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Strengths-Based African Leadership Training: A Comprehensive Guide For Empowering Grassroots Communities

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO:

STRENGTHS-BASED AFRICAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING:

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES.



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

PORTLAND SEMINARY

BY:

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PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2023



CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Dedication

To Mina and Izzy. I cannot tell you how grateful mummy and I are for the blessing of having you in our lives. May your generation love God deeply, know Him intimately, and serve Him faithfully.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my peer group: Kayli Hillebrand, Nicole Huyck-Richardson, and Jonathan Hyung Lee. It was really special to journey with great friends like you. Thank you to the entire cohort: Denise Johnson, Mary Kamau, Elmarie Parker, Roy Gruber, Eric Basye, Michael Simmons, Troy Rappold, and Andy Hale. Your passion for God and His people will continue to inspire me for long after our program.

I am indebted to my project faculty, Rebecca Jeong, whose commitment, patience, passion and insight saw me through three very defining years in understanding leadership at the grassroots. I am also grateful for Loren Kerns, Clifford Berger, Jen Macnab, and Heather Rainey. I have fond memories of your phone calls, courteous emails, precious conversations in Cape Town, and the support you gave me from day one until now. Thank you to the untiring lead mentor Jason Clark for modelling excellence in understanding leadership from several important perspectives.

This journey began with a chance meeting with Samuel Sarpiya during an airport stop-over at Ethiopia on our way from South Africa to Nigeria in the first quarter of 2019. It is amazing what God can do with one conversation.

My dear friend, Charlotte Preston, very generously provided the resources needed every semester. Your patient encouragement to publish my work is greatly appreciated. That flywheel has begun to turn. To Downtown Christian Center and the board of Africa Capacity, thank you very much

To my dear wife, Mampho, there are no words to express my gratitude. Your patience, understanding, support and love are *too much o!*

And, now, to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, amen.

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List of Abbreviations

5H - Head, Hands, Heart, Heels, Human Connection

ABCD - Asset Based Community Development

DLGP - Doctor of Leadership in Global Perspectives

IACD - International Association for Community Development.

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization.

SSD - Sacred Secular Divide.

SALT - Strengths-Based African Leadership Training.

TD - Transformational Development

WHO - World Health Organization

Glossary

Asset-Based Community Development. A model of community development that focuses on leveraging strengths rather than the traditional model of addressing needs.

International Association for Community Development. Established in 1953, this is a global network of community development practitioners with accreditation by the United Nations and working in over 70 countries.

Non-Governmental Organization. A non-profit or social sector organization working towards social development

Sacred-Secular Divide. An unbiblical belief among certain followers of Jesus that some professions, tasks and days are more sacred than others.

Strengths-Based African Leadership Training. An approach to leadership training that integrates biblical theology, strengths psychology, and African studies into a program designed for Africans at the base of the economic pyramid

Transformational Development. A model of community development that acknowledges the role of the Christian God in community development.

World Health Organization. The arm of the United Nations Organization focusing on global health.

Research Method

This Doctoral Project utilized a blended research and design methodology called ‘Collaborative Design for Ministry and Nonprofit Contexts’. In Collaborative Design, practitioners work with stakeholder representatives to address a Need, Problem, or Opportunity (NPO) in their context. Using a combination of bibliographic resources, local knowledge derived from stakeholder Workshops, and an iterative process of continuous adjustment using ‘just enough’ feedback information at each juncture of development, practitioners produce an application-oriented Project that seeks to effect Christ-centered change.

Abstract

This project portfolio addresses the following need, problem or opportunity (NPO): Hopelessness within African low-income communities highlights the need for equipping local agents with a Christian gospel that integrates discipleship with leadership development, vocational training, mental health and asset-based community development if we wish to see Shalom.

Several insights emerged from this research. First, to foster holistic transformation within low-income communities, it is imperative for discipleship to include basic mental health and practical interventions such as vocational training. Second, each community, regardless of how impoverished, is blessed with assets (skills, experiences and relationships), that need to be leveraged for the community to thrive. Finally, local Christian agents such as community development practitioners, missionaries, pastors, and educators, are a critical resource in fostering transformational development.

The context for this research is the densely-populated, low-income community of Duncan Village, a place akin to Harlem in New York. Established in the 1930s as an informal settlement for migrant workers, Duncan Village is located five kilometers from the central business district of East London, South Africa. However, unlike Harlem, which has developed significantly, Duncan Village has worsened. Inadequate infrastructure, poor sanitation, poverty and crime are widespread. Yet, it has also produced outstanding sportsmen, and it is welcoming to the gospel.

The project is a comprehensive leadership training guide that unpacks four of the 11 chapters relevant to my NPO. Chapter one discusses contextualization and its importance to leadership development. The second chapter explores spiritual formation, providing details on several spiritual disciplines. Chapter three examines five mental health models from a biblical and indigenous African perspective. Finally, chapter four describes asset-based community development and why it is preferable to the traditional needs-based approach to community development in Africa.

Introduction

I am an African. At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito. A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say - I am an African!

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom. My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandhlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the desert. Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that - I am an African.

I have seen what happens when one person has superiority of force over another, when the stronger appropriate to themselves the prerogative even to annul the injunction that God created all men and women in His image. I know what it signifies when race and colour are used to determine who is human and who, sub-human. I have seen the destruction of all sense of self-esteem, the consequent striving to be what one is not, simply to acquire some of the benefits which those who had improved themselves as masters had ensured that they enjoy.

It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White. It gives concrete expression to the sentiment we share as Africans, and will defend to the death, that the people shall govern. The pain of the violent conflict that the peoples of Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan, Burundi and Algeria is a pain I also bear. The dismal shame of poverty, suffering and human degradation of my continent is a blight that we share. The blight on our happiness that derives from this and from our drift to the periphery of the ordering of human affairs leaves us in a persistent shadow of despair. This is a savage road to which nobody should be condemned.

This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes. Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now! Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace! However improbable it may sound to the sceptics, Africa will prosper! Whoever we may be, whatever our immediate interest, however much we carry baggage from our past, however much we have been caught by the fashion of cynicism and loss of faith in the capacity of the people, let us err today and say - nothing can stop us now!¹

¹ Thabo Mbeki, "I Am an African," *News24*, July 28, 2017, <https://www.news24.com/drum/news/i-am-an-african-by-former-president-thabo-mbeki-20170728>

Overview of My Doctoral Journey

My passion for contributing to the upliftment of African low-income communities began in 2001 after joining the international Christian charity Mercy Ships. This season of my missionary career took me to some nine African countries in the West, Central and Southern sub-regions of the continent and exposed me to levels of poverty beyond my imagination. The term *extreme poverty* began to make sense. Fortunately, I also gained first-hand experience in becoming aware of a little of the natural resources Africa is blessed with. For example, the vast potential for cocoa, rubber, palm oil, cassava, and other agricultural products in several West African states. This paradox became even more disturbing as I slowly realized that Africans are created in the same *image of God* as people in other continents. Against that background, this Doctoral Project is a training manual that integrates leadership development with discipleship, basic mental health, vocational training and asset-based community development. It seeks to address the need for a critical mass of African Christian leaders with a thriving relationship with Jesus, emotional health, at least one vocational skill, an inclination towards asset-based rather than needs-based community development, and a sense of calling to lead in their unique contexts. This is based on the rationale that sustainable change in any context can only be driven by local agents who are self-motivated and equipped with the right tools.

Thus, although I have been dreaming about African transformation for long, formal training towards this was catalyzed only in 2019. This was after a chance encounter with a Portland Seminary alumnus during a stop-over at Ethiopia on my way to Nigeria. My doctoral studies journey and project are outcomes of that chance encounter. Puzzled by the paradox of Africa's extreme poverty despite her remarkable human and natural resources, I set out to answer the following question: "How might we train adults and youth in low-income communities to become holistic as agents of transformational development?"

During the discovery phase I considered evangelical adults and youth living in low-income communities as my primary context. Consequently, I selected stakeholders who live in a low-income community or have extensive experience working therein. These included six Black South African adult followers of Jesus, comprising two singles and four married people. Some of these individuals had extensive experience in parenting, prison ministry, real estate, life-skills training, and teaching pre-school. All were living or previously lived within a low-income community.

During the discovery workshop, my hypothesis of using a holistic approach to resolving the low-income community crisis was confirmed. All participants agreed that the need in low-income communities had both spiritual and material dimensions that can be addressed only through a combination of spiritual and practical interventions. The one-on-one interviews enriched my hypothesis by highlighting the critical roles of local agents (persons of peace), basic mental health, community development principles, measurement, character education, and vocational training. These interviews were with a Black South African running a thriving upholstery business within a low-income community. Other experts interviewed include a South African Caucasian psychologist and business consultant, as well as a Filipino professor of Missiology, both with extensive experience working among the poor in Africa and Asia.

The design phase exposed me to design thinking and significant feedback from a different set of stakeholders. These include four formerly-incarcerated persons living and working within a low-income community and three parents with significant experience in missions, electrical engineering, and the informal sector. Several potential ideas, including a leadership training guide, were considered during the design workshop and three big ideas emerged. These were an informal but well-planned door-to-door visit by local Christian leaders to engage community members for the purpose of evangelism, basic mental health and needs assessment. Second, a social media campaign to promote Christianity, moral values, and basic mental health. Finally, a vocational training project to address the literacy and economic needs in the community. The first two were surprising outcomes. Yet they were also enlightening because the door-to-door campaign, for example, revealed a desire for relationship that had escaped my realization. The social media campaign also validated a significant youth population that can be sensitized through this platform. However, upon careful consideration of feedback from the discovery phase, along with reflection on my most significant abilities and passions, I concluded that the most viable prototype (MVP) would be a leadership training guide incorporating spiritual formation (or discipleship) with community development, vocational training, basic mental health, the importance of door-to-door and social media campaigns and other ideas important for community transformation. Feedback from the discovery and design phases also resulted in the conclusion that the guide should be biblical, from an African perspective, and promote community *strengths*, rather than focus on needs, as the case is with the traditional approach to community development. This led to the term, *Strengths-Based African Leadership Training* (SALT), as the title for the guide.

In the early part of the delivery phase, I produced four chapters of the SALT guide as a prototype (sample) of my MVP and distributed this to several stakeholders. These include members of two low-income communities in East London, South Africa. Others consist of pastors, missionaries, pre-school teachers, nurses, as well as Christian community development practitioners and trainers, including a vice president of the International Association for Community Development (IACD). Based on feedback from the fore-mentioned, I updated the guide. One important conclusion from synthesizing the feedback is that although I will greatly like to create a tool for members of low-income communities in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, current limitations (low literacy levels of low-income community members) suggest that my strengths are best suited to equip literate local agents, such as community development practitioners. Consequently, the guide is aimed at literate local agents and not community members who are unable to read and write. Readers who are able to read, write and speak English, as well as communicate in the language of the community they serve should find the guide helpful.

Following graduation, I plan to complete writing the remaining chapters and research publishing possibilities with various organizations. Once the guide is published, I plan to design a website and embark on a promotion campaign targeting major cities in South Africa and beyond, as the Lord opens doors.

Lessons from My Doctoral Journey

My doctoral journey has been enlightening in several ways. First, I learnt that financial handicaps should not be an obstacle to pursuing God's will for any individual or group. I was accepted into the program in 2019 but had to defer starting due to lack of funds. In 2020, God very graciously intervened in two ways: I was granted a partial scholarship and a generous donor offered to provide the balance of my fees for the duration of the program. I suspect that this delay and divine intervention will continue to inspire me and those I meet for many years to come. More recently, I also learnt that God can use non-evangelical followers of Jesus in very profound ways. The assigned reading for one of the weeks of my final semester was *The Genesis of Gender: A Christian Theory*. Written by Dr Abigail Favale, a secular-feminist-turned-Catholic, the book is the best I have read on the subject of gender, addressing this very critical subject in a way that is both biblical and scholarly. In addition to teaching me about gender, it unveiled a blind-spot in my spirituality: a low regard for non-evangelical theology. I have since repented. Some of the more research-related challenges encountered along the way include having workshop participants who say very little even though their experience seems to indicate they could provide very helpful data. Needless to say, the benefits far outweigh the challenges and I have gained significantly from the research journey.

My research journey revealed other viable alternatives to approaching my NPO. One is an informal training program that closely resembles the model of Jesus' leadership training program with his twelve disciples. This would entail carefully studying Jesus' approach to recruitment, relationship-building, coaching, mentoring, prayer, mission, and character. This approach would be viable in contexts where there is no language barrier between the mentor and proteges. The *door-to-door* campaign idea that emerged during my design phase is a little similar to this approach.

One key development from my research journey is the discovery of asset-based community development (ACBD) as a key element to sustainable transformation in low-income communities. In contrast to the traditional needs-based approach to development, ABCD takes the position that every community has the assets (skills, experiences, relationships) necessary to foster development, and in some cases, with the help of external assistance. John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann are considered the pioneers in this field which seems rooted in the Bible. For instance, the transformation of Samaria involved Jesus, as an external stimulus, and the woman of Samaria, as a key local agent with strategic local relationships. Likewise, the transformation of Cornelius' large family (and possibly Caesarea) involved Peter, as an external stimulus, and Cornelius, as a key local agent with a profound spiritual experience and strategic local relationships. Viewing these scenarios through a community development lens, a traditional approach would consider the woman of Samaria and Cornelius as needy individuals who are lacking spiritually, and perhaps in a variety of other ways. While this may be factual, it does not present a complete picture. In contrast, ABCD would regard the woman and Cornelius as having assets that could result in significant community transformation.

Another key discovery is the importance of face-to-face interaction to change initiatives within low-income communities. This emerged during the design phase as part of the most significant of three big ideas that could bring change: a door-to-door campaign. This assumes little language and

cultural barriers between the individuals campaigning and community members. Taking that into consideration, this project will include a chapter dedicated to the dynamics of an effective door-to-door campaign.

Overview of the SALT Guide

From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshippers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering – Zephaniah 3:10.

Leadership is a critical success factor in any society. Consequently, the Bible explores the subject extensively, providing guidance on how to lead as well as examples of both excellent and mediocre leaders. Leadership also features significantly in non-biblical literature.

The SALT guide is a synthesis of biblical ideas, academic theories and common knowledge relevant to leadership development in Africa. SALT is an acronym for *Strengths-based African Leadership Training*. The guide brings together scholarship from several intersecting disciplines: theology, history, African studies, community development, psychology, and economics to address leadership development within African low-income communities. It is a culmination of three years of research within Duncan Village, a low-income community of approximately 100,000 residents in East London, South Africa. Rather than the traditional approach of focusing on needs or deficiencies, this guide focuses on strengths, or assets. Community strengths are the unique inherent talents or potential of the residents of the community that have been developed to the level of expertise, bring “lasting satisfaction” when deployed, and can be used consistently with outstanding results.² The guide also seeks to address leadership development from an indigenous African perspective, thereby hopefully, increasing its relevance to Christian community development practitioners or anyone working or interested in Africa.

Purpose

The purpose of the guide is to equip readers with the skills to facilitate Christian leadership development within African low-income communities. It is based on the assumption that readers are literate; already developing, or planning to develop, leaders; and have a personal relationship with Jesus. Each chapter includes an examination of the biblical foundations of the topic under review, questions, and assignments.

SALT also incorporates elements of mental health, community development, vocational training and other disciplines to develop the leadership skills of readers, and, by extension, people they may train in future. The guide supports the Biblical idea that personal transformation begins with a change in mindset that is fostered by replacing a secular perspective to life with a Biblical

² Markus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 3.

worldview.³ One of the many benefits of adopting a biblical worldview includes having peace of mind.⁴

Learning Objectives

The specific objectives for this guide include helping the reader:

1. Understand the role of the Bible in leadership development at the grassroots.
2. Appreciate the multi-dimensional nature of leadership development within low-income communities in Africa.
3. Recognize the role of contextualization in leadership development.
4. Understand the concept of strengths-based leadership.
5. Realize the role of mental health interventions in leadership development.
6. Understand the importance of asset-based community development.
7. Appreciate the role of vocational training in community leadership development.

How To Use This Guide

The guide will benefit readers the most if the contents are applied to one's life *before* being used to train emerging leaders. Personal experience moves ideas from the realm of abstract concepts to phenomena people can more easily relate to. Personal experience also gives one the conviction needed to speak convincingly before others. An important step in the application process is to write down action points that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).⁵ An example of a SMART action point would be to have a meaningful conversation about God's love with one person in Cape Town every day for a week starting 1 January 2023. While mere reading may lead to knowledge, application leads to personal experience and transformation. After application of action points, take a moment to reflect on lessons learnt and develop your own story and illustrations based on the contents of the book. This is important because as a wise leader once noted, "he who drives the wagon to town knows the way back the next time."⁶

It is also important to answer the questions at the end of every chapter. Designed to consolidate your knowledge of the material just read, the questions could provide a *reality check* of how

³ Romans 12:2.

⁴ Isaiah 26:3 and John 10:10.

⁵ George T. Doran, "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives," accessed November 25, 2022, <https://community.mis.temple.edu/mis0855002fall2015/files/2015/10/S.M.A.R.T-WayManagement-Review.pdf>

⁶ Dorothy A. Miller, *Simply the Story Handbook* (Hemet, CA: The God's Story Project, 2012), 11.

accurately one understands the contents of a chapter. There is an answer key at the end of the guide that can serve as a benchmark on how correct readers' answers might be.

Additionally, while reading, it is important to analyze the contents to see if it is relevant to your social or organizational culture, and, if so, how it may be contextualized. It is also important to double check all scripture references. Some benefits of this could be strengthening the awareness of scripture verses you may already be familiar with and becoming introduced to new scriptures. Some practical activities include highlighting portions of the guide that stand out to you and writing down thoughts that come to mind during personal study. The guide belongs to you. Note any questions that arise during your reading and ask during the training if you attend a SALT workshop. Otherwise, questions may be emailed to the author.

