.1 reproduced from TearFund, PILLARS: Mobilising the local church by permission. 3.1.2 reproduced from TearFund, PILLARS: Mobilising the community by permission. Copyright © Tearfund UK [2004, 2003] (www.tearfund.org)

ACTIVITY 2:**3.1.2 A Secret in a box****20 minutes**

Find a large cardboard box without holes. Place a number of different items in the box that have been found in the local area. These could include a bag of seeds, some stones, a hammer and some nails, or anything else you can find from the community. Close the box so no one can see inside.

Divide participants into four groups and set them each a different task. Ask each group, starting with Group A, to carry out their activity in front of the rest of the group. After discussing, they share with everybody what they think is the secret in the box. They must be very clear about all the details; colour, shape and size. Group B follows next, then Group C and finally Group D.

Group A is allowed only to walk around the box before it decides what they think is inside. Group B is allowed only to pick up the box and smell or shake it. Group C can blindfold one person who can put their hand in and feel the objects inside without taking them out of the box. The others must not look inside.

Group D is allowed to take out the objects one at a time and describe them.

- What happened in this exercise? What was each group doing? What did you notice?
- Why did Group A know so little about what was contained in the box?
- What helped each of the other groups to understand more about the 'secret'?
- If the 'secret in the box' is made up of all the important knowledge and resources contained within our local area, who knows most about the 'secret'?
- Who knows least?
- Who knows best about what is available within our local area? Who is best able to use this knowledge?
- Who do we usually think of as most important? Does this exercise make us question our attitudes about this?

CONCLUDE:

Too many times organizations have come from the outside to do something for the community, but when the outsiders leave, what had been accomplished disintegrates. The people expect the outsiders to provide the funds, parts or labour to maintain and repair the project. However, in the end, it doesn't last.

DISCUSS: (break into groups)

- Why do people usually expect change to come from outside the local area?
- Do you agree with this quote from Julius Nyerere (former president of Tanzania)? 'People cannot be developed - they can only develop themselves.'
- How can we seek God's priorities and values for our area and for our lives?
- What 'dreams' would we like to see come about in our own local area? What could we do to help these dreams come about?

ACTIVITY 3:**3.1.3 Crossing the River****20 minutes (Sourced from TearFund)**

Three people are needed for the role play. You will need paper for stones (or use leaves or actual stones) and you will need to delineate where the borders of the river are. The objective is for the people to cross from one side to another.

One person (usually a man) acts as the outsider who comes to a community and offers to help someone cross the river. The river has several useful stepping-stones. The outsider quickly carries the person on his back, but gets tired and leaves them in the middle of the river on a stepping-stone, saying he will return later. The person cannot find the way across the river on his/her own.

The outsider returns and offers to show a second person the way across the river. They move slowly together with the outsider showing where it is safe to step. They reach the other side safely. The first person is still stuck in the middle of the river.

DISCUSS:

- What type of outsiders come to our local area to offer help? Do people ever feel like the first person (who was left in the middle of the river)? Have they begun to take action on some new initiative but have then been unable to continue it on their own? Why? How could it have been better?
- What was different about the approach of the outsider during the second role play? What knowledge did the outsider share, and how did he share it?
- What could the second person have done to bring the role play to a different end? (Prompt the group to talk about how the second person had the skills and knowledge to place stepping-stones and safely cross the river, rather than the outsider.)

CONCLUDE:

Conclude with how sharing knowledge can help many people, while doing something for people can help only a few. After sharing knowledge (of making bread, for example) you still have as much to share. After giving away loaves of bread there are no more left for sharing.

3.2 RECOGNISING WHAT WE HAVE TO GIVE

2.5 HOURS

3.2.1 Needs-Based Development

ACTIVITY: ROLE PLAY

Quickly have one person playing a 'poor' person in a community. The other person can play a pastor or church member coming to them with displays of exaggerated paternalism.

"How are you, oh you look so sad today; let me help you. Your clothes are all torn; that is so sad. I will try to find some clothes for you ... etc."

ASK THE GROUP:

How was the young man feeling?

- He was feeling happy that someone cared.
- He felt hopeful that he had someone to talk to about things.

Could there be other negatives?

Continue the role play, two years later. In the role play, emphasise the ongoing dependency of the young person and the continued handouts of the church or pastor.

"Oh, hi there. You again, have you come for your weekly food ration? I see your clothes are still poor. Sorry we don't have enough for your family again; we'll have to see what we can do, etc."

ASK THE GROUP:

How is that young man feeling now?

- He may feel that he doesn't need to do anything.
- It stops him from thinking for himself.
- He may feel he cannot do anything on his own.

ASK THE GROUP:

What happens when that assistance ends?

- His situation has gone from bad to worse.
- His situation is worse than when it began.

What is development that is 'needs-based'? Needs-Based development is an approach to development, where communities are asked what their needs and problems are, and then organisations work to provide solutions to the problems.

NOTE:

Needs-based development is not the same as an emergency relief situation. In emergency relief situations, people have an immediate need that must be met in order for them to stay alive. The word 'development' implies a non-emergency situation where there is more time to solve the problem.

The assumption in the needs-based approach is that the solutions to poverty are dependent upon outside human and financial resources. Churches and organisations using a needs-based approach are often quick to provide food, clothes, shelter and money to meet the needs of low-income people.

DISCUSS:

- Ask: When you go into your community or meet with people in your church and you ask them the question, “what are your needs”, what do they respond with?
- Ask: Which relationships does this approach affect? Does this approach help to restore relationships or does it harm these relationships?

Examples of impact on the four relationships of a needs-based approach if used in a development context (non-emergency context):

Relationship with God:

- God is not a just God, because why are some people hungry and others not. God hates me.
- God is a Santa Claus; therefore, if I don't get things, then there is something wrong with me.

Relationship with Self:

- What is wrong with me that I have to get the leftovers? Dignity, disempowerment.
- Self-esteem, wrong self-perception. I am worthless. There is something I am doing wrong.

Relationship with Community:

- Increases stigma of people.
- Shifts the relationship to dependency between people.
- Increases divisions between non-poor and poor.
- Reshapes the entire community from “we have always sustained ourselves”, to “I have done this for you; what can you do for me?” In the past there was no need to compete. Now, there is a shift in the community into “I am aware of what you have and what I don't have”.
- It also encourages people to remain at the lowest level because they will receive more handouts from organisations if they portray themselves as poor and needy.

Relationship with environment/creation:

- We cannot self-sustain ourselves; we have no resources.
- How do I get through today? A person doesn't think long-term.
- A priority of earning lots of money—families are separated as some go abroad looking for work.
- There is no effort to get something from the local resources; there is a focus on buying from the town.

Starting a relationship with people in our communities by asking them “What is wrong with you”, confirms the feelings that we are superior, that they are inferior and that they need us to fix them.²⁵



HOW CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS USE NEED-BASED DEVELOPMENTS

²⁵ See Worldviews section of Behaviour Change document available from SPUK.

Break into groups of 6 to 8 people

READ:

As one big group: Matthew 25 v 31-40
 James 2 v 15-16
 Luke 16 v 19-25

Other optional verses to choose from:

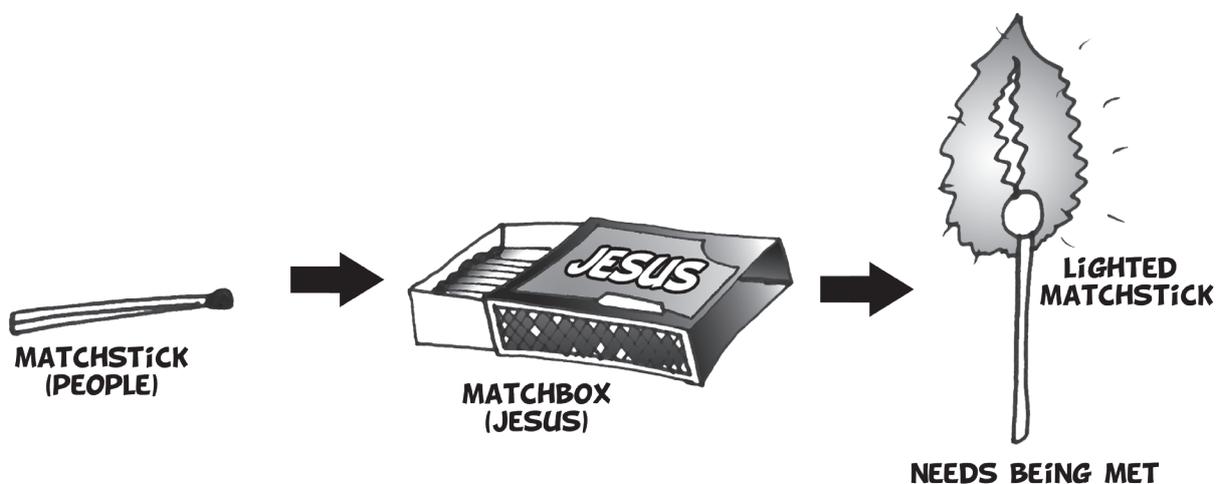
- Luke 17 v 11-19. People ran to Jesus to get their needs met (although he criticised them for this and told them to seek after the food that lasts).
- Luke 18 v 35-43. The Blind man came to Jesus and asked that his needs were met.
- Acts 6. The new church caring for the needs of widows.
- Luke 19 v 8. Zacchaeus committed to give half of his wealth to the poor.

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

- What do these verses say about providing for people's needs?
- How have churches and FBOs used these verses to care for people?

The assumption in the needs-based approach is that the solutions to poverty are dependent upon outside human and financial resources. Churches and organisations using a needs-based approach are often quick to provide food, clothes, shelter and money to meet the needs of low-income people.



PEOPLE RAN TO JESUS (LUKE 17: 11-19)

3.2.2 Asset-Based Development

ACTIVITY: ROLE PLAY

A church member goes to the same young man.

"Thanks for inviting me to your homestead. Wow, look at all of the goats that you have! And you have been able to reproduce them, at least once a year. That is amazing. And look at your land! I hear that land in this area is very rich. That is nice that you have a river right next to your land. That must make it very convenient. And your grandmother, I see she is able to weave these mats. What an excellent skill."

DISCUSS:

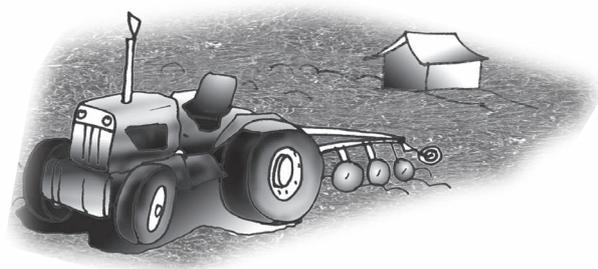
Ask: How does this young man feel now?

- A wakeup call: he realises that he has things he can use that he wasn't aware of before.
- He wasn't making use of these things; they can be useful to him.
- There is something to start with now.
- He feels happy, affirmed, etc.

3.2.3 Talk

Asset-based development focuses on what people have. It doesn't ask them what they need. Asset-based development recognises that God has blessed every person and community with gifts, such as land, social networks, animals, savings, intelligence, schools, creativity, production equipment, etc.

An asset-based approach puts the emphasis on what people already have and asks them to consider, "What is right with you? What do you have that you can use to improve your life and that of your community?"



JUST LIKE A TRACTOR, A COMMUNITY SHOULD BE ASKED TO USE WHAT THEY HAVE TO CULTIVATE THE MANY FIELDS IN THEIR ASPECTS THAT CAN IMPROVE THEIR LIVES

DISCUSS:

Ask: Which relationships does this approach affect? Does this approach help to restore relationships or does it harm the relationships?

Relationship with God:

- God is seen as just.
- He loves me, as He has given me good things.
- Our faith increases as we learn to depend on Him.

Relationship with Self:

- God has given me talents and gifts.
- People feel better about themselves if they can provide for themselves and their family.
- Being able to work for my family and myself gives me dignity and makes me feel happy.
- A negative—it could create egotism.

Relationship with Community:

- Shared resources, shared intelligence, etc. This improves relationships in the community.
- It can improve our relationship with our neighbours because we are relying on each other; we are working together.
- A negative—some people could hide what they have and not be honest and share with others.

Relationship with environment/creation:

- I have resources that I can use. I can sustain my family and myself through my work.
- The community is valuable and has resources.
- We are all called to work, to have a purpose and a vocation.

You will find below two boxes, each with a Bible verse and a discussion underneath. Please assign one verse and discussion to each group.

READ:

Matthew 25 v 14-30

DISCUSS:

What was Jesus' point of this story?