Target Audience

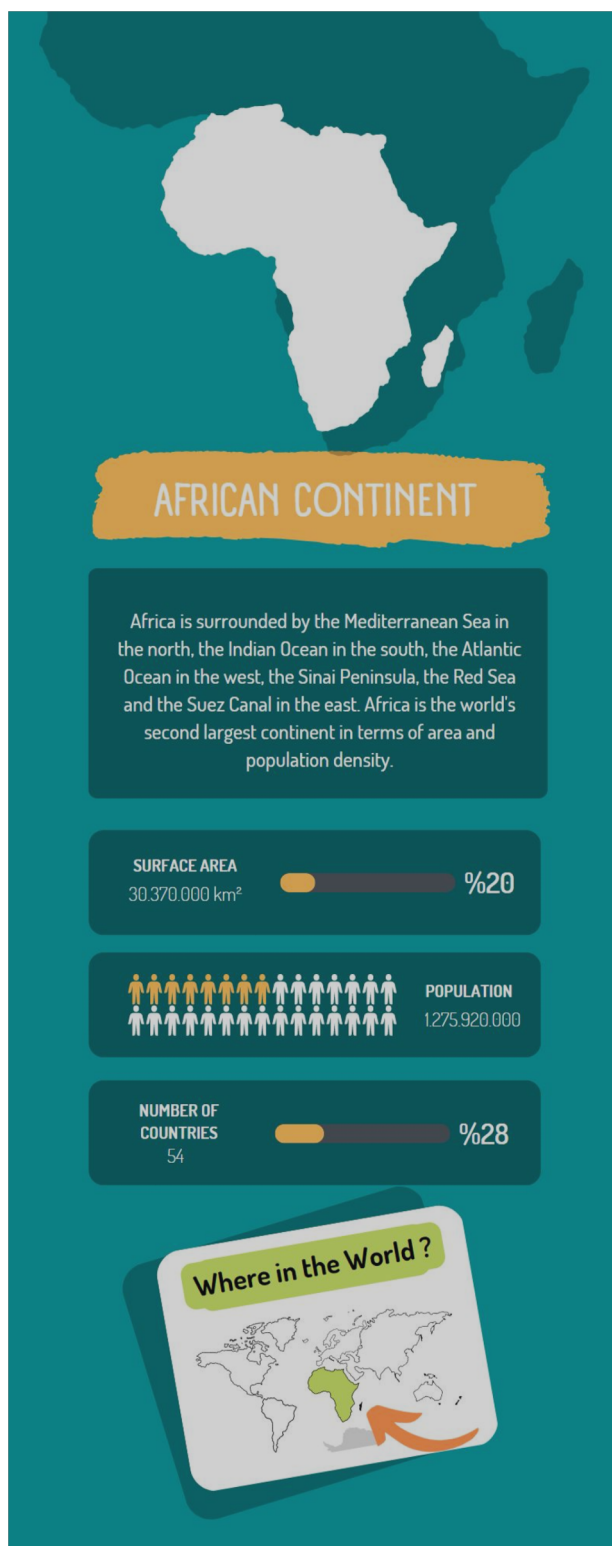
This guide is designed for two groups of people. First, Christian community development practitioners, pastors, missionaries, educators, social entrepreneurs, public servants and others involved in providing formal or non-formal education within African low-income communities. The second group is Africans living in low-income communities who are able to read without any difficulty. The guide integrates Biblical principles in all chapters thus readers need to be open to this if they are to benefit optimally. Naturally, others may benefit from the guide as well. It is hoped that all readers would find the content relevant to their unique situations and be able to contextualize the contents for their circles of influence.

Background

The background to this guide is threefold in nature. First, the guide leans upon a biblical foundation highlighting the significance given to individuals and countries that are of African or Black identity. Indeed, African nations including Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya, are mentioned multiple times in scripture, suggesting divine recognition and the possibility of significance in God's agenda. This reinforces the idea that not only are Africans, like everyone else in the world, created in the image of God, they also featured in key roles throughout the Old and New Testaments. One important ramification of this Black presence in the Bible is that it dispels the widespread but false idea that Christianity is the *white man's religion*. This biblical background sets the record straight and assures all Africans, especially economically-disadvantaged ones handicapped by an inferiority complex and limited access to information, that God "does not show favoritism" (Acts 10:34). In addition to this theme running across the guide, a whole chapter is dedicated to this important and liberating subject.

Second, the guide is written against the background of the psychological challenges and resources that currently define Africa and Africans. Corruption, various forms of violence, broken families, poverty, disease and other forms of brokenness are stressors that contribute towards the trauma that defines the everyday experience of majority of Africans, especially the poor. Some would argue that mental and emotional woundedness is so widespread that efforts towards fostering transformation in Africa which ignore this mental health dimension seem bound to become irrelevant.

Finally, given the incidence of widespread and persistent poverty, this volume is also written against the background of development theory and practice. Two aspects of this portion of the background



are worth mentioning at this point. First, the guide is written from an African perspective to development that is based on assertions by respected reflective practitioners in community development. Second it is written from the perspective of the asset-based community development (ABCD) model. Actually, a chapter is dedicated to discussing the ABCD model. Although the ABCD model was not proposed by Africans, the model is in alignment with the Bible, has been practiced globally for decades, and is relevant to the African situation. Therefore, this guide draws principles from theology, community development, psychology, and related disciplines such as vocational training, creative arts, sports, and economics to equip readers with the skills to help Africans living in low-income communities discover, develop and deploy their God-given potential for leadership.

Next Steps

As previously mentioned, my project is a leadership training guide that seeks to be biblical, strengths-based, culturally-relevant to Africans and incorporates discipleship, basic mental health, asset-based community development, and vocational training. One area of research I will like to pursue in future owing to this project is in Christian counseling from an indigenous African perspective. This is important because of the remarkably high levels of basic mental health needs within low-income communities and the small number of mental health professionals and informal care providers serving this demographic.

My Project Launch Plan outlines the activities I hope to embark on towards seeing this project come to fruition. First, between July and September 2023, I plan on writing the remaining seven chapters of the guide. These will focus on several important topics including but not limited to: Black presence in the Bible; discovering and deploying human strengths; the importance of including a door-to-door campaign in a community development campaign; and the power of social media. Subsequently, during the last quarter of 2023, I hope to share the full draft of the manuscript with various key individuals interested in endorsing the guide. This would include an official of the International Association for Community Development (IACD) and a prominent South African non-governmental organization (NGO) leader. During this time, I will also share the draft with a community development organization interested in using the guide in its training program, and with two pastors in low-income communities interested in community development. During the next quarter, January – March 2024, I hope to create an expanded list of South African and international stakeholders with expertise in community development, theology, higher education, writing, editing and publishing to advise on the viability of the guide as a popular book. Based on their input, I will research on the process of getting the guide published, edit the manuscript, share with potential publishers, and either accept a publishing contract or self-publish. Following publication, between April and June 2024, I will like to develop a website for promoting the guide, complete with written and video endorsements by key leaders, available locations for purchase (Amazon; Barnes & Nobles), author bio, excerpts for download, and animated culturally relevant promotional videos. I will also like the website to offer an opportunity for people to sign up for a related newsletters and blog posts.

Project evaluation after the launch will include quarterly follow-ups with organizations using the guide as a training tool regarding mindset shift from needs-based to asset-based thinking among

their workshop participants. A second assessment criterion would be lifestyle change in terms of adopting spiritual disciplines, such as meditation, owing to the use of the guide in low-income communities where pastors, missionaries and community development practitioners use the guide.

Conclusion

On a final note, the Doctor of Leadership in Global Perspectives (DLGP) research journey has been quite challenging. It challenged my false assumptions about several important subjects: the level of sacrifice needed for effective leadership; non-evangelical theology; the scope of a global leader's knowledge; the potential of the poor for significant transformation; and several other subjects. Yet the DLGP has been deeply fulfilling and enlightening. It equipped me to engage with stakeholders within my context at levels I have never done before. It was very insightful to observe the breadth and beauty of global leadership from a western perspective and to begin wondering what that might look like from an African perspective. It was disappointing to realize how many Africans in low-income communities live without hope of a better future, although that hope is freely available in Jesus. But it brings me profound joy to see that in His grace, God has provided an answer through holistic ministry that is not limited by the sacred-secular divide. On a lighter note, it was surprising to learn that although the poor sometimes struggle with lack of food, social media is still an important value to them, especially among the younger generation. All of this has strengthened my resolve to continue to pray and work towards transformation among the poor in Africa. There were moments when I felt like moving further afield, but, deep inside, I doubt that anything else will give me greater satisfaction. Empowered by the scriptures and lessons learnt from my DLGP journey, I dream of a day where every African can access a resource like the SALT guide in their mother tongue, and internalize and apply it to the glory of God.

Doctoral Project

Chapter 1: Contextualization

With many parables Jesus spoke to them, as much as they could understand – Mark 4:33-34

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel – 1 Corinthians 9:20-23

If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle – 1 Corinthians 14:8

Ideas are best understood when presented in alignment with an audience's perspective and literacy level. God models this through the incarnation where "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."⁷ Prior to the incarnation, although God had the option of speaking directly from heaven to Israel, by and large, His practice was to speak through human agents such as prophets. God also used narratives and several metaphors from the daily experience of His audience. Today, He speaks primarily through the scriptures, but also through humans inspired by His Holy Spirit. God's choice, of speaking through individual humans (Old Testament prophets, Jesus, and various individuals today) to the larger human family, illustrates the concept of contextualization. Tite Tienou, a widely respected African theologian, describes contextualization as interpreting "the Bible rightly in context."⁸ The ramifications include sound knowledge of the scriptures and the ability to make accurate connections between the Bible and an audience's local situation or culture. No wonder Jesus' engagement with His audience was characterized by "many parables."⁹ He had the important ability to connect people's daily experience at home, work and society to the teachings from God's Word, thereby making the scriptures accessible.

⁷ John 1:14.

⁸ Tite Tienou, "The Theological Task of the Church in Africa: Where are we Now and Where Should We be Going?" *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 6, no.1 (1987): 3-11, https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/06-1_003.pdf.

⁹ Mark 4:33.



African farmer making ridges

European child making a snowman

Which illustration will most effectively communicate the gospel in your context?

FIGURE 1: CULTURALLY-RELEVANT COMMUNICATION

History shows that in the absence of contextualization, African Christianity could easily degenerate into an irrelevant and powerless religion. For instance, one township (low-income community) in East London, South Africa, has been exposed to Christian preaching from foreigners and indigenes alike for more than two decades. Yet, it is questionable whether the gospel was presented with cultural relevance by reflective preachers. What is certain is that there is still plenty of room for transformation. Unfortunately, this community is not unique in her experience, because as Tienou observes, due to poor contextualization and reflection, “numerical growth far outpaces spiritual depth and maturity in African Christianity.”¹⁰ Remarkably, other regions of the world also wrestle with the need for contextualization. An astute Asian observer points out “[evangelical] theology is created in Germany, corrected in America, and corrupted in Asia.”¹¹ While other factors may be contributing to the low level of spiritual transformation in African communities, arguably, poor contextualization is a key factor.

¹⁰ Tienou, “Theological Task,” 6.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

Fortunately, Christian leaders across Africa are calling for greater contextualization within the continent. Done well, contextualization is certain to contribute positively to transforming the worldview of many Africans, including those within low-income communities. Changing

Worldview is the sum of culturally-based images and assumptions by which a people both perceive and respond to reality

the worldview is important because, as one expert on culture points out, worldview *colors* people's understanding of communication, politeness, respect, persuasion, leadership, decision-making, trust, disagreement, orientation to time, and other important aspects of life.¹² Therefore, taking an audience's worldview into consideration when communicating has become imperative in today's culturally diverse world. Indeed, in the absence of understanding culture, people risk patronizing, often unconsciously, any of the 20 different kinds of bias identified by experts.¹³

These biases result in forming stereotypes, falling prey to cultural conflicts, and promoting leadership that negatively impacts the world. Indeed, worldview is the sum of culturally-based "images and assumptions ... [by] which a people both perceive and respond to reality."¹⁴ Differences in perceptions make it necessary to present foreign ideas within an appropriate setting. Consequently, as much as possible, African examples will be used when explaining concepts in this guide. Further, during workshops where this guide is used, the use of local languages is highly recommended. Needless to say, when translators are needed, it is a good idea to take time requirements into consideration when planning for the workshop. The next section will focus on other barriers to learning. Although the focus is on South Africa, the principles would most likely apply to other parts of Africa and the world.

Barriers To Learning in South Africa

According to South Africa's Sectors Education and Training Authority (SETA), there are more than 20 barriers to learning within the country. Two of these include insufficient support from learning facilitators and using an inappropriate language of instruction.¹⁵ This implies that part of a learning

¹² Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014), 16.

¹³ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 11.

¹⁴ Charles H. Kraft, *Worldview for Christian Witness* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008) 12.

¹⁵ Compass Academy of Learning, *Facilitate Learning Using a Variety of Methodologies* (Unpublished Manuscript, 2019), 84.

facilitator's preparation to effectively engage learners should include contextualizing any foreign concepts within the content to be explored. It also suggests a need to understand a learners' level of language competency and to present material accordingly. In some cases, it may be more effective to speak the learners' mother tongue rather than the general language of instruction, in this case, English. This is why, where appropriate during SALT workshops, the use of local languages, proverbs and expressions is encouraged in explaining concepts that may otherwise not be easily understood.

Questions

1. What do you understand by the term contextualization?
2. What example of contextualization have you experienced?
3. What might happen when foreign ideas are not contextualized?
4. Has a foreign idea limited your learning in the recent past or even right now?
5. Why is learning in English as well as your home language important?

Redemptive Analogies, Storytelling and Case-Studies

Arguably, stories are one of the most powerful means of communication. In addition to the Bible, the effectiveness of stories is demonstrated in the works of Shakespeare and outstanding African authors like Chinua Achebe, Miriam Tlali, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie, to name a few. No other book, by any stretch of the imagination, contains stories like the Bible. Some of its most cherished narratives include the stories of creation, Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, Daniel in the lion's den, as well as the birth and death of Jesus. What is remarkable about biblical stories is that beyond mere entertainment, they are also life transforming.¹⁶

Remarkably, every culture seems to have indigenous stories, whether historical or fictional, with elements that point to God. These elements, often hidden in stories, poetry, songs, art or other aspects of the culture are what Don Richardson describes as *redemptive analogies*. These are similarities between a local culture and the Bible which may be used as an authentic and powerful means of introducing a community or ethnic group to the gospel and their Creator. Richardson used this approach with significant success in his cross-cultural engagement with the Sawi tribe of Indonesia.¹⁷ Redemptive analogies show how God cares for each culture and has left elements of Himself in the culture waiting to be *harvested* by anyone who will care to search.

For instance, circumcision is an important rite of passage into adulthood for adolescent boys within the Xhosa ethnic group of South Africa. In the evangelical community, it is believed that some of the activities during Xhosa circumcision lends itself to ancestral worship, and by extension, idolatry. Due to its significant spiritual implications, several evangelical followers of Jesus distance

¹⁶ Romans 12:1-2.

¹⁷ Don Richardson, "Redemptive Analogy," in *Perspectives of the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 397-403.

themselves from this practice. However, given its biblical precedence, they do not reject the practice of circumcision altogether. Instead, they subscribe to a circumcision fostered by respected Christian leaders who are known *not* to practice syncretism, and who promote circumcision conducted by medical professionals. Going the Christian and medical route greatly reduces the risk of death among initiates. In addition, while healing, initiates are taught significant biblical and cultural values as part of the transition process into manhood. This exemplifies one way in which elements within African culture can be redeemed. One would hasten to say that not all of *Xhosa*, or African, culture is ungodly or contrary to biblical principles. Some important examples of godly elements therein, similar to the cultures of several African ethnic groups, are the values of hospitality and respect. Yet, as is true with all cultures around the world, there are aspects of the culture of every African ethnic group that should, and must, be redeemed, if Africans are to fully follow Jesus and attain the spiritual maturity that is desperately needed within African Christianity.

One important way several Africans learnt in the past was through listening to wise village elders for counsel drawn from personal experience or lessons learnt from others. The contemporary equivalent in the western world would be a business consultant, psychologist or professional life coach. Within the family setting, grandparents would often play the role of the village elder, communicating their wisdom to little children in the evenings after supper through entertaining and well-crafted, real or fictional stories. Each story would have a moral or advice that the children can ponder over after hearing the story. In my childhood, I remember these times as special moments of bonding and learning. Reflecting on this cultural practice, Kenyan psychologist Gladys Mwiti equates this to the encounter between Jesus and the woman of Samaria.¹⁸ During this encounter, Jesus, in His typical conversational style, helps the Samaritan woman navigate difficult theological terrain including delicate subjects such as discrimination, salvation, marriage, worship and witness.¹⁹

Similarly, wise village elders mapped out the future for many Africans through informal counselling and life coaching. In what may be described as a discipleship training school, youth gained advice from grandparents and other elders eager to mold the minds of the next generation. In many families these sessions were both unplanned and voluntary. Naturally, there were minors who seemed to always choose to play or visit friends instead of occasionally spend time with grandparents. Obviously, that was okay as play was also encouraged. Yet, in retrospect, it has become clear that those who often avoided the village elders lacked the moral foundation necessary for life – a few even ended up in prison. According to a *Xhosa* proverb, *Isala kutyelwa siva ngolopu*, meaning a person who will not take advice gets knowledge when trouble overtakes him.²⁰

¹⁸ Gladys Mwiti and Al Dueck, *Christian Counselling: An African Indigenous Perspective* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 2006), 27.

¹⁹ John 4:1-42.

²⁰ Patricia Furstenberg, "Unique African Xhosa Idioms and Proverbs," accessed Nov. 15, 2022, <https://alluringcreations.co.za/wp/unique-african-xhosa-idioms-proverbs/>

In view of the above, this guide will use cultural concepts that are similar to Biblical ones to discuss important lessons.