- Jesus' point in this story is that all people need to use their gifts, abilities and resources to help bring His Kingdom on earth, regardless of how much they were given. God's call to invest what we have for His Kingdom's purpose is for all believers. To obey Jesus' command to love our neighbour, we need only what we already have.

READ:

Mark 6: 35-44

DISCUSS:

What does this tell us about an asset-based approach?

- Jesus began with what the disciples had. The people had a need, and instead, Jesus called for the assets. The disciples were needs focused: "we don't have enough". Jesus said to them, "you give them something". They came up with loaves and fish, and He said, "that is good enough; let's start with that". God multiplied the sacrifice of this boy many times to benefit many people. This story illustrates how there are no circumstances in which there are some people who have too little or whose lives are too insignificant to be used by God. Even if we have less material things to give, we have our time, prayers, love and other resources (even some we may not be aware of yet). These too, can be used and multiplied by God.



**BEING MINDFUL OF ENVIRONMENT BY
PRESERVATION INCREASES RESOURCES
TO BE USED BY PEOPLE**

READ:

Exodus 4 v 2

In this passage, God began with what Moses had. "What is that in your hand?" It was his staff, which then became a serpent.

READ:

1 Kings 17 v 11-16

There was a drought in the land. God tells Elijah to tell King Ahab what He has decreed. God takes the prophet and puts him by the brook, where he is sustained, and the brook runs dry. Then He tells him to go to the widow and there his needs will be met. The prophet is obedient and goes and finds the widow and commands the woman to give him food. She says, "All I have is a small amount of flour, so all I can make is one meal and then we can die". The prophet says, "give me something first." She shifts from the thought that they are going to die and thinks, let me trust God with what I have, and gives to the prophet.

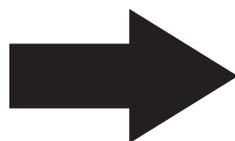
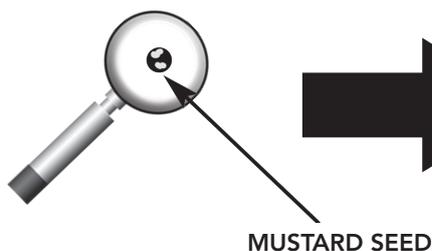
DISCUSS:

Ask the group: what do these verses say about an asset-based approach?

Asset-based development recognises that God has blessed every person and community with gifts, such as land, social networks, animals, savings, intelligence, schools, creativity, production equipment, etc.

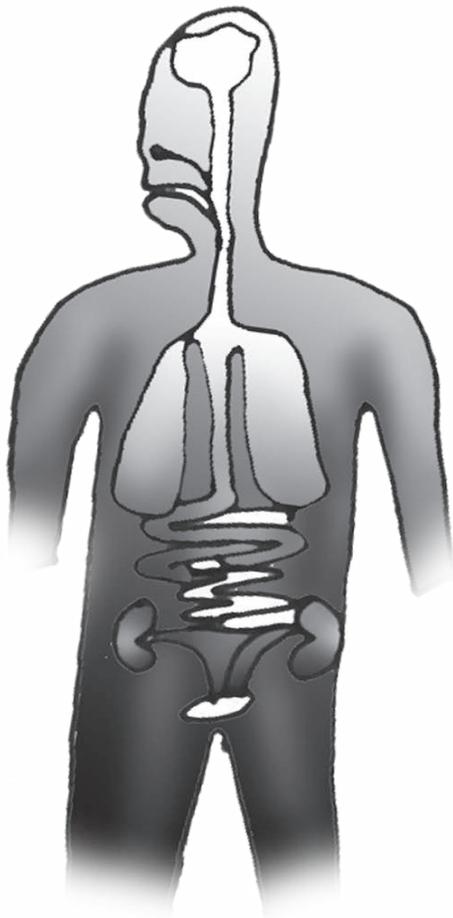
Ask the group for other verses that discuss an asset-based approach. Here are some other examples:

- Matthew 13 v 32. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed: *"Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."* Anything we give or do for God's Kingdom, however small, He can multiply for His good. Sometimes that may mean God does miracles where He multiplies the loaves and fish to feed 5,000 plus people. Other times, we cannot see what He does. But whether we see it or not, He will use it so that it has a greater impact than we ever could have imagined. This is a principle of the Kingdom of God.
- Elisha and the widow. 2 Kings 4. He helped her to shift from a needs-based, *"I have nothing."* It shifted her from looking from what she didn't have to looking to what she had.
- Jesus sent out the 72 disciples; He told them to go with nothing, using the assets of the communities they visited.
- We are all equal before God; He has made us all with some gifts and abilities. Romans 2 v 11: *"God is no respecter of persons"*—He doesn't favour one person over another. This means that everyone has something to offer. God created us all equal, and no one is superior to the other.
- Matthew 17 v 24. The Temple Tax. The fish was a symbol of working to earn the money to pay taxes.
- Proverbs 15 v 16, 17. Better to have peace with the little that we have than riches with hatred.
- 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of how the body is made up of many parts. This idea can also be used with the many parts that are needed to work together within a community. Therefore, once people's gifts are discovered, they need to begin to work together as a community, not as individuals, and be willing to help each other out. We are to help the poor learn how to use these gifts/talents that they have been given so that they can learn to help themselves as well as contributing to their community.
- Jesus gave thanks. When we give thanks, we look to see what we have, instead of seeing what we don't have. Thessalonians 5 v 18: *"In everything, give thanks."*



MATTHEW 13: 32
WHATEVER SMALL OUR CONTRIBUTION TO MINISTRY BIG FRUITS
CAN BE REAPED, MULTIPLYING GOD'S GOODNESS

- Hebrews 13 v 5: *“Be content with what you have.”*
- Ruth. In the Old Testament, farmers were to leave some of the harvest in their fields for the widows. However, the widows had to go and glean—this wasn’t handed to them in Deuteronomy 24 v 21. Even though Ruth was a widow, she was also to work. For example, Ruth went to Boaz’s fields to glean. She was to work herself and use her physical asset.
- Proverbs 10 v 4–5: *“He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.”* All people have resources and assets. This verse says that we need to keep working. Often people think they are poor, or they have a dependency mentality, and yet they have land and resources. Sometimes these people can appear lazy. But why? It can often be a belief: we are born poor; it doesn’t matter what I do, and I will always be poor. So I might as well do nothing. This has also been reinforced by handout projects.
- Matthew 20 v 6–7. Workers in the vineyard. *“Why are you wasting the whole day doing nothing? No one hired us.”* Why didn’t they work? They were waiting to be hired. Are there people in your community who wait around for someone to come and give them work? Is this helpful or not? What could they be doing instead?
- Nehemiah. Each man built a section of the wall near his house, and working together, they were able to complete the wall.
- Gen 1 v 8. God gave all of the earth to humans. *“I give you dominion over all your resources.”*



- When God sent Adam to go work and care for the garden (Gen 2 v 15), God was operating on the ‘asset-based’ principle. In other words, He was telling Adam to go and use what was available to continue making the earth a better place.

- The Bible says in Deuteronomy 8 v 18 that it is God who gives us power (talents, intelligence, creativity, relationships) to create wealth.

- 1 Thessalonians 4 v 11: *“Those who are capable, if you are not old, and can still work, work with your hands.”*

**OUR BODY HAS MANY PARTS
(1 COR 12: 12)
MANY PARTS CAN BE USED TO
WORK IN COMMUNITY**

3.2.4 Conclusion

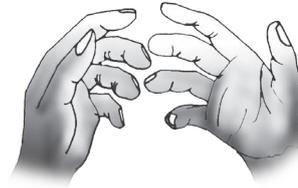
In Joshua 5 v 10–12 the Israelites had journeyed into the Promised Land via Jericho. They ate the produce of the land and manna. The whole manna story is needs-based, and there was a reason for it. As soon as the Israelites got to a place where they could sustain themselves, the manna stopped. It was time for them to live off the assets of the land.

REVIEW:

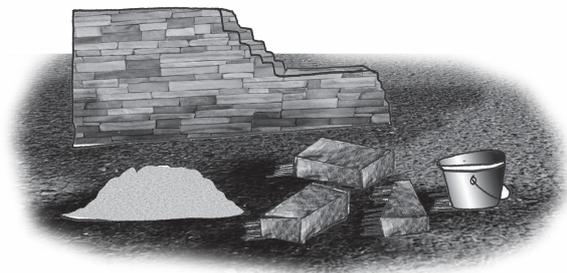
Ask the group: what is the Bible saying to us about needs-based development?

Go back through some of the verses and add the comments below if appropriate:

- There are many verses in the Bible that talk about care for widows and orphans. However, care can mean a lot of things; it doesn't necessarily mean needs-based development, i.e. hand-outs.
- In the early Church, money was gathered and given out to widows. Widows and orphans didn't own land. There was a need to respond to their needs because of this.
- The Good Samaritan was an outsider giving help; he saw the problem and took immediate action. This style of assistance is most appropriate to relief and rehabilitation help—a situation requiring a determined amount of short time. It was a short-term intervention.



**1 THES 5: 11 THOSE WHO ARE CAPABLE
...WORK WITH YOUR HANDS**



**EACH MAN BUILT A SECTION OF
THE WALL NEAR HIS HOUSE
(WORK TOGETHER)**

REVIEW:

Ask the group: When is it appropriate to use needs-based development?

- The immediate meeting of needs is appropriate in a short-term situation.
- In the role play, it was fine for the young man to receive help initially. But when that charity is continual, it begins to negatively affect us.
- We must be careful about handing out relief or charity in the long-term as this may affect people's identity and dignity and create dependency. This can negatively affect people's walk with God, with themselves and with others and creation.
- Ecclesiastes chapter 3 says that there is a time and a season for all things. There is a time to help and give relief, and then there is a time to work and harvest.

REVIEW:

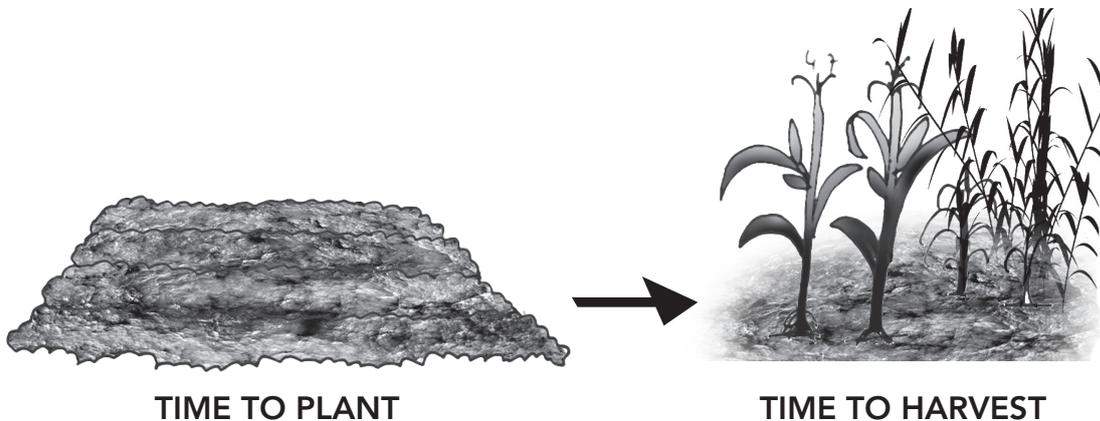
Ask the group: What is the Bible saying about asset-based development?

For when it is longer term. For anytime that it is not an emergency situation.

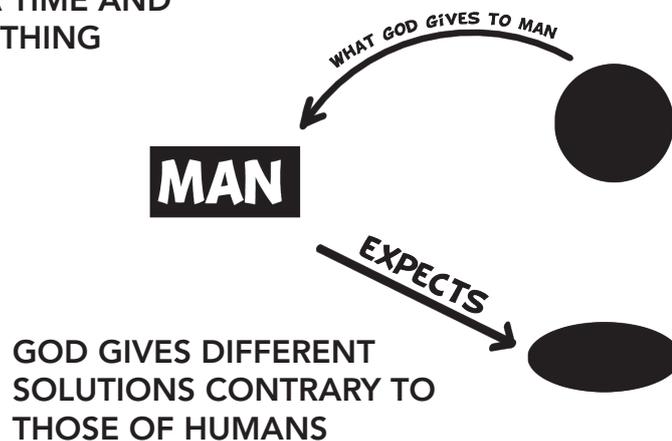
Break into groups:

DISCUSS:

- What approaches have been used in our community? What has been the result of this?
- What approaches are we currently using or have used in the past in our church? Have we used a needs-based approach or an asset-based approach? What was the result of this?
- Do we need to adjust our approach? If so, what are some specific things we could do?
- Like in the Parable of the Talents, did Jesus make an exception giving to those who didn't have much to give?
- Are there any circumstances in which people have 'too little' or something 'too insignificant' to give to God for Kingdom purposes?