Storytelling and case-studies are two very effective means of communicating life lessons. Experts say that when the heart language, or mother tongue, of indigenous people “links with a good story that is well told, it is the direct way to the heart.”²¹ Experts further say that “to change people at the deepest level, we must change their stories.”²² Owing to various factors, most people either cannot read, or prefer to learn by means other than reading. The default learning method seems to be stories. Indeed, studies conducted in 2003 by a US government agency show that 87% of people in developed nations cannot learn using literate methods or prefer to learn using oral means. This implies that “the percentage of nonliterate or preferred oral learners within [developing] countries [where formal education opportunities are relatively less] is even higher.”²³ In addition to learning orally, it is also important to learn from other cultures. This may be approached through case studies as well as other ways. Case studies will be used in this manual due to its appeal to many people and its relevance to oral learners who cannot, or prefer not to, read.

Questions

1. Who was a wise elder in your community and how did they help the community?
2. What story in your community’s history may be used as a connection to the Bible?
3. Do you prefer to learn by reading, listening, watching or doing?

Culture Change

Each culture is blessed with elements that are beneficial to those within the culture as well as to foreigners. Indeed, consistent implementation of the positive elements of culture can result in heroism, a quality best-selling author Joseph Campbell points out exists in “Babylonia, Assyria and [all] other ... populations.”²⁴ However, each culture also has elements that are not beneficial and will, therefore, need to be changed. Paul alludes to this need for culture change when he says he is made all things to all men that he might “win” some²⁵. According to Anthropologist Charles Kraft “for solid change to happen throughout a culture, people must make basic changes in the

²¹ International Orality Network, *Orality Breakouts: Using Heart Language to Transform Hearts* (Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2010), 5.

²² International Orality Network, *Orality Breakouts*, 5.

²³ Miller, *Simply the Story*, 13.

²⁴ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), xxv.

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 9:22.

worldview of that culture."²⁶ Hopefully, embracing the suggestions made within this guide would help in the journey to change.

Questions

1. Who are some heroes in the Bible?
2. Who are some heroes in your community now and in the past?
3. What parts of your community's worldview should be changed? Why? How?

Assignment (for discussion next week).

What is the most important training needed in your community: business, vocational or spiritual? Support your answer with reasons.

²⁶ Charles Kraft, *Worldview for Christian Witness* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2008), 46.

Chapter 2: Spiritual Formation

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ – 2 Peter 3:18.

The God of the Bible is the God of liberation rather than oppression; a God of justice rather than injustice; a God of freedom and humanity rather than enslavement and subservience; a God of love, righteousness and community rather than hatred, self-interest and exploitation – Allan Boesak.

Last Week's Assignment Review

Introduction

Growth is a natural result of healthy living. Every healthy newly born baby is expected to grow into childhood, youth, and adulthood and to make meaningful contributions to society. If a child is not growing well, most parents or caretakers would immediately take the child for medical attention. But growth is not limited to the physical, mental, emotional and social aspects of life only. It also extends to the spiritual. Sadly, many people have limited awareness of spiritual growth or choose to neglect the spiritual aspect of their lives altogether. Simply put, spiritual growth may be seen as the process of becoming a disciple of Jesus. This involves practicing several important spiritual disciplines discussed in the Bible and modelled by Jesus and others in scripture and history. These disciplines foster intimacy with God, character, and spiritual maturity in the life of anyone who will embrace them. When ignored, the result is a life lacking in fulfilment and spiritual depth. Unfortunately, many around the world, including those who identify as Christians, fall into this category, leading Richard Foster to observe that "superficiality is the curse of our age."²⁷ This superficiality is manifested in the low levels of loyalty seen today between friends, community members, employees and employers, and even between husbands and wives.

²⁷ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2008), 1.



Fortunately, the spiritual disciplines discussed here address this superficiality by fostering the strong relationships and maturity exemplified in the lives of several characters in the Bible - and needed in society today. Based on lessons from various African and non-African Christian leaders, the disciplines this guide examines include meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, celebration and disciple-making.

Meditation

Practiced for hundreds of years, Biblical meditation is to spiritual growth what eating and digesting food is to physical growth. It may be seen as pondering upon the word of God and involves deep contemplation as one examines scripture to understand its meaning and possible application in one's life. Therefore, after receiving a divine message from an angel, Mary "pondered" over what she was told.²⁸ According to Rick Warren, meditation can also involve *visualizing* or *imagining* the scene of a Bible narrative in one's mind.²⁹ I have found this practice to be very helpful as it makes a passage *come alive* and the process of engaging with the Bible exciting and fulfilling. Additionally, visualization and imagination have an inexplicable way of making biblical characters and events more relatable to one's experience.

Additionally, meditation involves carefully thinking about *each* word under study and even muttering it quietly so that one *hears* the word. Muttering portions of the Bible significantly helps one focus one's thinking on scripture and see truths that were previously missed. Foster explains

²⁸ Luke 2:19.

²⁹ Rick Warren, *Bible Study Methods: Twelve Ways to Unlock God's Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 38.

that meditation means “listening to God’s word, reflecting on God’s works, rehearsing God’s deeds, ruminating on God’s law, and more.”³⁰ “Listening to God’s word” here alludes to the importance of *muttering*. Foster further suggests that other forms of meditation include pondering upon creation and upon the events of our time.³¹ Unfortunately, this very important discipline is at best treated superficially and, at worst, hardly ever discussed among followers of Jesus in many African communities today.

According to Warren meditation also involves paraphrasing and personalizing the passage under study.³² This means restating a passage in one’s own words and replacing references to other characters with personal pronouns. For example, “Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,” might be personalized as *I am blessed because I do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly*.³³ Warren also suggests using an acrostic (S-P-A-C-E-P-E-T-S) which asks questions that can help one probe the passage under study during meditation.

Meditation may be seen as pondering upon the word of God and involves deep contemplation as one examines scripture to understand its meaning and possible application in one’s life.

- Sin to confess? Do I need to make any restitution?
- Promise to claim? Is it a universal promise? Have I met the condition(s)?
- Attitude to change? Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?
- Command to obey? Am I willing to do it no matter how I feel?
- Example to follow? Is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?
- Prayer to pray? Is there anything I need to pray back to God?
- Error to avoid? Is there any problem that I should be alert to or beware of?

³⁰ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 19.

³¹ Ibid., 35-36.

³² Ibid., 39.

³³ Psalm 1:1.

- Truth to believe? What new things can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or other biblical teachings?
- Something to praise God for? Is there something here I can be thankful for?³⁴

Agreeing with Warren, Bayo Famonure, a respected Christian leader from Nigeria, notes that meditation can occasionally lead to "confession and brokenness."³⁵ Confession uncovers any hidden sin that may exist in the life of a follower of Jesus, thereby advancing one in the journey towards reconciliation with God. When confession is done from a position of brokenness, it leads to forgiveness and restoration. According to the Psalmist, God does not despise a broken and contrite spirit³⁶. Famonure continues, "when we see the goodness of the Lord [through meditation], His power and His love as contrasted to our shallow commitment to Him, we can break down in tears of repentance."³⁷

Meditation also fosters a remarkable path to hearing God's voice. Kenyan Bible scholar David Oginde notes that the divine instruction to Joshua to meditate:

marks a major turning point in the communication between God and his people, especially with regard to knowing God's will. Up to this point God had revealed his will to his people through dreams, visions, angels, prophets and even directly in person. But it appears that God is telling Joshua that whatever he may need to know has already been revealed and put down in writing by Moses in the Book of the Law.³⁸

Similarly, Foster points out that the purpose of meditation is to enable people hear God more clearly.³⁹ In these days of severe poverty and other pressing challenges, what a refreshing difference hearing from God can make in the life of anyone who seeks direction in managing personal, family or community needs.

Meditation lays the foundation for divine guidance, or what is often called, *hearing God's voice*. Based on verses that show how God spoke with people all through the Bible, hearing God's voice unveils a God who wants to communicate with His people in deep meaningful ways, including, but not limited to, guiding people on project management, as was the case with Noah in building the ark and Solomon in building the temple; as well as providing clear travel instructions, as seen in the

³⁴ Warren, *Bible Study Methods*, 39.

³⁵ Bayo Famonure, *Training to Die* (Jos, Nigeria: Agape Media Services, 1989), 125.

³⁶ Psalm 51:17.

³⁷ Famonure, *Training*, 125.

³⁸ David Oginde, "Joshua" in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 259.

³⁹ Foster, *Celebration*, 37.

cases of Abraham, Lot, and the Apostle Paul.⁴⁰ Hearing God's voice reveals a very significant supernatural dimension to the Christian faith and a fulfilling experience for the individual who enjoys this privilege. Through meditation, one experiences God's written word deeply and, is thus, in a better position to access God's spoken word as manifested through convictions, impressions, dreams or visions that are inspired by God. In conclusion, meditation may be seen as the foundation of a significant engagement with the scriptures. Engaging scripture is illustrated in the diagram below.



FIGURE 2: ENGAGING THE SCRIPTURES

Prayer

Prayer is the second spiritual discipline that we will examine in this chapter. It is a simple yet profound process of communicating with God in a personal and meaningful way. Often using words, but sometimes in silence, effective prayer is always done by faith. In the Bible Jesus describes prayer as *verbal communication* with God; for He says, "... when you pray, say ..."⁴¹ Similarly, Paul writes about "... *making mention* of you in my prayers ..."⁴² This idea of verbal prayer is demonstrated several times throughout the Old and New Testaments therefore, speaking with God in prayer is recognized as a significant form of prayer.

However, the Bible also records remarkable events when prayer is offered in *silence*. For example, when Hannah prayed, it is said that "... as she continued praying before the LORD, ... Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was *not heard*."⁴³ It is important to note that silent prayer does not mean that the individual praying simply refrains from speaking while their mind wanders aimlessly. On the contrary, as Hannah's experience shows, silent

⁴⁰ Genesis 12. Genesis 19. Acts 13.

⁴¹ Luke 11:2.

⁴² Philippians 1:16.

⁴³ 1 Samuel 1:12-13.

prayer is a profound level of communion with God that is outwardly voiceless, yet, in God's sight, involves *speaking in the heart*.

Describing prayer as an "acknowledgement that there is an invisible superior realm that affects the physical and visible world," Kenyan Christian leader Bonifes Adoyo notes that prayer is "rooted in the desire to glorify God, and that to be effective, it must be in accordance with his will⁴⁴." Agreeing, Famonure observes that "prayer is a two-way communication between God and man [that requires a] right heart attitude [which] leads to an urge to communicate with the Creator.⁴⁵" It is this urge that has moved followers of Jesus throughout all generations to pray, resulting in remarkable answers to prayer that impact on both individuals and whole communities.

In contemporary times the East African nation of Uganda is recognized as a remarkable example of a praying nation. Researcher George Otis notes that,

When things got rough for [local Christian leader] Robert Kayanja during his transformative ministry in a dangerous neighborhood in Kampala Uganda, his own parents were among those urging him to leave. "God wants to save these people," they said, "but he doesn't want you to die in the process."⁴⁶

Rather than leave the life-threatening situation, Kayanja chose to remain and pray daily at the *wailing wall*. He did not only survive, he thrived as his nation overcame the threat of civil war, economic collapse, and extinction from AIDS. In answer to the heartfelt prayers of her citizens, Uganda experienced a modern-day revival of Christianity.⁴⁷ John Mulinde, another Christian leader from Uganda, argues that for prayer to be effective, the people praying must humble themselves, pointing out that the absence of humility is the "biggest problem" with prayer in the nations.⁴⁸

Prayer is primarily intended for intimacy with God. This is demonstrated in the Garden of Eden when God visits in the late afternoon and asks Adam, "where are you?"⁴⁹ The image suggested by God leaving heaven to visit the garden and ask after Adam suggests a being longing for intimate friendship with the object of His love: human beings. Jesus alludes to this because in teaching His

⁴⁴ Bonifes Adoyo, "Prayer," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1186.

⁴⁵ Famonure, *Training*, 112.

⁴⁶ George Otis, "Recognizing and Defeating the Powers of Darkness," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 15, no. 4 (October - December 1998), 212.

⁴⁷ Otis, "Powers of Darkness," 212.

⁴⁸ John Mulinde, *Transforming Your World* (Jerusalem, Israel: Progressive Vision Publishing, 2005), 4.

⁴⁹ Genesis 3:8-9.

disciples to pray, he begins on a note of relationship, "Our Father ..."⁵⁰ Reflecting on the privilege of experiencing revival in Uganda, Mulinde notes that when combined with meditation, scripture reading and consecration, prayer becomes a platform for "drawing the presence of God" into one's life.⁵¹ Drawing God's presence will satisfy the deepest longing of the soul as well as develop spiritual maturity in a way people who have not experienced God will not understand. God's presence will address the spiritual superficiality mentioned in the section on meditation.

However, prayer is also for adoration or worship. This refers to a high regard for God that overflows into praise expressed in word, song, attitude, giving, and service. Other reasons why prayer exists include consecration, petition and intercession.

Regardless of why one prays, Jesus insists that prayer must be based on faith. This refers to praying on the basis of conviction - not mental assent or empty religious ritual - but a deep conviction that God is real and does answer prayer. He says "whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."⁵² Similarly, Paul encourages the Philippians to be anxious for nothing, but "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."⁵³ Thanking God before one sees the physical manifestation of the answers to prayer suggests faith on the part of the person praying.

Fasting

Fasting refers to voluntary abstinence from legitimate pleasures for short or extensive periods of time for the purpose of intimacy with God, repentance, worship, intercession or spiritual warfare. The pleasures people have abstained from during fasting include food, drink, fashionable dressing, engaging with society, and sexual intimacy between married couples. In recent times, this list has been extended to include modern conveniences such as watching TV and reading novels or newspapers, drinking alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, engaging in sports, attending parties, and a host of other generally accepted pleasurable activities.

Repentance from sin is a popular reason for fasting in the Bible. There are several examples of fasting. One of the most remarkable is that of the king and people of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah by engaging in a city-wide fast, and dressing in sackcloth "from the greatest of them to the least."⁵⁴ Today repentance continues to be a reason why many followers of Jesus fast. When the Christians in Uganda realized how greatly sin had impacted their relationship with God,

⁵⁰ Matthew 6:9.

⁵¹ John Mulinde, *Prayer Altars: A Strategy that is Changing Nations* (Orlando, FL: World Trumpet Mission Publishing, 2013), 3.

⁵² Mark 11:24.

⁵³ Philippians 4:6.

⁵⁴ Jonah 3:5.

they embarked on a profound and heart-felt, nation-wide repentance that seems very much like that of the people of Nineveh. The result has been a transformation that has significantly improved their quality of life, reputation, and spiritual influence around the world. As illustrated in the diagram below, other reasons why fasting is done include worship, consecration, remorse and intercession.⁵⁵



FIGURE 3: REASONS WHY PEOPLE FAST

Historically, all categories of people have engaged in fasting. This ranges from leaders such as the King of Nineveh, Queen Esther, and Nehemiah, to slaves or prisoners of war, such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Today, several churches in South Africa have a practice of fasting together as a congregation, usually at the beginning of the year, to seek divine guidance. Many African Christians also fast in the days preceding Easter during the season of Lent. Several Africans also fast for divine intervention regarding personal, family and community challenges.

Fasting can take the form of total abstinence from all food and drink for a short period of time. Examples of this are Esther's three-day fast for the protection of her nation and Saul's three-day fast immediately after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.⁵⁶ A popular kind of fast is abstaining from food while drinking water, a form some people believe was done by the Lord Jesus for 40 days before beginning his public ministry. But fasting may also include eating very basic meals or smaller amounts than usual, as demonstrated by Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they refused to eat delicacies, presumably offered to idols, so that they will not "defile" themselves.⁵⁷ Against this background of various forms of fasting, it may be concluded that fasting should be done based on the following factors: the severity of the situation inspiring the

⁵⁵ Acts 13:3, Daniel 1:8, and Nehemiah 1:4-10.

⁵⁶ Esther 4:16 and Acts 9:9.

⁵⁷ Daniel 1:8.

fast; as discreetly as possible; taking medical implications into consideration, and ultimately, based on personal conviction or the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Study

"Study to show yourself approved to God, a laborer that has nothing to be ashamed of, rightly interpreting the word of truth."⁵⁸ This advice by an outstanding New Testament leader to his young protégé, underlines the importance of the spiritual discipline of study. One important element of studying is observation. For Bible study, this involves carefully identifying the characters (individuals in the passage being studied); context and background; words or phrases used; actions or attitudes portrayed; comparisons, if any; time; events; process; geography; and culture in the text under study. In other words, *everything*. Every detail in scripture is important. Somethings would be easily perceived, but others would have to be carefully studied before they can be understood. A casual reading, or skimming, is *not* serious study. It is valuable as a *first* step to study, but to actually study involves much more than a superficial consideration. Observation implies asking at least three important questions while examining a passage:

- What is the book (passage) about as a whole?
- What is being said in detail?
- What is its significance to me today?⁵⁹

According to Foster, study involves paying "careful attention to reality" within a person, passage, nature, or event through four steps: repetition, concentration, perception and reflection⁶⁰. Study would therefore lead to at least two important outcomes: a *transformation* in one's thinking and the *application* of lessons learnt. Transformation and application, or implementation, lead to both personal and community development. It is, therefore, not difficult to see how poor study habits could be one of the most significant reasons for the underdevelopment of Africa.

In addition to observation, study also involves interpretation of the passage under review. Generally, this means understanding the situation from the perspective of the original audience and not from a contemporary perspective. Simple as this may seem, it takes discipline to develop. "For communication to be effective," says a Theologian from Kenya, "the speaker must not only express his or her thoughts well, but the hearer [or reader] must also interpret what is said correctly."⁶¹ Interpretation is especially important because we each approach the Bible from unique cultural perspectives and life experiences that shape our thinking. Consequently, Ngewa suggests

⁵⁸ 2 Timothy 2:15.

⁵⁹ Mortimer Adler and Charles van Doren, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 48.

⁶⁰ Foster, *Celebration*, 79-82.