ECCLE 3 THERE IS A TIME AND SEASON FOR EVERYTHING



3.3 GOD'S ABACUS ²⁶

45 MINUTES

God desires the best for us. In this lesson, we will see just how powerfully God is prepared to bless those who act in obedience to Him. This is not to say that when we trust God we never have hardships—we do (Romans 5 v 3–4; 2 Corinthians 12 v 6–9). However, the Bible tells of many cases where often God's calculations in a situation give a different solution to the calculations of humans. When people in the Bible gave what they had, God often multiplied.

READ:

Matthew 15 v 35 - 38

(5 loaves + 2 Fish) ÷ Jesus = 5,000 people fed; remainder 12 baskets

1 Kings 17 v 7-16; 18 v 1

(1 widow + 1 handful of flour + a little oil)
 ÷
 (1 widow + 1 son + Elijah) x God

= Food for 3 years x 3 people

= A lesson for everyone thousands of years later

DISCUSS:

- Did Jesus make an exception for people who do not have, in terms of their responsibility to give some of their resources for Kingdom purposes?
- Do those who give to God always see or experience personal blessing in this life?
- What do people need in order to be obedient to Jesus' command to love their neighbour?
- As we share what we have, what attitudes are necessary?
- Are there any circumstances in which people have 'too little' or something 'too insignificant' to give to God?
- What evidence is there that God blesses the giving of all people regardless of what we have?
- When God blesses the gifts we bring, does He bless by 'addition' or 'multiplication'?

READ:

Matthew 25 v 14-30

Servant + 1 talent x 0 = 0 talents + servant thrown into darkness

DISCUSS:

Considering this passage, what do you think is the consequence for people if we use poverty as a reason not to obey Jesus' command to love our neighbour? What is the consequence for anyone who does not love his/her neighbour, regardless of the reason?

²⁶ Inspired by the Samaritan Strategy.

Ensure the following is emphasised through the discussion:

- The obligation to invest what we have for Kingdom purposes is for all believers. That includes the poor. To obey Jesus' command to love our neighbour, we need only what we already have.
- There are no circumstances in which what we have is 'too little' or 'too insignificant' to be used by God. Even if we have less material to give, we have our time, prayers, love, etc. These, too, can be used and multiplied by God.
- These passages, plus the evidence of God's blessing in our own lives, is evidence of His desire and willingness to bless our giving as we obediently invest what we have in the service of others.
- An attitude of love for God and others causes us to obedience and faith.
- We can be sure that God multiplies gifts sown in loving obedience, even if we do not see the multiplication personally. This is the law of the harvest. God has literally multiplied the gift of the widow's last coins through the centuries through the giving of many other people who, through the centuries, have been inspired by her example. As far as we know, she did not see how God used her gift during her lifetime.
- Giving should be motivated by loving obedience, not by the expectation of personal blessings. Acts 20 v 35 says, "It is more blessed to give than receive."
- There is actually more blessing in the act of giving itself than there is in receiving any of the benefits.
- The consequences are drastic if we believe or act as if we are exempt from Jesus' commands to share what we have!



**AFTER AN ACT OF FAITH, THERE WAS ENOUGH FOOD FOR EVERYONE.
GOD BLESSED THEM**

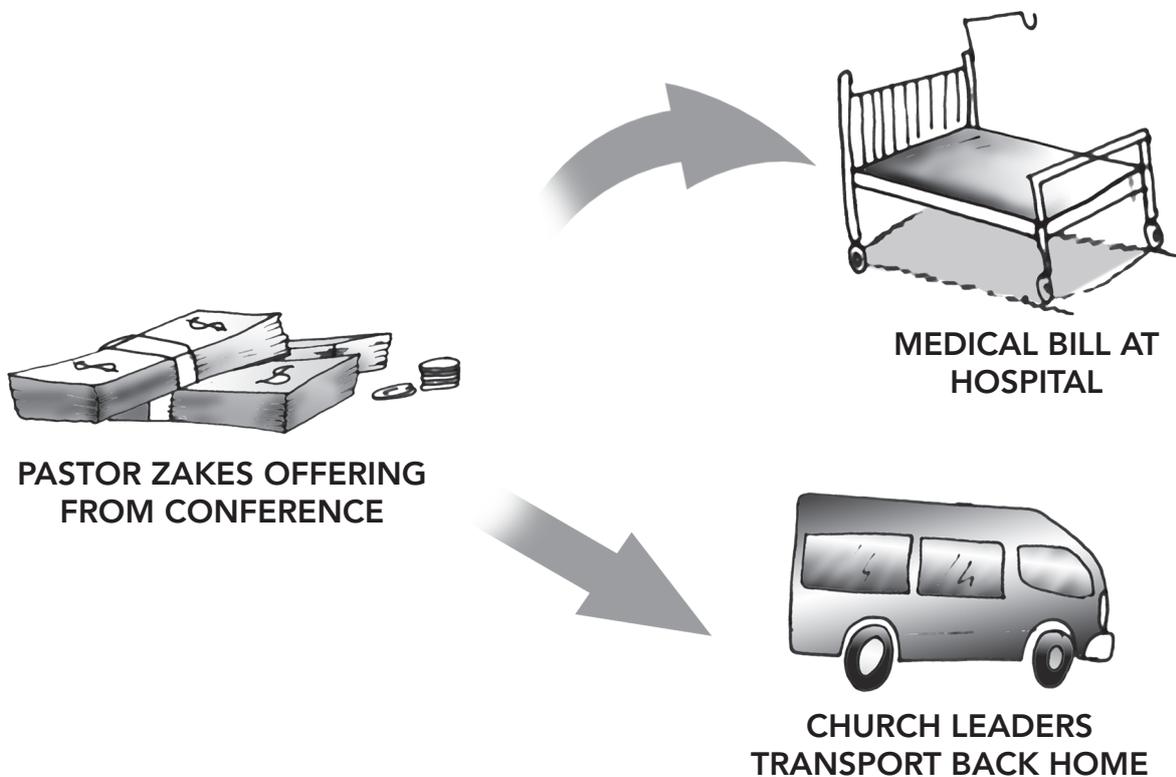
MAKING SO MUCH OUT OF SO LITTLE: A TESTIMONY FROM BISHOP ZAKES NXUMALO

Bishop Zakes has planted ten churches in Swaziland, two churches in Mozambique and one church in Malawi. Zakes is passionate about envisioning and mentoring local Church Leaders so that they can become better church leaders. For over 19 years, his Levites Camp initiative has brought together Church Leaders from across all denominations for a week of envisioning and Bible teaching. In Swaziland, over 250 Church Leaders attend this annual conference.