⁶¹ Samuel Ngewa, "Principles of Interpretation," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1103.

that interpreting the Bible should be done with a consideration of the cultural situation surrounding the passage as well as the style of writing (history, doctrine, poetry, symbolism) of the passage being studied. In view of the great significance of culture in interpreting the Bible, Bediako, a respected theologian from Ghana, urges Africans to continually attempt to find the connection between scripture and African culture. He wisely describes scripture as a prism, record of God's engagement with culture, road map, our history, basis of our identity, and our story.⁶²

Ultimately, all study should end in application. Otherwise, we risk falling into the trap of head knowledge *without* practical implementation. Paul warns the mere knowledge *puffs up*.⁶³ In other words, merely knowing something through observation and interpretation is not enough. Knowledge must be applied. Indeed, Paul's warning alludes to the fact that mere awareness without application is a great risk because it leads to pride, and pride goes before a fall.⁶⁴

In conclusion, everyone can engage in the spiritual discipline of study, even if they are not literate or prefer not to read. According to the Lausanne Congress and International Orality Network, 80% of the world, or some 5.7 billion people, today cannot read or prefer to learn by means other than reading.⁶⁵ It is possible that many of the people Jesus addressed during his time on earth were in similar circumstances. Fortunately, oral learners, as they are referred to, can learn through listening (especially to stories) and watching dramatization, diagrams, movies and other visuals. For example, in Northern Nigeria the Hausa ethnic group, particularly those in rural areas, are relatively less literate compared to other ethnic groups across the country. Yet, interestingly, many Hausas are devoted to *listening* to radio daily and, on average, are far more aware of local and global developments than any other ethnic group in the country.

The Bible is divided into 10% exposition, 15% poetry, and 75% narrative (story).⁶⁶ As a result of learning through listening and dramatization, some oral learners have been able to learn more than 200 passages from the Bible and repeat these accurately as they tell others what the Bible says on various subjects.⁶⁷ Therefore, there is hope for anyone interested in engaging in this spiritual discipline of study, regardless of their educational status or level of literacy. This is very good news

⁶² Kwame Bediako, "Scripture as the Interpreter of Culture and Tradition," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 3.

⁶³ 1 Corinthians 8:1.

⁶⁴ Proverbs 16:18.

⁶⁵ "Statistics & Facts," International Orality Network, accessed Nov. 10, 2022, <https://orality.net/statistics-facts/>.

⁶⁶ Miller, *Simply the Story*, 13.

⁶⁷ "Oral Bible Schools," *Simply the Story*, accessed Oct. 22, 2022, https://simplythestory.org/oralbiblestories/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=219&Itemid=186.

for places in Africa where literacy is not high, and it is especially exciting to hear feedback from African communities that have embraced oral learning with remarkable results.

Service

Christianity is a practical religion. Consequently, the Bible is filled with stories of practical activities such as God creating the physical world; Cain and Abel managing crop and animal production projects; Noah building an ark; Nehemiah rebuilding a broken wall; Peter running a fishing business; and Jesus washing his disciples' feet.

Service, otherwise known as ministry, is the selfless use of one's time, talent and treasure for the benefit of another and for the glory of God. It usually involves self-denial, humility, preferring others, and *getting one's hands dirty*, as illustrated in the story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet.⁶⁸ In other words, those who insist on remaining *dignified* will find it very difficult to serve others. Service also implies self-denial. According to Mulinde,

The humble spirit will always say, "God, this is the way I was brought up. This is the way I was taught. This is the way I see things. This is the way I know how to do it. In my understanding, what You are saying to me is impossible; but because You have said so, I will obey. Because You have spoken, I will trust you. Now Lord, help me, show me how to start."⁶⁹

As suggested above, service requires experiencing the biblical concept of dying to self. Jesus illustrates the value of death to self with the image of a seed decomposing, germinating and yielding a harvest. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. But if it dies, it will bring forth much fruit."⁷⁰ Commenting on this verse, Ngewa notes that "no matter how healthy that grain [representing a person] is, its glory lies in its death."⁷¹ In other words, unless one *kills* his or her pride and chooses to value and serve others, the hidden glory in their lives will remain veiled. Consequently, Foster observes that:

nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service.⁷²

Consequently, it is critical for Africans, like anyone else, to develop a culture of serving others without regard to whether they receive any recognition or compensation for their contribution.

⁶⁸ John 13:1-17.

⁶⁹ Mulinde, *Transforming Your World*, 23.

⁷⁰ John 12:24.

⁷¹ Ngewa, "Interpretation," 1279.

⁷² Foster, *Celebration*, 161.

Making Disciples

A disciple is a follower, protégé, or student of a master. In this case, the master is none other than Jesus Christ, “the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”⁷³ In the gospels, Jesus mandates his Church to make disciples of “all nations, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you.”⁷⁴ Making disciples is an aspect of spiritual formation that is closely related to service. This refers to serving individuals and communities in ways that help advance the lordship of Jesus. Specifically, this would include modelling Christian living, evangelism, relationship-building and consistent teaching on the spiritual disciplines discussed above. Making disciples is a patient endeavor involving seeing the new disciple engage in unbiblical practices often. Yet, the disciple-maker must patiently, humbly, lovingly, prayerfully and wisely guide the new disciple back into the path of a healthy relationship with God, remembering that everyone starts the Christian life as a new disciple who unintentionally, but unfailingly, makes several mistakes.

Making disciples is important because it fosters a situation where individuals and communities:

... live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. [For] This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.⁷⁵

Against this background, it is not difficult to envision what proper disciple-making could lead to within African communities that are characterized by civil unrest, dis-quietness, moral degeneration, poor sanitation, environmental degradation, poverty, egocentric leadership and idolatry. God desires *Shalom* and an abundant life for Africa and the rest of the world; and a critical path to realizing this is through making disciples.

Arguably, the most important aspect of making disciples is by modelling Christian living, not simply talking about it. African followers of Jesus, especially those in leadership roles, have a significant responsibility to demonstrate the God-kind of love, Christ-like humility, radical faith and other character qualities portrayed in the life of Christ. Unless this happens, it seems clear that African Christianity will remain weak and ineffective in the quest for widespread spiritual and social transformation. But it is also common knowledge that evangelism is a non-negotiable element of making disciples. In contrast to social action, evangelism refers to the verbal presentation of the good news to those who do not acknowledge the lordship of Jesus over their lives. The early church demonstrates this very well as seen in the exploits of Paul throughout Asia Minor in the second half of Acts of the Apostles. Paul’s efforts resulted in remarkable conversions leading Bebbington to

⁷³ Hebrews 12:2.

⁷⁴ Matthew 28:18,19.

⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 2:2-4.

identify conversionism as one of the four defining traits of the Evangelical movement.⁷⁶ This highlights the critical roles proclamation and conversion play in disciple-making. Similarly, commenting on preaching in Africa, Tienou makes the important observation that:

... it is popular theology [as opposed to academic theology] that takes root in the heart of the people in Africa. It is popular theology that truly counts. This is theology expressed in hymns, in preaching, and in the ordinary [informal] counsel given by pastors and other spiritual leaders on a day-to-day basis.⁷⁷

What this means is that, actually, a remarkable amount of preaching, or theologizing, is taking place across Sub-Saharan Africa. The question is whether, by and large, African preaching is faithful to the biblical text. In response, Tienou expresses serious concern:

On the evangelical scene, a lot is happening theologically in Africa at the popular level, while little is happening at the academic. This situation is alarming because popular theology is by no means always grounded in and governed by Scripture. The way in which some pastors preach and give counsel may be totally opposed to sound scriptural interpretation.⁷⁸

This critical observation by one of the foremost contemporary African theologians highlights the urgent need for accredited and easily accessible theological training across Africa, if evangelism in Africa is to be effective and African Christianity is to see the level of spiritual maturity it desperately needs.

Another important path to making disciples is through relationship-building. Again, the incarnation paints a beautiful picture of this dimension of making disciples. Some important landmarks in building relationships include humility, taking initiative, friendliness, loyalty and love. Jesus exemplified all these in his life and ministry. Relationship, especially when initiated by the non-poor towards the poor and inspired by God's love, becomes such a powerful witness for Christ. While serving as a missionary in Sierra Leone in 2004 I was privileged to develop a friendship with a 60-year-old Muslim who received medical care from the mission agency I worked with. A 2.2 kilogram tumor was removed from his face during surgery the day before. Upon asking him what he thought about his surgery, he said he was eager to go back home and "tell my people what God has done for me." Subsequently, with his permission, I proceeded to tell him a little bit about the God who made it possible for him to receive surgery free of charge. At the end of our conversation, he expressed interest in pursuing a personal relationship with Jesus, although I assured him

⁷⁶ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2.

⁷⁷ Tienou, "Theological Task," 7.

⁷⁸ Tienou, "Theological Task," 7.

profusely that he was under no obligation to do that. I then had the privilege of leading him to faith in Jesus.

Finally, making disciples has to do with consistently, patiently and prayerfully providing sound teaching on the spiritual disciplines to emerging disciples. Perhaps every disciple-maker should start out implementing this within his or her own family, before teaching others. Paul alludes to this principle when he insists that emerging spiritual leaders must, among other things, be "able to ... manage his own family well ... [for] if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of the church of God."⁷⁹ Obviously, this may not always be possible since family members sometimes reject, or even persecute, those who choose to become followers of Jesus. In this case, the disciple is encouraged to make the most of every opportunity to disciple others, especially the smallest and least significant opportunities; for "those who are unfaithful in little things, would be unfaithful in greater opportunities."⁸⁰

Questions

1. How would you describe spiritual formation?
2. Why is spiritual formation important?
3. What are some of the spiritual disciplines needed in the life of a follower of Jesus?
4. What has been your experience with practicing the spiritual disciplines?
5. Which disciplines do you struggle with practicing?
6. How do you plan to address these areas of difficulty?
7. What spiritual disciplines are most needed in your community and why?

Assignment (for discussion next week)

If we address spiritual challenges through implementing spiritual disciplines, how should we address emotional challenges?

⁷⁹ 1 Timothy 3:2-5.

⁸⁰ Luke 16:10.

Chapter 3 Mental Health

A cheerful heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit makes one sick – Proverbs 14:22
 People who drink to drown their sorrows, should be told that sorrow knows how to swim – African Proverb

Last week's Assignment Review.

Introduction

Mental health is arguably one of the greatest - and most ignored - needs in Africa. In South Africa, for instance, a nationwide survey conducted in 2022 shows that more than 25% of South Africans "suffer from probable depression with higher levels in certain provinces."⁸¹ The report further shows that this percentage is:

much higher than data collected in comparative surveys in the US (6.9%: 2011), Germany (5.6%: 2013), and Australia (10%: 2014). South Africa's rates of mental illness are also more than double those of Brazil (7.9%: 2016), which is also classified as a low-and-middle-income country with high levels of inequality. Mental illness significantly impairs overall health. And, of course, Covid-19 worsened depression and anxiety, with fear, uncertainty and social and economic disruptions arising during the pandemic.⁸²

If this is the case in the continent's most advanced economy, one wonders what the situation might be like across Africa's other countries. According to a 2022 United Nations report, "mental health problems affect 116 million people in the African region, up from 53 million in 1990."⁸³ The UN further states that Africa has "six of the top 10 countries for suicide in the world [and] ... for each suicide in Africa, there are an estimated 20 suicide attempts."⁸⁴ What is even more alarming is that despite "the urgency of the problem, African governments allocate less than 50 US cents per person to treat mental health problems [which is] well below the recommended \$2 per person for low-income countries."⁸⁵

⁸¹ "Mental health in SA is at shocking levels but people are not seeking help," University of Witwatersrand, accessed Nov. 5, 2022, <https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/research-news/2022/2022-11/mental-health-in-sa-is-at-shocking-levels-but-people-are-not-seeking-help-.html>

⁸² University of Witwatersrand, "Mental health."

⁸³ "Make suicide prevention in Africa a priority, UN health agency urges governments," United Nations, accessed Nov. 7, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129292>

⁸⁴ United Nations, "Suicide Prevention."

⁸⁵ United Nations, "Suicide Prevention."

Suffering with mental and emotional wounds may also be referred to as being *dis-membered*. Reflecting on this, Kenyan clinical psychologist Gladys Mwiti and American professor of psychology Al Dueck note that:

South African artist, layman, and Bible reader Azariah Mbatha captures the African experience in a woodcarving that graphically presents the predicament of his own Zulu tradition and culture. Each panel is filled with characters, all with African faces and costumes. This is the African community - many people together engaged in a common enterprise. However, what is the enterprise? In each panel, a human is being exchanged for money. Joseph's brothers sell him to the Ishmaelite/Midianite traders⁸⁶.

Adding his reflection to this, South African theologian Simon Maimela notes that the dismembering of Africans also extends to their culture.

He states that after many centuries of oppression and white supremacy, black South Africans felt ashamed of their Africanness, it became synonymous with helplessness. He notes that the "humiliation was calculated to highlight the relative uselessness of our African cultures, religions, and gods, which failed to protect us against European military assault, [resulting in] our eventual subjugation and consequent oppression."⁸⁷

"To understand suffering," Westman suggests we must "start from the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth. He then created people and other living things. He created us for life and for relationship."⁸⁸ But this abundant life God created us for was interrupted when our ancestors, Adam and Eve, naively chose to dishonor God in favor of Satan. Part of the result is the complex range of woundedness Africans experience today. Fortunately, there is hope.

The goal of this chapter is to *equip readers with the basic skills needed to bring emotional and interpersonal healing to the poor in Africa, and in this way care for the whole person*. The target audience is informal community care providers. In other words, anyone disturbed by the mental health challenges in their community and having a desire to help. The content is basic, yet important for helping anyone better understand people, mental health, and suffering. There are at least three reasons that justify the training of informal care providers to address basic mental health issues. First, the severe shortage of mental health professionals on the continent. There is "only one

⁸⁶ Mwiti and Dueck, *Christian Counselling*, 11.

⁸⁷ Mwiti and Dueck, *Christian Counselling*, 12.

⁸⁸ Lyn Westman, *Understanding People, Mental Health and Trauma* (Unpublished manuscript, 2020), xix.

psychiatrist for every 500,000 inhabitants” of Africa.⁸⁹ Second, as previously discussed, African governments are paying inadequate attention to mental illness. Finally, as illustrated below, expert opinion by the World Health Organization (WHO) provides the stimulus for training informal care providers.

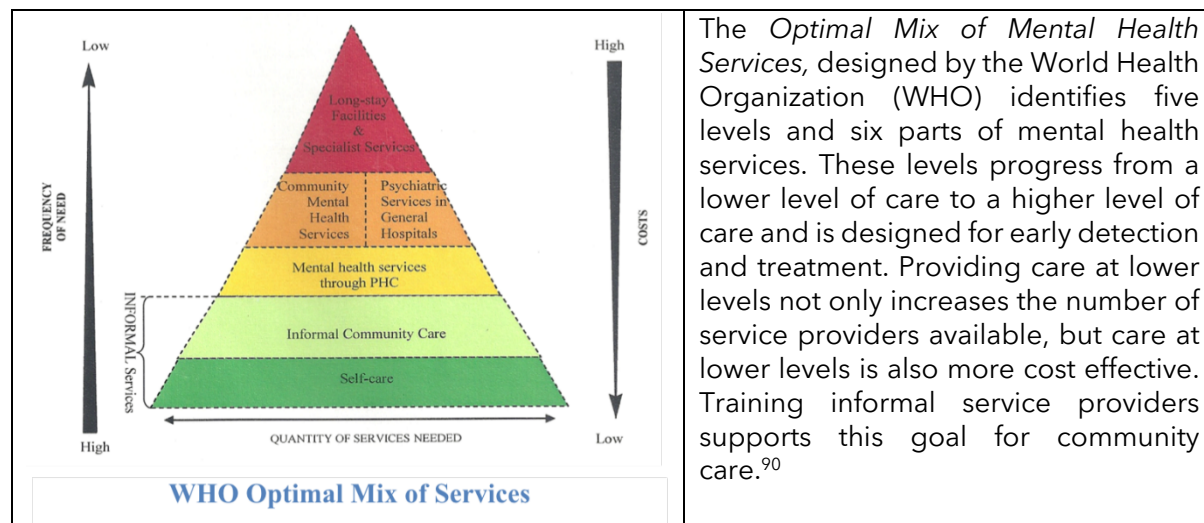


FIGURE 4: THE WHO OPTIMAL MIX OF SERVICES

Having briefly discussed the impact of suffering, we now turn our attention to basic mental health interventions that can be applied by anyone interested in fostering healing. Informal counselling is perhaps the most common intervention available to most African populations. Yet, to be effective, informal counselling must be transformational. According to Mwit and Dueck:

Transformational counselling that meets the needs of African populations will require counsellors who understand the unique needs of the people [and are] ... guided by approaches that are holistic in nature. These approaches will utilize a multiplicity of interventions and partnerships to achieve wellness among those that are served. The same methodologies must build on rich indigenous practices that are consistent with a biblical value system. Africa's traditional psychology is rich in tools that have been used for healing over millennia. For training, teaching and counselling, African counsellors can use folk tales, African proverbs, songs, dances and musical instruments.⁹¹

⁸⁹ UN. "Suicide Prevention."

⁹⁰ Lyn Westman, Email message to author, September. 3., 2020.

⁹¹ Mwit and Dueck, *Christian Counselling*, 58.

Indeed, African stories or proverbs that have biblical values may be one of the most effective tools for fostering healing, as they are platforms for integrating faith and culture. Additionally, they reinforce the value of culture as a tool for communicating God's love and restoration to individuals and communities that have suffered for very long.

Mwiti and Dueck also note that African indigenous Christian counselling is composed of three important elements: Biblical grounding, indigenous cultural sensitivity and non-African psychology. Biblical grounding was discussed in chapter three and cultural sensitivity in chapter two, so we will turn our attention to non-African psychology. Lyn Westman, an American clinical psychologist who has been practicing and offering training for almost two decades across Africa, suggests that there are five important non-African mental health models that are relevant to basic counselling in Africa and elsewhere. These are the Whole Person Model, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (adapted), Johari Window, the Behavior Process Model and the Change Model⁹². While these may seem intimidating, they are actually simple and illustrated below with easy-to-remember diagrams.

The Whole Person Model

The Whole Person Model is based upon a biblical worldview which teaches that people are in essence spiritual beings created in the image of God. The human spirit is intangible, eternal and can make contact with the spiritual realm. The Christian faith and African traditional religion address the spiritual part of man significantly. Additionally, people have souls made up of the mind, will and emotions. The Bible teaches that the soul, just like the body, can be wounded, healed, restored and renewed.⁹³ Humans also live within physical bodies that are composed of multiple systems, organs and minute cells. Finally, from conception each person is also in a relationship with another person. God desires for human relationships to be healthy and has provided tools to this end. Unfortunately, our relationships are often toxic, resulting in inter-personal conflict, separation and sometimes even war. The Whole Person Model is illustrated by the diagram below.

⁹² Westman, *Understanding People*, 31.

⁹³ Psalm 23:3 and Romans 12:2.

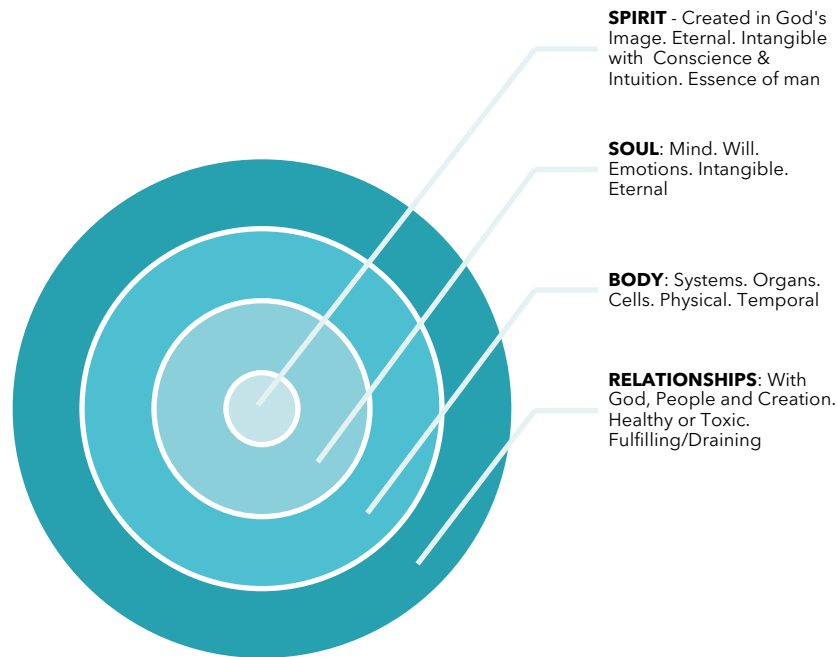


FIGURE 5: THE WHOLE PERSON MODEL

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was proposed by Abraham Maslow to address the needs faced by humans everywhere. It ranges from people's most basic needs to what Maslow labelled as *self-actualization*. However, Westman adapted this model to reflect a Biblical worldview that points out that sex is not a need but a desire; each individual has a God-given purpose that is more important than self-actualization; and that, ultimately, God is the greatest need of every individual. It is illustrated as follows:

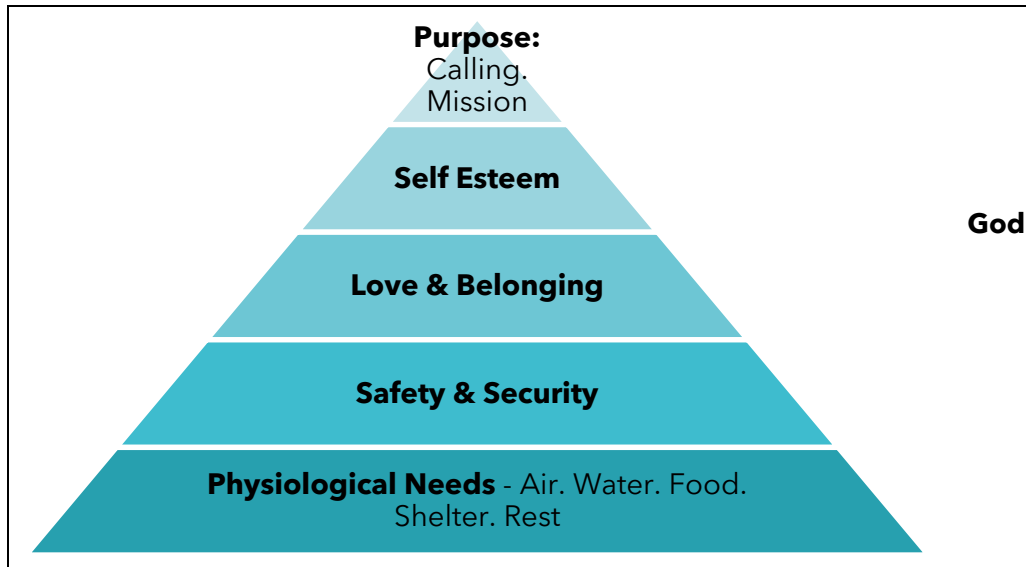


FIGURE 6: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (ADAPTED)

Johari Window

This model identifies four distinct levels of awareness in an individual's life. The first is the arena, which is an area where elements of an individual's life are known to the individual and others. Second, the blind spot refers to aspects of a person's life that are not known to the person but known to others. The following element is the façade, where an individual knows something that is not known to others. Finally, the unknown, where both the individual and other people are not aware. In other words, only God is aware of this area. This is also illustrated below.

	Known to Self	Not known to Self
Known to Others	ARENA	BLIND SPOT
Not Known to Others	FAÇADE	UNKNOWN

FIGURE 7: JOHARI WINDOW

Behavior Process Model

This model describes the relationship between four essential elements in the way people behave. It asserts that behavior is, first and foremost, inspired by a situation, which may be positive, negative or neutral and impact upon an individual, family, organization, community or even the world at large. One recent example of a global situation is the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, the situation triggers thoughts which may differ from person to person depending on their worldview or mindset. This difference in perspective is an important factor in how the individual ultimately responds to the situation. The third factor in this model is the feelings. Also known as emotions, one's feelings may range from positive to negative depending on their perspective, or thoughts. Finally, thoughts and feelings result in actions or behaviors, which is the last element in this model. However, since people are complex, individuals sometimes react intuitively. This means that the thoughts and/or feelings step/steps may be bypassed with people moving from situation directly to actions. This explains irrational actions which some individuals take and later regret. The model is illustrated below.



FIGURE 8: BEHAVIOR PROCESS MODEL

Change Model

This model seeks to identify where an individual might be in the process of change. Developed by Westman, the model is relevant to the aspirations of many Africans who dream of a future where widespread personal and community transformation is a practical reality. It discusses five key elements that may be described as milestones in the journey to change. The model begins with an awareness of the situation causing the problem. Sometimes people are not aware of the root cause of their problem, in which case a thorough investigation becomes necessary. Following this, it is

important to find out if a motivation for change exists. Remarkably, people are sometimes not willing to pursue change because their situation might be beneficial in some way. For example, some South Africans on social grants may choose to continue benefiting from this although the amount falls significantly short of meeting their needs. Some beneficiaries say they would rather struggle with a meagre social grant than face the grind of going to work every day. Situations exist where an individual may have the awareness of the situation and motivation to change, but lack the knowledge and skills to change. The UN recognizes the significant lack of functional literacy globally by making quality education one of the sustainable development goals.⁹⁴ The fourth factor in the Change Model is energy, which highlights the reality that without energy, awareness, motivation and skills alone will *not* result in personal or community transformation. The Change Model ends with hope, a quality that has helped people in the most desperate of situations survive and eventually, thrive. The model is illustrated below.

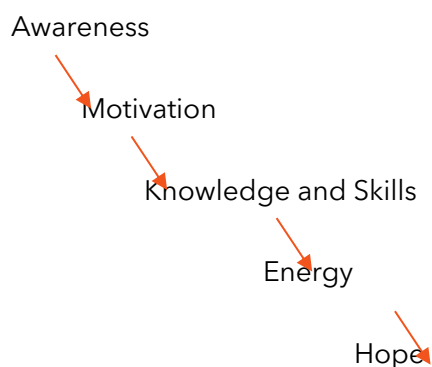


FIGURE 9: Change Model

In view of the above, it becomes imperative that serious efforts in grassroots leadership development within Africa include training in basic mental health intervention. Fortunately, the mental health challenges confronting African low-income communities have been addressed by globally respected behavioral health experts because other world regions experience similar problems.

In his landmark book *Failure of Nerve*, American mental health consultant and rabbi Edwin Friedman examines contemporary American leadership against the background of 15th and 16th century European leadership. Using Europe's transition from a millennium of uneventful ordinariness to a glorious era of innovation, art, exploration, discovery and expansion, Friedman

⁹⁴ "Sustainable Development Goals," United Nations, accessed Nov. 9, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

argues that, today like in the past, anxiety stifles imagination, fun, adventure, relevance and advancement within marriages, families, congregations, corporations, and state agencies - basically everywhere.⁹⁵

While the disruptions of Covid, globalization, climate change and other developments might seem to be great reasons for anxiety, Friedman shows that these challenging conditions do not differ much from past events. In this way, Friedman uses history as a platform for hope. This is both pragmatic and therapeutic with important implications for leadership within low-income communities, the context that I am privileged to serve in.

First, there is hope because history shows that every country/world region has experienced poverty at some point in their development. Since many have overcome it, there is no need for anxiety. On the contrary, as Friedman suggests with the story of Prince Henry, the Navigator who funded the exploratory research of Columbus, low-income communities should explore new business possibilities and venture into trades, products, services and industries as God may direct them.⁹⁶

Obviously, this does not negate the need for in-depth market research and strategic planning. The old European explorers were guided by maps and other cartographic inputs which, though not as accurate as today's maps, provided significant value in discoveries that have changed the world.

Another important implication *Failure of Nerve* has for low-income communities is that since mistakes are generally inevitable according to history, the poor should not be afraid of making honest mistakes. Indeed, the road to greatness anywhere is paved with mistakes, albeit mistakes made in the process of people doing the best they can with the knowledge they have. Friedman points out that 15th and 16th century cartographers created maps which were sometimes *quite* inaccurate. One example is a map that claimed California is an island. However, Friedman points out that the price paid for making mistakes ultimately pales in comparison to the value gained in adventure and exploration based on the information known at the time. Similarly, members of low-income-communities may gather information from several key sources and use this in exploring holistic asset-based community development within their neighborhoods.

Finally, *Failure of Nerve* implies that it is imperative that leaders within low-income communities operate with courage. This is not a denial of the injustices, woundedness, deprivation or broken systems within poor communities. On the contrary, it is a call to abandon the anxiety that cripples leadership potential to developing the "nerve," or *guts*, needed for the battle for the God-given destiny of marriages, families, congregations, companies and communities everywhere. Perhaps this is why, at the very beginning of his calling to lead Israel, Joshua is repeatedly challenged to be

⁹⁵ Edwin H. Friedman, Margaret M. Treadwell, and Edward W. Beal, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2017), 18, Kindle.

⁹⁶ Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 72.

"strong and courageous."⁹⁷ Given the levels of decadence in the social institutions among low-income communities, it is not difficult to see why courageous leadership is needed. Combining this with self-differentiation, meditation, prayer and other disciplines could significantly transform low-income communities.

One important mental health situation impacting South African grassroot communities stems from untreated trauma due to various stressors. Some of these stressors include the impact of poverty, crime, grief, broken families and the legacy of Apartheid. In his ground-breaking reflection on post-Apartheid South Africa, *No Future without Forgiveness*, Nobel Laurette Desmond Tutu gives details of a victim hearing during a session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This individual expressed a desire to forgive, the struggle of not knowing exactly who perpetrated the crime he will like to forgive. Other stressors include the trauma of losing loved ones without the opportunity of giving them a decent funeral, or burying dead relatives without permission to view their mortal remains - supposedly due to extreme dismemberment.⁹⁸ This highlights the incidence of untreated trauma not only in South Africa but also across the continent.

Another good book, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, describes how trauma has reached epidemic levels in societies all over the world, and the various ways in which the body responds to it. These include tightened stomachs, shallow breathing, increased heart rates. And may also include "clenched fists, tightness in the neck, nausea and trembling" as Lyn Westman points out in *Understanding People, Mental Health, and Trauma*.⁹⁹ But trauma also has other devastating effects on children and adults including memory loss, outbursts of rage, withdrawal, self-blame, violence, "drugs, alcohol, binge eating, or cutting" and a host of other inappropriate behaviors. Ultimately, the book discusses several important approaches to healing.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the mental and emotional health of Africans living within low-income communities may be improved by integrating African indigenous counselling practices which align with the Bible with non-African psychological models, biblical meditation and prayer. The indigenous practices, expressed through proverbs, folk tales, songs and art, hold significant cultural relevance that fosters easy acceptance. Non-western models, such as Maslow's, have a great appeal because they address universal needs that are easy to understand. Biblical meditation, arguably more than any other factor, brings in a powerful therapeutic dimension, because as Isaiah points out, God will

⁹⁷ Joshua 1:6,7,9.

⁹⁸ Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 145.

⁹⁹ Westman, *Understanding People*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014), 104.

"keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on him."¹⁰¹ The Bible also notes that prayer, when offered in line with God's will, can address anxiety and result in "peace beyond all understanding."¹⁰² Informal care providers interested in improving their knowledge or efficiency are encouraged to study Gladys Mwitwa and Al Dueck's landmark book, *Christian Counselling: An African Indigenous Perspective* and Lyn Westman's remarkable manual *Understanding People, Mental Health and Trauma*.

Questions

1. How would you define mental health?
2. What are some misconceptions about mental health in your community?
3. Name at least three of the non-African models described in this chapter?
4. Do you see a need for mental health in your community? Why?
5. In what ways was mental health implemented in your community in the past?
6. How is mental health implemented now?
7. What similarities do you see between mental health approaches in your community and how Jesus approached the Woman of Samaria in John 4?

Assignment (for discussion next week)

How can mental health contribute to community development?

¹⁰¹ Isaiah 26:3.

¹⁰² Philippians 4:6-7.

Chapter 4: Asset-Based Community Development

In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well – Romans 12:6.

The biblical perspective on the purpose of empowerment is, in brief, that fallen human beings may – through good relationships with their Creator, each other and the rest of creation – become responsible stewards, accountable to God for their use of material possessions, wealth and all given resources – Deborah Ajulu.

The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they aren't true, but they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story – Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie.

I am fortunate: my parents told me the world was my oyster, when they could have said I wouldn't make it for a lot of reasons – rural, girl, small African country. So, no regrets – Dambisa Moyo.

I believe we have reached a stage in life in the economic development of Africa where moving forward is perilous, moving backwards is cowardice and standing still is suicidal but we must persevere because winners do not quit and quitters never win – PLO Lumumba.

Review of Last Week's Assignment

Introduction

Africa is abundantly blessed with human and material resources. Africans in the diaspora have occupied positions such as president of the United States, secretary general of the United Nations and founder/pastor of the largest evangelical church in Europe. Africans have also been Nobel prize winners in various fields of human endeavor. Additionally, it is no secret that the continent is blessed with vast petroleum and solid mineral resources, a lot of which still remains untapped. Despite all of this, current economic realities suggest Africa is the poorest continent on earth with many precious people barely able to survive. Addressing this disturbing paradox is the motivation for this chapter. In the words of the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* best-selling author, Jim Collins, it is time to confront the brutal facts. Why is Africa a sleeping giant? More importantly, how can she wake up and maximize her potential? Needless to say, this not the first time this irony is being examined. For instance, reflecting on the deplorable state of affairs across the continent in 2017, Patrick Lumumba, an outspoken professor of law from Kenya posed a challenging question to this generation of Africans:

What will you tell [South African Nobel prize winner and former president of the African National Congress] Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Reginald Tambo, Steve Biko, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Thomas Sankara, Ahmed Kathrada, Patrice Emery Lumumba about the state of Africa?¹⁰³

¹⁰³ "Tiro: Old Soldiers Never Die," Patrick Lumumba, accessed Jan. 12, 2023.
<https://www.ul.ac.za/tiro/data/application/downloads/Prof%20PLO%20Lumumba%20speech.pdf>

Similarly, Dambisa Moyo, a pan-African economist from Zambia, laments in her best-selling book *Dead Aid*, that foreign aid that is granted without rigorous assessment, despite the good intent of donor countries/agencies and the significant amounts involved (some \$400 Billion over 50 years), by and large, is not working for Africa.¹⁰⁴ She concludes that the way forward is a “new level of consciousness, a greater degree of innovation, and a generous dose of honesty about what works and what does not as far as development is concerned.”¹⁰⁵ Needless to say, the principles that are true at the macroeconomic level, are also applicable at the microeconomic one. This is important because several Africans tend to moan about the political corruption that has crippled the continent while conveniently ignoring the grassroots corruption that enables high-level corruption through the voting process.

Another important voice on Africa is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The Nigerian novelist, who delivered the 19-minute Ted Talk, rated as one of the 25 most popular of all time, and was named one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2015, recalls an eye-opening experience when she realized the danger of not recognizing human potential at the grassroots:

[O]ne Saturday, we went to his [Fide, Adichie’s domestic helper] village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia that his brother had made. I was startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them.¹⁰⁶

Adichie, who holds honorary doctorate degrees from 17 universities including Johns Hopkins and Yale, concludes: “when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.”¹⁰⁷

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is based on the assumption that everyone is created with *at least* one God-given talent that can be *developed* into strengths. The Bible provides significant support for this idea of every individual having at least one talent. For example, Jesus illustrates this profoundly in the parable of the talents, where each of the multiple servants of an affluent nobleman is given one or more talents to invest.¹⁰⁸ One of the studies in support of this assumption is a 30-year research project conducted by the Gallup organization. The research uncovered “overwhelming evidence” from more than one million respondents in nearly 50

¹⁰⁴ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009) 141.

¹⁰⁵ Moyo, *Dead Aid*, 145.

¹⁰⁶ Chimamanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story,” October 7, 2009, TEDTalk, 18:32, https://www.ted.com/playlists/171/the_most_popular_talks_of_all

¹⁰⁷ Adichie, “Single Story.”