In 2007, Zakes decided to extend his Levites Camp conference to Mozambique. He knew from his regular visits that there was a hunger for this type of teaching, but nothing could have prepared him for the size of the response. Over 500 church leaders attended the conference. Zakes explained to me that whilst this was a wonderful response, he was concerned over how he would be able to provide food for those attending; many had travelled far. He also explained that Church Leaders in Mozambique were extremely poor, and after an offering had been taken, there was insufficient money to pay for the food. Zakes prayed and believed that as God had called so many to attend, He would provide for them.

Soon after the collection had been received, a church leader visiting from Swaziland got news that one of his children had fallen very ill. He needed to return home immediately. However, he didn't have any funds for his return journey on his own and was also concerned about how he would find the money to cover his child's medical expenses. Zakes explained that in praying over this, he received a word from God telling him to donate the offering to the church leader. Then the magnitude of this course of action hit him. It had been a struggle to raise even this small offering towards the cost of food, and even then, it had not been sufficient. In his mind, he knew it would be a real challenge to seek a second offering. However, he had received a clear word from God that he was to give what little he had to his brother in Christ.

Zakes shared with the conference the word he received and everyone agreed that the offering should be handed over to the pastor, even if this resulted in uncertainty over whether there would be food for the conference delegates. They prayed for him and also prayed for God's provision of food for the conference. Zakes then explained how he made a general appeal for people to bring whatever they had to cater for their food needs. He then described the miracle of how a few chickens and vegetables were donated, and from this point on, there was enough food and they even had food left over. Zakes really believed that God provided for the conference needs as there were so many people attending and many of the Church Leaders were visiting from outside Maputo and, therefore, did not have access to food. God blessed what little they had.



04

THE CHURCH WORKING
WITH THE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE:

To see how the community plays a key role in transformation.

This can be done by the following sessions:

- 5.1 God's Church in the World
- 5.2 The Church Working in the Community
- 5.3 Seed Projects

Churches often feel afraid of connecting with other community members for fear that they will be influenced by some of their behaviours and views. However, let's look at what this means for the Church.

4.1 GOD'S CHURCH IN THE WORLD²⁷**30 MINUTES****4.1.1 Some Church Models**

Draw or print and hold up pictures of the Church's involvement in the world (see Appendix 2).

READ:

As one big group:

John 17 v 13–18

Explain that the church has taken three stands:

Picture 1:

The Disengaged Church. We have taken the role of being disengaged: in the Church and out of the world. We become so separate from the culture that we embrace the language and lifestyle of a ghetto, or enclave (develop an inward-looking, defensive, siege mentality) and do not engage comfortably with those around us.

- Ask the group to brainstorm characteristics of this Church.

Picture 2:

The Conformed Church. We are afraid that if we are in the community, we become conformed, and we are indistinguishable from the world. We become so absorbed by the culture that we become identified by it and lose our distinctiveness and prophetic truth.

- Brainstorm again what this looks like.

Picture 3:

The Transforming Church. Impacting the world: in the world but not of the world.

- Brainstorm what this practically looks like.

²⁷ Taken from the Samaritan Strategy.

DISCUSS:

Break into groups and discuss the following:

- Does being different from the world mean being isolated from the world?
- In looking at the three images, think about your church in your community.
- Which image do we think we are?
- What type of church do the people around us think we are?
- Which image do you want to be?
- What is the relationship between our church and the different groups in the community around it? How can we improve our relationship with different groups in the community?
- Should the wider community be involved with what we want to do?
- What are the challenges of involving community leaders and other community members?
- What are the advantages of involving them?

4.1.2 Conclusion

Active churches with members who share Christ's love and compassion with their neighbours should have a positive impact on their community. We are called to be 'salt and light' in our communities, so our lives should be a good witness. Our actions should draw in other people, testifying to our words.

The Church needs to share responsibility for taking action with people outside the Church. Discussions and plans must be made with community representatives and not by the Church alone. This will give people in the community confidence to make changes that will improve their lives. This way of working may take a lot longer. However, it should result in more sustainable changes and prevent serious mistakes being made through lack of understanding.

4.2 ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

2 HOURS

4.2.1 Note about Engaging with the Community

A committee is formed to engage with the community, but it is recognised that the participation of the community could be different, given the local context. For example, the church may want to select four committee candidates from outside of the church with the community voting on which one of the four possible candidates joins the committee.

It is helpful to look at this as a continuum (below) rather than different stages, as different models can be appropriate in different contexts, and different churches will want to start at different points. Remember, there are different stages towards community engagement. The objective is to move churches to increasing engagement with the community.

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

- What are the benefits of involving the community in the work of the church?
- What are the challenges?

Ensure the following is emphasised through the discussion:

- Changes may be longer lasting because the church is facilitating a process of change through the community and not only through the church.
- It is less likely that people will become dependent on the church or see the activities as 'charity' from the church.
- The church is seen as working together with the community and not separate from it. This can change the way the church is viewed in the community.

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

What are the risks of involving the community?

- Community will take over the project.
- The spiritual element will be minimised.
- Others?

4.2.2 The Continuum

In our research, we have identified different ways of involving the community. This can be represented by the following diagram:



EXPLAIN:

1. Church working for the community.

The church does the work itself, leads the process and makes decisions on what work the church will do in the community. Community members are there as beneficiaries only but have no involvement as decision makers nor do they sit on the committee. They are passive recipients.

2. Church working with the community.

This is where the church works closely with the community to affect change. The church begins as a facilitator and mobiliser of the community. Together, the church and community members form a committee and work to bring change in their community. The work is still done by the church and sits under the church leadership, but community members sit on the committee with church members, and together, they decide how to move forward.

NOTE:

As this process is a continuum it is OK for the churches we are working with to start at point 2 (working with the community) but it is important we don't encourage them to be only helping the church. As we begin this process the minimum we want the church to begin at is for them to be working with the community.

3. Church as catalyst in the community.

To the far right-hand side of the continuum, the church is envisioned to get involved in their community. They mobilise and envision their community to get involved in transformation in their community. The role of the church is not as implementer; however, the church still plays a key role as catalyst and can also be involved in the work of the community. The church, therefore, plays a prophetic role in speaking into their community and getting people to transform their community, even as they release the work out to the community to do. The church's primary role is as a catalyst, with members from the church involved as community members in the work.