¹⁰⁸ Matthew 25:14-30. Luke 19:13-26.

countries that everyone has at least one talent, thereby providing scientific support for the Bible's longstanding claim that everyone is talented.¹⁰⁹ One important reason why everyone, including people with disabilities (PWDs) and people living within low-income communities (PLWLICs), has at least one God-given talent, is that all human beings are created in the image of God.¹¹⁰ This implies, among other things, that every human has the potential of enjoying the same intimacy with God, wisdom and success that Adam and Eve enjoyed before the fall in the Garden of Eden. Jesus describes this quality of life as the abundant life.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, this is a foreign concept to many people, especially those living within economically-challenged communities in Africa. As illustrated below, research shows that there are at least five different kinds of gifts people are blessed with.



FIGURE 10: CATEGORIES OF GIFTS: 5H (HEAD, HANDS, HEART, HEELS, HUMAN CONNECTION).¹¹²

Following significant engagement with low-income communities, John McKnight and Jody Kretzman became dissatisfied with the traditional practice among community development professionals of viewing communities through the lens of needs, deficiencies and lack. Upon further study, McKnight and Kretzman concluded that the inclination towards needs is both counter-productive and disempowering to the communities being served. This is because by focusing on what is lacking, the needs-based approach naively ignores gifts that are present, thereby fostering a mindset of seeking external help - even for things that can be achieved with internal assets. A

¹⁰⁹ "The Clifton StrengthsFinder Research FAQs," The Gallup Organization., accessed Jan. 22, 2023, http://media.gallup.com/pdf/twys/csf_research_faq.pdf

¹¹⁰ Genesis 1:26.

¹¹¹ John 10:10.

¹¹² Allison Lourash, Michele Dunscombe, April Doner, and Hunter Goodman, *ABCD 101* (Unpublished PowerPoint, 2022), 32.

multiplier effect of this is an inferiority complex that has crippled the self-esteem and motivation of many African and developing-world communities. To make a difference, Lori Sokoluk, proposes that community members or community development practitioners can integrate a community's indigenous values with those of ABCD, and thereby foster a mindset where communities are decolonized and fully leverage their assets. This is illustrated in the diagram below.¹¹³

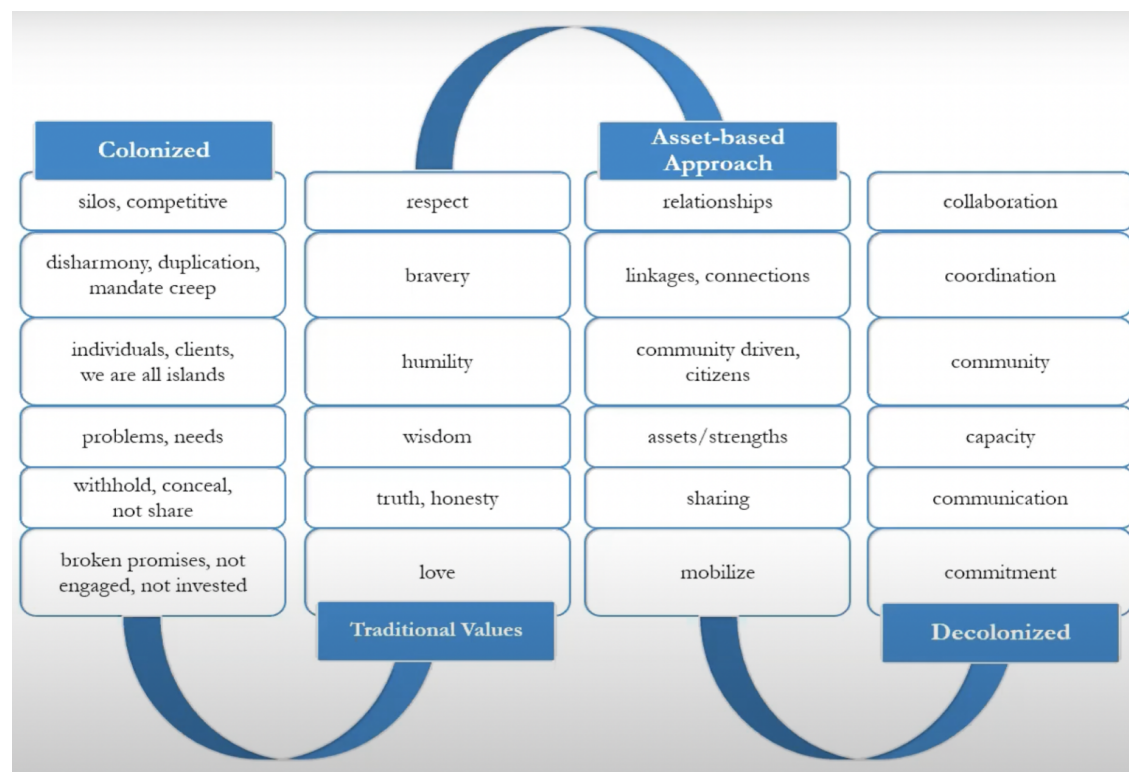


FIGURE 11: ABCD & INDIGENOUS VALUES.¹¹⁴

Realizing the gaps in the traditional, needs-based approach to community development, McKnight and Kretzman developed the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model and began campaigning for *what is strong, not wrong*, within communities.¹¹⁵ The table below contrasts ABCD with the traditional approach to community development.

¹¹³ Lourash et al., *ABCD 101*, 23.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ "From What's Wrong to What's Strong," Cormac Russell, accessed Jan. 25, 2023, <https://www.nurtureddevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/AmericaTour2018.pdf>

TABLE 1: COMPARING ABCD WITH TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SOCIAL SERVICES)¹¹⁶

<i>ABCD Approach</i>	<i>Social Services Model</i>
Focus on assets	Focus on needs
Builds from opportunities	Responds to problems
Investment orientation	Charity orientation
Emphasis on associations	Emphasis on agencies
Focus on community	Focus on individuals
Goal is empowerment	Goal is services
Power comes from relationships	Power comes from credentials
People are the answer	Programs are the answer
People are citizens	People are clients

Also known as assets, an individual's strengths can significantly improve both personal and community circumstances when leveraged fully and when paired with the strengths of others in the community.

There are several approaches to ABCD which subscribe to the general belief in strengths but also reflect local realities. This leadership training guide will use the model created by Janine Ward, a South African with several years of experience implementing and training others in ABCD. As illustrated below, Ward's framework presents six important kinds of assets any community can use in leveraging their strengths and pursuing community development. These include connecting assets, human assets, social assets, physical assets, natural assets and financial assets. Following the diagram is a table giving details of the assets and how each may be applied.

¹¹⁶ Lourash et al., *ABCD 101*, 22.

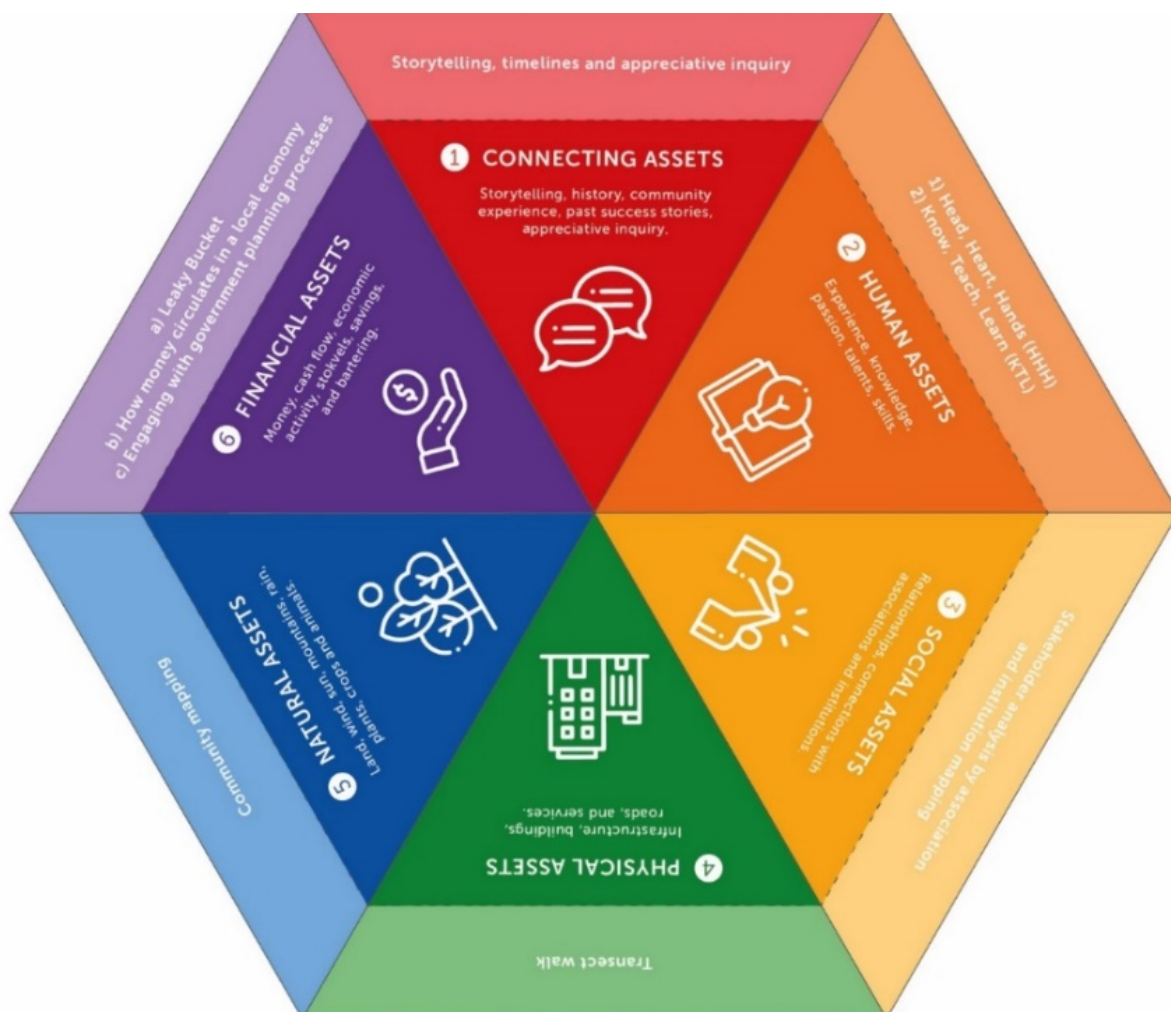


FIGURE 12: ABCD PIZZA - BY JANINE WARD¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Janine Ward, Email message to author, Nov. 23, 2022.

The details are explained a bit further in the table below.

TABLE 2: ABCD PIZZA - 6 ASSETS & THEIR TOOLS¹¹⁸

	<i>Asset</i>	<i>What (Focus)</i>	<i>How (Tools)</i>
1	Connecting Assets	Storytelling, history, community experience, past success stories	Timelines, storytelling, appreciative enquiry
2	Human assets	Individual experience, knowledge, passions, talents, gifts.	Head, heart, hands, know, teach, learn.
3	Social assets	Relationships, networks, connections with associations and institutions.	Association mapping or stakeholder identification
4	Physical assets	Infrastructure, man-made buildings, services.	Transect walk to identify existing physical assets
5	Natural assets	God-given land, water, mountains, rain, sun, wind, plants, animals	Community mapping
6	Financial assets	Money, cash flow, savings scheme (stockvels), economic activity, bartering.	Leaky bucket

Based on Ward's framework, using ABCD to engage communities begins with using connecting assets, especially through stories of how we have survived and thrived as a community. Reflecting on this within the context of his nation's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Desmond Tutu notes:

Our nation sought to rehabilitate and affirm the dignity and personhood of those who for so long had been silenced, had been turned into anonymous, marginalized ones. Now they would be able to tell their stories, they would remember, and in remembering would be acknowledged to be persons with an inalienable personhood.¹¹⁹

In her landmark book, *Holism in Development: An African Perspective on Empowering Communities*, Deborah Ajulu, a respected African development practitioner, laments over how poverty-induced powerlessness blinds grassroots communities from seeing "their own strengths and abilities".¹²⁰ Ajulu then observes that "although empowerment must be a grassroots process,

¹¹⁸ Janine Ward, email message to author, November 23, 2022.

¹¹⁹ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 28.

¹²⁰ Deborah Ajulu, *Holism in Development: An African Perspective on Empowering Communities* (Monrovia: CA, MARC, 2001), 137.

based at a specific location and social group, like a village or community, it requires catalytic and facilitatory external intervention.”¹²¹ Ajulu also insists that a:

holistic empowerment process needs to incorporate different and varied elements such as (a) building up personal self-esteem, dignity, identity, confidence and a sense of belonging for individuals and groups in a community; (b) equipping the rural [and urban] poor with capabilities and skills for decision-making, action, management, negotiation, and production; ... satisfying the spiritual needs of the people, especially enabling to enter into a personal relationship with their Maker.¹²²

Perhaps the greatest empowerment needed across Africa is a process whereby members of low-income communities come to terms with the God-given talents they have been blessed with, and, very importantly, develop these talents to the point where they can compete with others with similar talents anywhere on the planet. Ultimately, after development, African talents need to be deployed for the common good. This is what Lumumba, Adoyo and Adichie have done. This is what Africans in low-income communities must do.

Similarly, Asian missionary leader and scholar David Lim strongly insists that to experience sustainable Christianity, indigenous churches must be “self-governing (with their own leaders), self-supporting (their own resources), self-propagating (their own witness), and self-theologizing (their own theological and ethical sensitivities).”¹²³ This has important ramifications for asset-based thinking within African low-income communities. The fullness of God’s blessings will be seen within grassroots communities once they develop the confidence to become self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-theologizing. This will probably start with a critical mass of courageous *first entrants*, who will then go on to inspire and mobilize others.

Several other non-Africans subscribe to asset-based thinking. For instance, in his classic book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell observes that the contemporary hero/heroine is “the modern individual who dares to heed the call and ... seek our whole [common] destiny.”¹²⁴ Campbell concludes with the counsel that:

every one of us shares the supreme ordeal—carries the cross of the redeemer—not in the bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Ajulu, *Holism in Development*, 140.

¹²² Ajulu, *Holism in Development*, 141.

¹²³ David S. Lim, “God’s Kingdom as Oikos Church Networks: A Biblical Theology,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 34, no. 1-4. (2017), 32, accessed Jan. 25, 2023, https://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/34_1-4_PDFs/IJFM_34_1-4-Lim.pdf

¹²⁴ Campbell, *The Hero*, 362.

¹²⁵ Campbell, *The Hero*, 362.

Similarly, Taleb, urges everyone - including Africans living in low-income communities - to transition from fragility to resilience. But Taleb argues that, contrary to popular opinion, it is not enough to be resilient. Those who want to excel must strive to be *antifragile*. He defines this as the ability to benefit, thrive or grow (not merely survive) when exposed to "shocks ... volatility, randomness, disorder, ... stressors ... risk, and uncertainty¹²⁶." Unimaginable as this may seem, the author illustrates antifragility with a case from his native country, Lebanon:

My Levantine village of origin, Amioun, was pillaged and evacuated during the war, sending its inhabitants into exile across the planet. Twenty-five years later, it became opulent, having bounced back with a vengeance: my own house, dynamited, is now bigger than the previous version. My father, showing me the multiplication of villas in the countryside while bemoaning these nouveaux riches, calmly told me, "You, too, had you stayed here, would have become a beach bum. People from Amioun only do well when shaken." That's antifragility.¹²⁷

Therefore, the compelling question is why other communities pillaged by similar circumstances do not bounce back? This might be a good point to heed the conclusion of Jim Collins after several years researching more than 1000 companies in search of why some make the leap and others do not: "greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline."¹²⁸

Questions

What stories best capture a fair and truthful history of your community?

1. What are three of the most significant human assets (knowledge, talents, passions) in your community?
2. What associations among community members could be developed in your community that could make a big difference in development?
3. What community infrastructure do you have that has the potential of being used in a very significant way?
4. What God-given natural assets does your community have that could be used much better than they are being used now?
5. How could you continually invest your financial assets back into your community?

¹²⁶ Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragile: Things that Gain from Disorder* (New York: Random House, 2012), 3.

¹²⁷ Taleb, *Antifragile*, 203.

¹²⁸ Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking is not the Answer* (Suffolk: UK. Random House Business Books, 2006), 31.

Assessment

Experts define critical success factors (CSFs) as the factors that “contribute to achieving project success.”¹²⁹ Accordingly, the most important factors for evaluating my project’s performance include the following:

- At least 60% of 20 Christian community development practitioners serving in South Africa invited to review a preliminary draft of the manual express satisfaction with its content as indicated by an expression of interest to buy a published copy of the guide.
- At least 75% of ten experienced community development trainers in South Africa invited to review a preliminary draft of the manual express satisfaction with its quality as indicated by feedback from a written questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions.
- At least one of five professors teaching community development at universities in the USA, Australia, Asia and Africa express interest in adopting the guide as part of their syllabus

The method for monitoring, measuring, and documenting that will be used in this project will include completion of first draft and administering of questionnaire to participants mentioned above by October 31, 2023; feedback received and analyzed by November 15, 2023; and feedback incorporated into final draft by November 30, 2023.

Benchmarking may be described as “identifying the highest standards of excellence for products, services, or processes, and then making the improvements necessary to reach those standards”.¹³⁰ In this case, the standards include alignment with scripture, language that is easy to understand yet rich in content, and finally, good graphic design in terms of inclusion of relevant photos and good layout. At least one South African organization, Brightstar Lifestyle, excel in work similar to my proposed project, the production of training manuals. Some of their benchmarks include:

- Producing content that is in alignment with a biblical worldview
- Adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to content development by combining theology with business, psychology and education
- Regular invitation of feedback from trainers on how to improve the quality of the manual and training program
- A commitment to excellence in graphic design in manual production

Based on the forementioned, I would consider my doctoral project as being above average. This is because the vast majority of stakeholders reviewing the preliminary draft rated the contents as being in in alignment with a biblical worldview. This is my most important critical success factor,

¹²⁹ Marija Lj Todorovic, Dejan C. Petrovic, Marko M. Mihic, Vladimir Lj Obradovic, and Sergey D. Bushuyev, “Project Success Analysis Framework: A Knowledge-Based Approach in Project Management,” *International Journal of Project Management* 33 (2015): 774.

¹³⁰ Khurram S. Bhuta and Faizuil Huq, “Benchmarking – Best Practices: An Integrated Approach,” *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 6, no. 3 (1999): 254-268.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/14635779910289261>

thus I am grateful for attaining this. Stakeholders also rated the multidisciplinary approach high. However, an important stakeholder feedback was the inclusion of more illustrations to better clarify the ideas I seek to communicate. I agree with this feedback because as the popular maxim goes, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” However, my initial efforts at securing an illustrator to bring my ideas to life proved difficult. Fortunately, I have been able to secure one who is conceptualizing these ideas and we anticipate integrating her work into future drafts of the project. It is my hope that this will significantly improve the quality of the content and layout. Otherwise, I am happy with the feedback from both my stakeholders and project faculty, and hope that the finished product will be well received by the intended audience.

Guided by feedback from the stakeholders who reviewed the first draft of my project, I have developed the following benchmarks:

- A section critically discussing making disciples in the chapter on spiritual disciplines to highlight the importance of this key component of Christian leadership
- Graphic art components in all chapters to clarify and better illustrate the concepts presented

Project Launch Plan

Doctoral Project Description

NPO STATEMENT: Hopelessness within African low-income communities highlights the need for equipping local agents with a Christian gospel that integrates discipleship with leadership development, vocational training, mental health and asset-based community development if we wish to see Shalom.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A comprehensive leadership training guide that focuses on identifying and deploying community strengths rather than the traditional development approach of focusing on needs. Containing 12 chapters, the guide may be read on its own or be accompanied by a workbook, if used as a workshop training manual for low-income community residents. The workbook, which is to be produced as part of the launch plan, is designed for semi-literate community members, will feature several illustrations, and have a maximum of two pages corresponding to each chapter in the guide.

Audience

The audience includes Christian community development practitioners, pastors, teachers, missionaries, public servants and social entrepreneurs working among African low-income communities. I plan to engage the audience through community development associations, ministers' fraternities, churches, university alumni associations, social media, and referrals from friends.

Development Plan

July – September 2023

- Complete writing the seven remaining chapters of the guide
- Contract illustrator for artwork

October – December 2023

- Share full draft with two International Association for Community Development (IACD) officials interested in endorsing the guide¹³¹
- Share full draft with a Christian leader serving missionaries across several African countries and interested in promoting the published guide within the ministers' fraternities the leader belongs to
- Create a list of stakeholders with expertise in community development, theology, writing, editing and publishing to advise on the viability of the guide as a popular book

¹³¹ The International Association of Community Development is the only global network of development practitioners and educators. It is accredited by the UN. Therefore, endorsement by the organization's leadership will lend significant credibility to the guide.

- Research on the process of getting the guide published based on input from the previously mentioned stakeholders

January – March 2024

- Evaluate feedback from stakeholders and decide on viability of the guide as a popular book. Edit manuscript and share with potential publishers
- Accept a publishing contract or self-publish, if needed.

April – June 2024

- Provide a copy of the published guide to all the leaders that endorsed and/or reviewed the manuscript
- Develop a website for promoting the guide, with written endorsements by key leaders; available locations for purchase (Amazon; & South African bookstores like Cum Books); author bio; and excerpts for download; and contact page

Project evaluation after the launch will include quarterly follow-ups with organizations using the guide as a training tool regarding mindset shift from needs-based to asset-based thinking among their workshop participants. A second assessment criterion would be lifestyle change in terms of adopting spiritual disciplines, such as meditation, owing to the use of the guide in low-income communities where pastors, missionaries and community development practitioners use the guide.

Appendix A— Milestone 1 The NPO Charter

PERSONAL RESEARCH MANIFESTO

I commit to a research process that seeks to discern God's will for my NPO through engaging scripture, literature, and key stakeholders prayerfully, eagerly and respectfully.

NPO STATEMENT

How might we train men and youth in low-income communities to become holistic as agents of transformational development?

NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

By the end of this doctorate program, a short course will exist to equip men and youth in low-income communities with the resources needed to facilitate holistic discipleship. The course will be practical and include spiritual formation, vocational training, community development, and basic mental health. At this point, it is difficult to estimate the exact costs associated with the course. Scope, boundaries and costs will be defined/evaluated as the course progresses.

NPO CONTEXT

My NPO ministry context includes non-denominational, evangelical men and youth living in low-income communities. The primary target communities will be Duncan Village and Pefferville, two informal settlements within East London, South Africa, that are populated by Black and Colored low-class families. With an estimated population of about 80,000 people, these communities are characterized by African Traditional Religion, syncretism, substance abuse, unemployment, extreme poverty, poor infrastructure, low skills, and crime. Some efforts have been made by evangelical churches towards evangelism, church planting and feeding schemes, with little visible results in terms of large-scale behavioral and economic transformation. The participation group per course will be capped at 6-15 individuals, ages ranging 18-60, to allow for learning effectiveness.

ROOT CAUSES

The most critical root cause of my NPO is hopelessness among men within low-income communities. Based on generational poverty, systemic corruption and oppressive leadership, several men simply cannot see how their poor circumstances can significantly change, and have thus lost motivation to seek solutions. One effect of this is producing children without nurturing them (fatherlessness). Consequently, the children grow to become youth who are not empowered; envisioned as community members with significant contributions for society; involved in decision-making; or equipped with the spiritual and vocational training needed to fulfill their calling. Feeling unappreciated and disempowered, some youth seek significance in gangsterism, further eroding their self-esteem and worsening the incidence of crime, dysfunctional families, and poverty within their communities.

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

My discovery session stakeholders included a father/prison ministry facilitator, mother/life skills trainer, mother/real estate agent, student/electrician/single male/young adult, wife/mother/missionary, and single female/youth ministry leader.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

My one-on-one interviewees included a college president/author/scholar, business consultant/author/scholar, and a carpenter/vocational trainer.

3-5 KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS

The following texts will be examined as a basis for this study on holistic discipleship and poverty: Daniel 1:8,17-20; Luke 2:52; Acts 20:27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Within my field of research, namely, holistic discipleship among the poor, primary voices include the following scholars and authors: Tetsunao Yamamori (PhD), Bryant Myers (PhD), Jayakumar Christian (PhD), Ravi Jayakaran (PhD), and Deborah Ajulu (PhD). It also includes the following theologians and authors: Kwame Bediako (PhD), and Mark Greene. In addition to books and journal articles by the fore-mentioned, relevant dissertations will also be consulted. Other areas of research include development in Africa; youth-at-risk; business-as-mission and orality.

APPENDIX A

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

My discovery workshop was held on October 18, 2020, at my friend's home from 2pm – 5pm. The following were in attendance:

- Father/Prison Ministry Facilitator
- Wife/Mother/Life Skills Trainer
- Single Parent/Real Estate Agent
- Student/Young Adult/Single Male/Electrician
- Mother/wife/missionary
- Single Female/Youth Ministry Leader

The session followed the format suggested in the DMIN 750/795 assignment guidelines.

Fruit juice, water, and various fruits were provided.

DISCOVERY STATEMENT

The workshop started with a welcome, prayer, brief introductions and an overview of activities. Following this, we discussed the key issue we were trying to address and its importance; the primary audience; social/cultural factors shaping the NPO; and evidence of its value. The first activity was concluded with a revision of the NPO Statement, which was as follows:

Families and youth in low-income communities need holistic leadership and a revival of values to heal the dysfunctions in their communities

Subsequently we examined the thoughts, statements, feelings, and deeds of families and youth in low-income communities. We then reframed the NPO and explored the root cause, which was seen as not integrating, or “balancing,” spiritual values with vocational ones. The reframed NPO was as follows:

Healed families with good leadership reintroduce youth to balanced (spiritual and vocational) values that transform low-income communities.

Finally, the entire feedback was reviewed and key takeaways noted. This resulted in the NPO statement below:

Considering men and youth in low-income communities, we've discovered that there is a decline in spiritual and vocational values, which is caused by hopelessness and disempowerment.

If solved, it will mean community transformation.

CRITICAL INSIGHTS FROM DISCOVERY WORKSHOP

One important aspect of the discovery workshop was determining evidence that the NPO is worth the investment of time and resources. The evidence includes high levels of substance abuse, delinquency, imprisonment, school dropout, unemployment and mortality among youth. Other evidences include syncretism, ancestral worship, greed, corruption, lawlessness, fatherlessness, dysfunctional families, gender apartheid, nepotism, low skills, and extreme poverty. These are caused by a decline in spiritual formation and vocational training among youth in low-income communities. If addressed, low-income communities will be transformed spiritually, economically, socially and physically (environment). This does not imply perfection or an absence of problems in low-income communities, but a remarkable improvement in holistic development.

It was surprising that although the participants were predominantly women,

all present agreed that the primary audience was youth and men, not women or even pastors. Another surprise was the inclination towards an informal practical training integrating spiritual and vocational formation, rather than a formal academic program.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW DISCOVERIES

In general, my one-on-one interviewees agreed with the findings of the discovery workshop, with each offering suggestions or emphasizing aspects that resonate with them. For example, (a) the first interview was with a carpenter/vocational trainer who agreed with the men and youth's need for holistic discipleship, but emphasized the need for a strong vocational training element to address the deep yearning for this in low-income communities. Secondly, (b) the business consultant/scholar/author also advocated for addressing both spiritual and vocational needs, calling it a "systems approach." However, he suggested that all demographics should be targeted, and not men and youth alone. He pointed out that if men are transformed, it will directly impact the fatherlessness, dysfunctional families and other challenges confronting low-income communities. Finally, (c) the college president/scholar/author also agreed with the holistic approach to engaging low income communities, but said men should be the primary audience. He believes this should be so because in most cases, men are the decision-makers and role models, thus impacting men would be the most effective way of impacting the community. Citing the Biblical principle of the person of peace (Luke 10), he suggested that for maximum impact, faithful, God-fearing and influential men be strategically and prayerfully targeted for discipleship (2 Tim. 2:2 and Acts 10). These would, in-turn, disciple their communities.

SYNTHESIS

The NPO discovery workshop and one-on-one interviews were strikingly complementary. All nine stakeholders agreed on the need to prioritize holism in the evangelical community's mission/discipleship strategy towards low-income communities. The following three themes emerged:

- There is a significant need for integrating spiritual formation with vocational training and community development, if a relevant and sustainable engagement with low-income communities is desired.

- Men and youth are the primary audience. This is not to diminish the value of women in any way, as women have been, and continue to be, used by God in significant ways. Instead, this is to highlight the *decision-making* role men play in several low-income communities.
- The most effective approach would be an informal, practical training using different kinds of learning methods, and not a formal academic and quick-paced program in a classroom.

NEXT STEPS

Areas for further academic research include exploring best practices in holistic discipleship within low income communities; examining the history and impact of the sacred-secular divide; investigating the role of persons of peace in disciple-making; the decline of men in spiritual leadership; and youth-at-risk.

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

On October 18, 2020, I met with six individuals to examine the possibility of **creating a certificate program that integrates spiritual, vocational, and leadership formation to address the leadership gap within low-income communities.** This was the initial statement regarding the Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) for my DMin project at Portland Seminary. During our session we examined the audience, evidence, cause and hopes to develop a more concise NPO statement.

The primary audience that would provide the greatest impact and highest level of significance for the least amount of effort invested was found to be youth and men. Youth were selected because they were seen to be teachable, and men were chosen because they were seen as the decision makers.

Evidence that this NPO is worth the investment is demonstrated in the high incidence of fatherlessness, single parent homes, substance abuse, imprisonment, school dropout, gender-based violence and gangsterism.

The underlying **causes** for this NPO was seen to be:

- a feeling of hopelessness by men and youth
- lack of youth empowerment and involvement in community decision-making

- lack of integrating spiritual formation with vocational training and community development for both men and youth

if the NPO is addressed, participants said it would mean community transformation, implying a significant reduction in the socio-cultural factors behind the NPO: spiritual bondage, corrupt leadership, and dysfunctional families, education, and social media.

The main NPO themes discovered included the following:

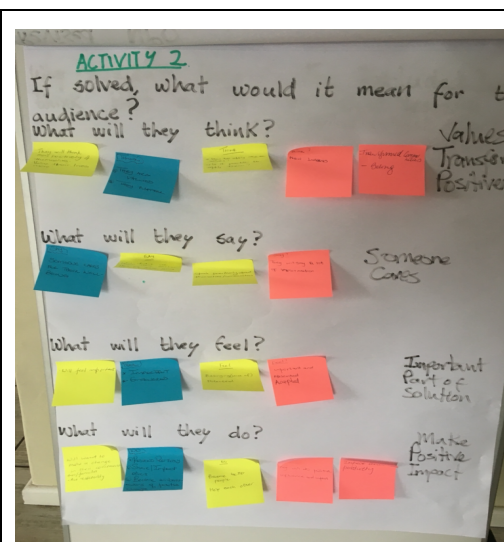
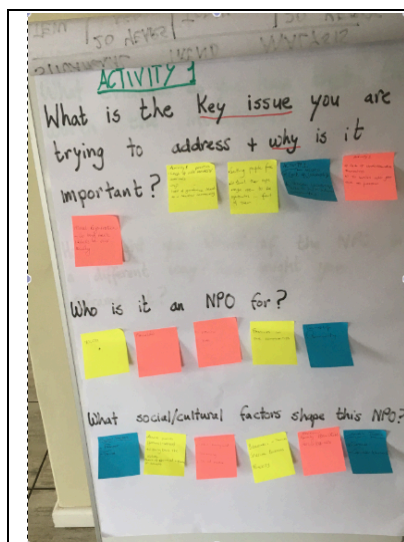
- Discipleship must integrate spiritual formation, vocational training and community development
- Men and youth are the key audience.
- The most effective approach would be an informal, practical training using different kinds of learning methods

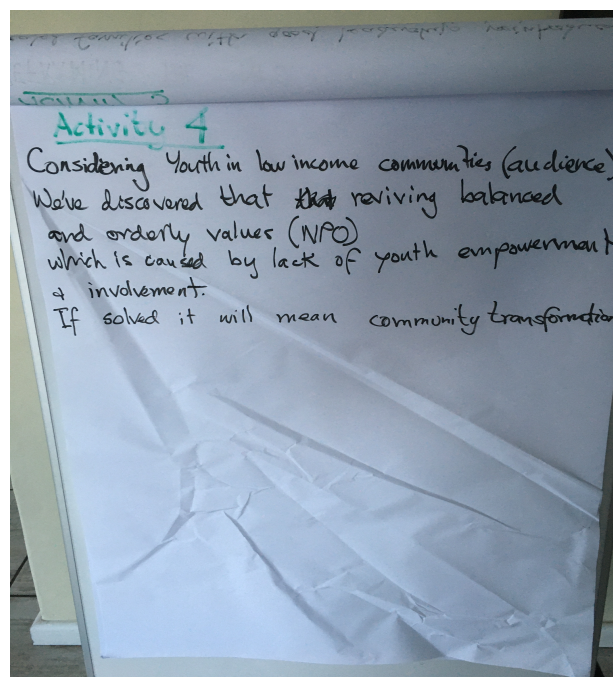
The group developed the following statement:

Considering men and youth in low-income communities, we've discovered that there is a decline in spiritual and vocational values, which is caused by hopelessness and disempowerment.

If solved, it will mean community transformation.

Edited NPO: How might we train men and youth in low-income communities to become holistic as agents of transformational development?





Dear friend,

As you may remember, on 18 October 2020 we discussed the Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) of a decline in integrating spiritual formation with vocational training within low-income communities, and came out with the following findings:

1. **Key audience:** men and youth in low-income communities; because men are the decision-makers and youth are teachable, energetic, and will effect change quickly.
2. **NPO:** a decline in spiritual and vocational values, in other words not integrating spiritual formation with vocational training.
3. **Functioning root cause:** hopelessness and disempowerment
4. **Socio-cultural factors** that shape this NPO: include spiritual bondage, corrupt leadership, and dysfunctional families, education, and social media.
5. **Evidence that this NPO is worth the investment:** High rates of syncretism, crime, fatherlessness, substance abuse, mortality, school dropout, unemployment, and poverty.
6. If the NPO is solved, men and youth in low-income communities will think optimistically; feel valued; and make a positive impact.

NPO Discovery Statement: *Considering men and youth in low-income communities, we've discovered that there is a decline in spiritual and vocational values, which is caused by hopelessness and disempowerment. If solved, it will mean community transformation.*

At this point there is no known need for additional feedback or corrections.

I am very grateful for your participation in this workshop and for offering such excellent contributions towards my NPO research.

Wishing you God's richest blessings,

Henry Gwani

Following the discovery workshop, I conducted one-on-one interviews with three additional stakeholders and the summary is outlined below.

Interviewee A - Carpenter/Vocational Trainer

- In full agreement with findings from the workshop.
- Most people in low-income communities are unaware of the Bible's teachings and so need sound spiritual formation.
- Skill acquisition through vocational training is a practical tool through which residents of low-income communities can appreciate God's love.
- Vocational training inspires hope within low income communities that there will be *food on the table*, thus creating the correct image of God as a God who cares.
- Vocational training will empower men and youth to use their minds and hands to secure a better future and convince them that God has "not forgotten about them."

Interviewee B - College President, Author, Scholar

- Men are the decision-makers and role models within families in low-income communities.
- Holistic discipleship ensures men (and, by extension, the families they lead) overcome the sacred-secular divide and become equipped with the tools to effectively withstand the challenges (spiritual, economic, social, and vocational) confronting low-income communities.
- Competent and ethical leadership is non-negotiable if we want to see transformation and shalom. Therefore, include vocational and leadership formation in the discipleship of low-income communities.
- Disciples who enjoy serving can easily develop to become servant leaders.
- Persons of peace (in some cases, a "significant sinner" such as the Samaritan woman of John 4), are imperative for sustainable transformation.