Sometimes churches may begin their work more to the left of the continuum, move slowly to the right and then may eventually release their work out to the community. It frees them up to then focus on new issues. The church becomes a trailblazer.

4.2.3 What is the Impact of these Different Approaches?

Research from Kenya has indicated that the more the community is involved, the greater the impact on the people targeted; the wider community and the church grow both numerically and spiritually. This is because when the church reaches out and walks in real relationships with others, people come to know God. Also, as church members connect with more non-believers, their faith is also strengthened and challenged, and this also increases their spirituality.

Return back to the risks and advantages. Add any others that you may have identified as you shared the research.

4.2.4 Jesus' Intention for the Church



MATT 5: 13–16 WE ARE SALT OF THE WORLD

READ:

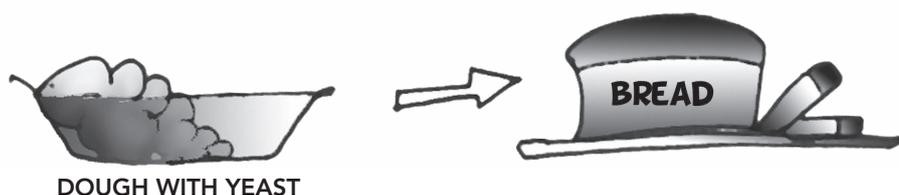
As one big group:

Matthew 5 v 13–16

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

- What happens when salt becomes tasteless?
- What was salt used for in Jesus' time? (Disinfecting, preserving and seasoning.) The church should do this in society.
- What happens when the lamp is hidden?



LUKE 13: 20–21 IT'S LIKE YEAST KNEADED INTO DOUGH

READ:

As one big group:

Luke 13 v 20 & 21

DISCUSS:

As one big group:

- What happens when yeast is mixed through the flour mixture? (The whole mixture rises.)
- Why was Jesus using this to talk about the Kingdom of God?

Emphasise that as Christians, when we go into our communities and mix with others, the whole community can be lifted up. This was the point of Jesus' example in Luke.

In the same way, we should be mixing with our communities in partnership so that by our example the whole community can be transformed.

DISCUSS:

Break into groups and discuss:

- What has the church's relationship with its community been like in this community?
- Does the church need to repent of anything?
- What are the community's healing and reconciliation needs?
- What are the good examples that we should be promoting in our own country or in our community of churches that have worked with their community?
- What are the barriers to the church approaching the community?

Discuss how to mitigate the risks or concerns that people have of involving the community.

**PRAY AND SEEK GOD****INVOLVE THE GOVERNMENT**

Some examples from Church Leaders in Nairobi, Kenya (ensure this is included in the discussion):

- Be guided by God. Pray and seek His vision. God wants the community to be involved because this is how they can become impacted and come to know Him. Rely on your fellow Church Leaders. Come together and pray together and seek His wisdom on this.
- Educate the community on the vision and transformational aspect of the work. Create ownership in the community.
- Form committees from the church and the community. Develop regulations and a structure to guide this. Avoid people with personal interests; find people with the right heart and passion, people of peace in the community.
- Involve the community in sustaining the work. Involve them from the beginning. Build relationships with community people. This can be done by visiting homes, having an open house in the church or sharing a meal together.
- Listen and appreciate the views of the community.
- Involve the government. So when any difficulties arise, the government knows the work, and there is a relationship built already.
- Don't compromise your witness. It is OK to have criteria for committee members e.g. Do not get drunk, violent etc.

4.2.5 Conclusion

There are many different ways and different levels of involvement a church can have with its community, but generally, the more engaged, the higher the impact.

Many churches have been frightened at first to get involved with the community but have been surprised by the richness of involving other people in the work.

It is important to highlight to the group the importance of involving the wider community in this process. People in the community also are worried about their community and may be able to offer help and support and become actively involved in working to change the situation in the community.

NOTE:

At this point, the church at a minimum should commit to listen to the community in identifying gaps and priorities and, to start with, should include at least one community member on their committee. If people cannot identify a good person to involve, then see if they can include a beneficiary family as a starting point.

Often the outreach work of the church will challenge the local community to become involved. This has happened a lot in places like Uganda where family, neighbours and leaders have been challenged that the 'strangers' care enough about a family/families in need then they should too. It is very powerful.



CHURCH HELP IDENTIFY GAP AND PRIORITIES

4.3 SEED PROJECTS²⁸

1 HOUR

4.3.1 Group work

ACTIVITY

Divide the group into smaller groups and get each group to look at one of the following verses and discuss the accompanying question:

- Matthew 13 v 31-32 (Parable of the mustard seed)
- What is the principle Jesus is teaching?
- How could this principle apply to ministry?
- John 4 v 37-38 (One sows and another reaps); 1 Corinthians 3 v 6-9 (One plants, another waters, God makes it grow)
- What is Jesus teaching?
- What are the possible applications to holistic ministry?
- 2 Corinthians 9 v 6-13 (Sowing generously)
- What is Paul teaching?
- What are some possible applications for ministry?

Key Ideas

- Faith makes irrelevant the smallness, the apparent insignificance, of our obedience.
- Humility and obedience are critical in ministry.
- Obedience is more important than receiving credit.
- Whatever our assigned task, it should be done cheerfully.
- It is God who provides the multiplication or increase.
- God blesses us in order that we will minister to others.
- Our generosity brings thanksgiving to God.

²⁸ From the Samaritan Strategy.

DISCUSS:

Discuss the following in your groups:

How can we apply the principle of Matthew 13 v 31-32, the parable of the mustard seed, in our churches?

- Even though we are a poor church, we could give more to those in need in our community and allow God to bless and multiply our gifts.
- We can start small, and God can grow the impact of what we do.

How could we apply the principle in John 4 v 37-38 (one sows, another reaps) and in I Corinthians 3 v 6-9 (one plants, another waters, God makes it grow)?

- We need to recognise that those in our church who 'sow' kindness should be given as much recognition as those who have the privilege of winning people to Christ.
- That we all need to work together, and we each have a role to play to bring about God's Kingdom.

How could we apply the principle in 2 Corinthians 9 v 6-13, the teaching regarding sowing generously?

- Next month, we could double what we normally give in the offering.
- We could give this double amount with joy, instead of hesitation.
- Others ...

4.3.2 Conclusion**Ask:**

- What are some of the ways that we are currently doing ministry in our community?
- What are other examples for us in our country—in our community—that inspire us?

Since God brings growth when we sow seeds, even small seeds, explain that we'll use a new name for small-scale projects: 'seed projects'.

Define seed projects. They are very small-scale ministry projects that are carried out by the local church and that demonstrate God's love to the people in the community and possibly to other churches that have not yet caught the vision. They are for the community and can be completed in one or two days. It is important to emphasise they must be short-term projects that benefit others and not the church.

Some seed project examples: community clean-up, build a local house for a vulnerable family, one-day feeding event, planning and an awareness campaign.

Explain that further on in this process, churches will be encouraged to begin seed projects in their community.

05

THE WAY
FORWARD

5.1 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU AND YOUR CHURCH? 1 HOUR

We are not here to convince you of anything or to tell you what you need to do. We believe that God is moving His Church to show His love to people in a holistic way, and we have come here to support you if this is something that you feel passionate about.

We would encourage you to think about this and pray about it as a leadership team. We would also encourage you to go back to your church and speak to the wider church. If you and your church believe that God is calling you and your people to respond to those who are vulnerable in your community, then we can assist you in working this out. We see our job as supporters and facilitators, not doers. The doing and the action are for God's Church and His people to do. Each one of us is called to do this in his or her community, whatever country or community that may be.

This means that we will help you to find out what the greatest challenges in your community are and what resources you have in your church and wider community to help change this. It is hard work, challenging work, and will require of you and your church emotional, spiritual and physical giving. However, we recognise that however difficult it is, we know that with God all things are possible.

5.1.1 Outline the Next Steps for the Church Leaders

1. **Envision your church.** Go back to your church and envision the rest of the leadership and other key church members. Get together and pray about this. If you feel convinced that God wants your church involved in this, then commit the work to God and envision the rest of the church. Give sermons on holistic ministry, have meetings, invite people in the church to come together and discuss what this means. Do some of the Bible studies and activities that we have done here to communicate this message.
2. **Identify a small group of people.** Bring together key people from the church who feel passionate about moving forward with this (approximately seven people. Make sure that people have selected themselves; it should not be the Church Leader selecting people). Some people will be too busy to help. Some will not want to help because they are afraid, feel inadequate or fear the consequences. However, all church members need to feel a sense of ownership and support the action through prayer. Choose people who want to give to this work and who are willing to volunteer their time. (There should be a good representation of men and women and a youth representative. Also, there should be some people who can read and write. Go through some other criteria with the Church Leaders.)

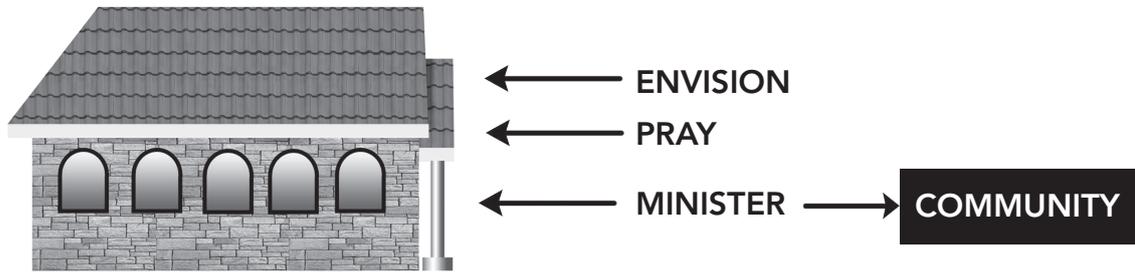
5.1.2 ACTIVITY

Next steps

15 minutes

- Break into your church group and spend some time together discussing and praying.
- Discuss the way forward. It may be simply a commitment to return to your church to pray with other members to see whether your church should move forward more intentionally. Or you may feel convinced that God wants you to move forward with this. If so, work out a practical plan for what you are going to do next. (The staff can be walking around the room supporting people during this process.)

ENVISION YOUR CHURCH



**IDENTIFY PERSONS
WILLING TO VOLUNTEER**

5.2 FEEDBACK AND CONCLUSION

5.2.1 Group Summary and Closure

Open up the opportunity to listen to the Church Leaders. Just sit and listen to them and let them stand up and speak what they feel God is saying to them and what they have learned.

5.2.2 Final Challenge

As Church Leaders, you have this challenge to speak the truth so your churches will act in compassion and love.

PRAY

This curriculum may take you more than one day to go through. If it does, close each day in prayer and worship. Below is an example, but feel free to improvise each day.

"O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption." Psalm 130:7

Ask a pastor to close in prayer.

06

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DIGGING DEEPER

1 HOUR (OPTIONAL EXERCISE)

Exercise: Split into two groups

Group 1 Read:

Matthew 16 v 18
 Acts 2 v 41-46
 Acts 4 v 32-34
 Romans 12 v 4-5
 Ephesians 3 v 8 -12

Group 2 Read:

1 Corinthians 12 v 28
 Colossians 1 v 24
 1 Timothy 3 v 14-15
 1 Peter 2 v 9
 Revelation 21 v 2 & 9-11
 Revelation 22 v 16-17

Answer these questions in the groups:

1. Where does the Church come from?
2. What is a/the Church?
3. What is its purpose?

Come back together as one group and discuss those questions; write the answers up on a flip chart for all to see.

Question 1:

The Church was created by Christ as His vehicle to reach the earth (Matthew 16 v 18). It was a Mystery (Ephesians 3 v 9) that belongs to God (1 Tim 3 v 14-15).

Question 2:

The Church is ...

- A Community: 'One' (Acts 2 & 4)
- Christ's Body (Colossians 1 v 24)
- Bride of Christ (Revelation 21 & 22)
- Community full of giftings for ministry (1 Corinthians 12 v 28)
- Global & local (Matthew 16 & 1 Peter 2; Acts 4)
- A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people (1 Peter 2 v 9)

Question 3:

The Purpose of the Church is ...

- A Witness (Ephesians 3 v 10)
- To Declare God's Praise (1 Peter 2 v 9)
- Community (Acts 2 & 4; John 17 v 20-23). The only thing in Genesis that was called 'not good' after it was created was that man was alone (Genesis 2 v 18). Our identity is found in Christ's community, and our mission takes place as a/the Church.
- Notice in the Acts reading that "they had favour with the people"!



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