- Discipleship should follow Jesus' approach of (1) modeling godly living; (2) assisting disciples grow spiritually and in ministry; (3) watching disciples conduct ministry assignments with minimal or no input from yourself; (4) leaving mature disciples and moving to a new mission assignment.
- Community development principles and basic mental health training should be included in the discipleship of low-income communities.
- Church cell groups in low-income areas could receive vocational training and graduate into becoming cooperatives/small businesses consisting of/co-owned by different family members.

Interviewee C - Business Consultant, Author, Scholar

- No demographic (children, youth, elderly, men, women, parents) should be excluded when engaging low-income communities. There is no "key" audience.
- Use a "systems approach." However, amount of time used in engaging each demographic could vary according to need.
- Ensure measurement/evaluation, not simply provision, of spiritual formation and vocational training.
- Mentor/disciple people within the contexts of their occupational calling. For example, those called to business, sports, etc, should be mentored within that particular context by a mature believer with experience in that field.
- Root cause of NPO is fatherlessness. Research shows that a father accepting Christ has a bigger "ripple effect" within the family/community than a mother.
- Prioritize character education. Honor leaders, even if you disagree with them.

Appendix B– Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay

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SECTION 1: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Transformational Development among Men and Youth in Low-Income Communities in the Biblical World

Poverty is extremely disturbing. Globally, several rural and urban communities grapple with it. In Duncan Village, an informal settlement outside East London, South Africa, where I serve as a missionary, the vast majority of the population are unemployed and struggle daily with hunger and other effects of poverty. Yet, as the examples of various countries (including modern-day Israel) show, poverty could be resolved. Against this background, this paper will argue that integrating theology and community development can help men and youth in low-income communities become change agents in their context. Therefore, this paper will unfold the biblical and theological foundations of helping men and youth in low-income communities become change agents with two key theories to promote the integration of theology and community development.

In this paper, community development refers to the process of a low-income community identifying and resolving its socio-economic, cultural and political challenges, usually with the support of an external agency (a foreign missionary or missionary organization not indigenous to the beneficiary community). Transformational development (TD), or holistic development, refers to the integration of theology and community development, thereby including a significant spiritual dimension in the development interventions for a low-income community. Development principles means tools such as advocacy, capacity building, empowerment, etc, used by community members and development agencies in helping low-income communities address local challenges. Agents of change (transformation) are Christian members of low-income communities who facilitate TD locally by changing their personal and community's mindsets and response to poverty from a traditional (usually fatalistic) one to a more biblically aligned mindset and response. Agents of change, in this paper, are usually members of a local church, thus affirming Kwame Bediako's

observation that, "the church is the primary agent" of transformational development in the earth¹³².

Evaluation means examining development activities in the light of originally desired outcomes.

Old Testament Textual Discussions

God as a Model of Transformational Development in Genesis 1-2

Genesis 1-2 highlights the possibility that men and youth in low-income communities can become agents of change. For example, God's transcendence and immanence¹³³ over a previously formless, empty and dark earth, inspires hope that, with God, any community can be transformed. Indeed, "create," "complete," and their synonyms are mentioned some 20 times (in chapter 1 verses 1, 7, 17, 21, 25, 27; and in chapter 2 verses 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 18, 21, and 22), implying God is the Almighty, Omniscient Creator who brings "beauty" out of ashes (Isa. 61:3). Additionally, the earth's pre-creation condition and God's intervention stress the development principles of problem identification and problem solving. Secondly, the divine blessing and mandate towards fruitfulness strongly suggests sustainability, a principle desperately needed in many low-income communities. Interestingly, God creates everything yet invites Adam to name all the animals, thereby highlighting the importance of stakeholder participation.

Managing Post-Crisis Reconstruction in Nehemiah 1-3

¹³² Kwame Bediako. "Theological reflections." In *Serving with the Poor in Africa: Cases in Holistic Ministry*, eds. Tetsunao Yamamori, Bryant L. Myers, Kwame Bediako and Larry Reed. (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1996), 181-192.

¹³³ Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki and Cherrith Fee Nordling. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 32.

Nehemiah's experience of successfully facilitating the reconstruction of his homeland while in exile is an example of the significant effect of spirituality in community transformation. Firstly, Nehemiah hears about the despicable state of Jerusalem from Hanani, is burdened by the news, and for several days humbles himself before God in fasting, deep repentance and prayer (Neh. 1). Jerusalem is subsequently rebuilt, despite opposition from Sanballat and Tobiah, thereby suggesting God's ability to answer prayer and intervene on earth¹³⁴. Interestingly, 2 Chr. 7:13-14, which highlights God's warning to Solomon and Israel about judgment (drought; epidemics; crop failure) that may come on the nation owing to sin, also shows that genuine repentance, humility and prayer will attract forgiveness and healing for the community. Further, when King Artaxerxes asked why Nehemiah seemed depressed, Nehemiah offered a presumably silent and quick prayer, then advocates for the reconstruction of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:1-8). Armed with royal permission and now in Jerusalem, Nehemiah carries out due diligence to ascertain the reality of his initial needs assessment. He then empowers the hitherto inactive Jewish officials, priests, nobles and general workers to participate in the reconstruction project (Neh. 2:11-18). This shows that theological principles alone, good as they are, do not fully represent God's redemptive strategy for low-income communities. Indeed, what Nehemiah seems to teach is an integration of both theological and development principles.

Youth Model Spiritual, Academic and Professional Excellence in Daniel 1

¹³⁴ Boniface Adoyo. "Prayer." *In Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo. Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers 2006), 1186.

The Book of Daniel begins with a time when Israel was under Babylonian captivity with several Israeli youth of royal descent being trained for future service to King Nebuchadnezzar. Evidently, sin lead to this national reproach. Despite this situation, Daniel and his three friends determined not “defile themselves” with the delicacies of the king (Dan. 1:8). Presumably, the food had been offered to idols. The text also highlights the principles of faith, divine favor, wisdom and promotion. Despite being young and under captivity, Daniel and his friends demonstrate strong faith by their unpopular stance for purity. Additionally, God granted the young Jews favor before their supervisor; wisdom (even special insight into dreams for Daniel); and positioned them “10 times better” than any spiritual adviser to King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1:9, 17, 20). This implies that regardless of how adverse circumstances may be, those who choose to trust in God and pursue divine favor, wisdom, and promotion, can expect to become significant change agents, like the four Hebrew youth.

Daniel 1 also highlights the importance of indicators, noting that even after fasting, Daniel and his friends *looked* healthier than their colleagues (Dan. 1:15). This reveals God’s interest in metrics, and cautions potential change agents about unwisely dismissing seemingly unimportant data. Similarly, the value of evaluation is expressed in Daniel 1. Following a significant investment of resources, Nebuchadnezzar conducts a, presumably, thorough evaluation at the end of his three-year training project. This principle is reflected in other portions of scripture such as the parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:1-13) and the parable of talents (Mt. 25:14-30). An important lesson here for men and youth in low-income communities is to invite regular objective, independent evaluation of their development activities and use these as a springboard for growth.

Jesus Models Holistic Development in Luke 2:52

The New Testament too integrates theology and community development. To illustrate, Luke 2:52 bears witness to Jesus' spiritual, mental, physical, and social development, thus suggesting holistic development. Paul John Isaak notes that this reveals Jesus' deep "understanding of His relationship to God as His Father"¹³⁵. This verse shows how Jesus, arguably the greatest change agent to ever grace the earth, models the theological principle of spiritual growth for aspiring change agents. Evidently, Jesus rejects spiritual stagnation, and instead grows through various spiritual disciplines. These disciplines include an in-depth engagement with scripture, as evidenced in His regular references to it during the temptation in the wilderness (Mk. 4); regular and fervent prayer (Mk. 1:35. Lk. 22:39-45); and unparalleled search for the unsaved (Lk. 15). However, Jesus also grew mentally, physically, and socially, thus highlighting the need for empowerment and synergy. One example of how Jesus empowered community may be seen in His commissioning of the seventy disciples who excelled in their assignment (Lk.10:1-12; 17-19). An important lesson that may be learnt from this is that empowering others brings joy, overcomes darkness, and multiplies impact far beyond what can ever be accomplished by one individual.

Lessons from Ephesians 5:25-33 on Men's Calling to Follow Christ's Model of Leadership

Ephesians 5:25-33 highlights the sacrificial leadership model of Jesus and calls husbands to love their wives "as Christ loved the church and gave [sacrificed] Himself for her" (v29). Contrary to the selfishness so prevalent in popular culture, evidenced by high divorce rates even among

¹³⁵ Paul John Isaak. "Luke." In *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo. (Grand Rapids, MI: WordAlive Publishers . 2006), 1209.

professing Christians, husbands are called to selflessness and sacrifice in marriage¹³⁶. Following the sacrificial example of Jesus would reintroduce humility, forgiveness, patience, and other critical character qualities that could heal dysfunctional families in low-income communities. This is important because family is the first institution of society. Indeed, historically, God created family before the church, government, or any other social institution (Gen. 2). Therefore, the family institution is foundational and if it fails, all other institutions cannot thrive. Unsurprisingly, Ephesians 5:25-33 reveals the tension between Christian marriage (based on sacrificial love) and secular romance (based on selfishness). The text also hints at the development principle of equity, because although a husband is the head of his wife, husbands are to love, care and provide for their wives as sacrificially as Christ gave Himself. In other words, while authority may differ, there is equality of value before God, and no room for a false sense of importance.

Synthesis of Themes, Values and Commitments

The Bible is a chronicle of change and God is the greatest change agent. In the beginning, God changes a shapeless, empty and dark earth into one with structure, diversity and beauty. Following this model, various Old and New Testament characters integrate important theological and development principles to effect significant change - often in distressed communities. Remarkably, some of these change agents include youth in the diaspora; and, fortunately, all the principles are found in scripture. The theological principles include an in-depth knowledge of scripture, humility, repentance, prayer, integrity, and sacrificial love. Equally important are community development principles such as equity, empowerment, sustainability, and a host of others. The biblical texts examined reveal how the fore-mentioned principles, working by God's grace through ordinary people, result in reconstructing ruined cities; distinguishing foreign youth

¹³⁶ Yusufu Turaki. "Ephesians." In *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo. (Grand Rapids, MI: WordAlive Publishers . 2006), 1436.

in the world's greatest economy; redeeming society's most fundamental institution; and other important outcomes. Given the great levels of spiritual, moral, emotional and socio-economic distress today, contemporary followers of Jesus must also employ these principles if the church is to remain relevant in this very secular generation.

SECTION 2: TOPIC HISTORY AND KEY VOICES

Topic History

This section will explore two important aspects of the history of transformational development. First it will examine the era before TD, when the term was unknown and how Christian practitioners became dissatisfied with community development leading to the emergence of TD. Second, the section will discuss the growth of TD and how it evolved into the status it enjoys today.

Initial History: Community Development.

As previously stated, transformational development emerged out of community development, therefore, this paper will trace its history against that background. According to various scholars¹³⁷, Community Development (CD) may have begun in 1870 in the Mid-Western USA through the practice of agricultural extension, or with the Cooperative Extension Service in 1914. This is remarkable because even today, more than 100 years later, extension services in the agricultural sector continue to play a major role in community development efforts globally.

¹³⁷ Hennie Swanepoel and Frik De Beer. *Community Development: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty*. (Lansdowne: Juta. 2011), 34.

The establishment of the Indian Institute for Rural Reconstruction in 1921 may be the first recorded CD milestone outside of the US. Webster Vhembo¹³⁸ notes that the program, established by the British colonial masters, “emphasized the use of local resources and an integrated approach towards development.” Swanepoel and De Beer¹³⁹ also point out that approximately two decades later, in 1944, CD was formally integrated into British colonial policy in India & Africa. This is significant given the large population and vast scope of the geographical area impacted by this development. Subsequently, in 1948, during the British Conference on African Administration, the term *Community Development* was first introduced, following a change from “mass education” under British Colonial Informal Training and Community Literacy; and by the end of the 1940s the term CD was in use globally¹⁴⁰. In 1952 the Indian CD program was launched and provided important lessons for other developing nations, thereby making CD gain international prominence in more than 80 countries¹⁴¹.

During the 1950s and 1960s, CD continued to gain popularity leading the US, in view of the Cold War, to consider CD as a tool “through which democracy could be established and communism kept at bay¹⁴².” During this period, Max Weber also proposed the first CD theory, the Modernization Theory, suggesting that developing nations can develop “only by imitating

¹³⁸ Webster Vhembo. “Towards the Introduction of Community Development within a Theological Curriculum: Murray Theological College of the reformed Church in Zimbabwe.” (master’s thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2019).

¹³⁹ Swanepoel et al, *Community Development*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Vhembo, “Introduction of Community Development,” 42.

¹⁴¹ Francois Theron, ed. *The Developing Change Agent: A Micro-Level Approach to Development*. (Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. 2008), 125.

¹⁴² August, Karel. 2010. *Equipping the Saints: God’s Measure for Development*. (Bellville: The Print-man. 2010), 5.

developed countries¹⁴³." While this was embraced at the time, given the explosive growth in knowledge and innovation, it has been criticized by scholars and practitioners. Yet it remains important as a key historical contribution to the development of CD.

In the 1960s more than 30 countries formally adopted CD in their national development efforts¹⁴⁴. This trend continued, making 1968 to the late 1970s the golden age of CD; a time when ideas were refined into theory and good practice was developed¹⁴⁵. Following the failure of the Modernization Theory, Latin American scholars proposed the second CD theory, Dependency Theory, between the late 1960s and 1970s to address the widening gap between developed and developing nations¹⁴⁶. Wayne Bragg¹⁴⁷ views dependence as a situation where the growth of low-income countries is based upon the "development expansion of the developed nations." Owing to its inclination towards addressing the imbalance between rich and poor nations, this theory is still embraced by many practitioners today.

During the 1980s Christian practitioners became uncomfortable with the term CD because it was limited to social welfare alone without much inclusion of justice concerns or evangelism¹⁴⁸. This gave rise to TD, a subject that will be treated more in the next section.

The Emergence of Transformational Development

¹⁴³ Ephraim Yoms. "Transformational Development as a Theological Challenge: An Evaluation of the ECWA People Oriented Development Programmes." (dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 2015).

¹⁴⁴ Vhembo, "Towards Community Development", 42.

¹⁴⁵ Henderson 2008, 8

¹⁴⁶ Yoms, "Transformational Development," 27.

¹⁴⁷ Wayne Bragg. *From Development to Transformation*, ed. Samuel Vinjay and Sugden Chris. (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1987), 28.

¹⁴⁸ Bryant Myers. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. (New York: Orbis Books. 1999), 95.

This subsection chronicles the growth of transformational development from the early eighties until the present. Wayne G. Bragg first proposed the concept of TD during the evangelical debate on “The Church in Response to Human Need” at the Wheaton Consultation of 1983¹⁴⁹. As previously stated, the motivation for Bragg was the general notion among Christian CD practitioners that the term “development” was loaded with secular connotations. In other words, CD sought to address material needs among the poor with no acknowledgement of any role played by God. While addressing human need was noble, traditional community development, specifically the modernization theory, failed to effectively address the challenge of poverty¹⁵⁰. This implies that significant aid funds were being invested in CD globally without appropriate results in terms of sustainable large-scale transformation in the conditions of the poor. As it is widely known, an important factor for this outcome was corruption, leading to criticisms by both donor nations and donor recipients regarding the effectiveness of CD and aid. One notable criticism is the widely acclaimed book, *Dead Aid*, by Dambisa Moyo. Something was very wrong. Transformation was lacking.

Samuel and Sugden¹⁵¹ describe transformation as the “change from a condition of human existence contrary to God’s purpose to one in which people are able to enjoy fullness of life in harmony with God.” This paper supports the above notion, one that differs from the general view of transformation, which is simply a change from one state to another, without any acknowledgement of God’s involvement. Transformational Development, as Yoms¹⁵² suggests, is

¹⁴⁹ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 95.

¹⁵⁰ Nadine Du Toit. *Moving from Development to Social Transformation*. ed. Swart, I, Green S and Erasmus J. Stellenbosch: Sun Press. 2010b), 263.

¹⁵¹ Vinay Samuel , and Chris Sugden. eds. *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*. (California: Regnum Books. 1999), 265.

¹⁵² Yoms, *Transformational Development*, 62.

the Christian framework for development and poverty alleviation. It is holistic and used to seek positive change in human life materially, socially, emotionally and spiritually¹⁵³. Yoms¹⁵⁴ makes the very important point that TD seeks to address the sacred secular divide. Described as the “biggest challenge facing the church today¹⁵⁵,” the sacred secular divide refers to the myth that God’s interest and involvement in human life is limited to certain days (usually Sunday), places (church), vocations (clergy, missions), etc. The impact of SSD is so deep that “globally 98% of Christians are neither envisioned nor equipped for mission in 95% of their waking lives¹⁵⁶.” In contrast, Colossians 1:20 declares that Jesus seeks to “reconcile *all things*, whether things *on earth* or things *in heaven* by making peace through his blood ... [emphasis added] ”

Following Bragg’s proposal of TD in 1983, other important developments continued to happen. Notably among these are the contributions of two Indian scholars and practitioners, Jayakumar Christian and Ravi Jayakaran. Christian’s contribution in the early 1990s deepened the “spiritual side of understanding poverty¹⁵⁷” by proposing that poverty is a web of five interrelated systems, namely a personal system (involving a marred identity); biophysical system (weak mind and body); cultural system (inadequate worldview); social system (captivity to god-complexes of rich donors); and spiritual/religious system, as evidenced by their deception by demonic forces¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵³ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 83-85.

¹⁵⁴ Yoms, “Transformational Development,” 67.

¹⁵⁵ Mark Greene. *The Great Divide*. London: London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, 2010.

¹⁵⁶ Greene, Mark. *The Great Divide*, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 72.

¹⁵⁸ Myers, 72.

Similarly, in the mid 1990s, Jayakaran contributed to the history of TD by suggesting that poverty is a “lack of freedom to grow¹⁵⁹.” Based on Luke 2:52, where Jesus is described as *growing* in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and people, Jayakaran viewed poverty as a web of restrictions: spiritual (fear, bondage); mental (limited perspectives, mental blocks, poor self-image); social (limiting restrictions); and physical, involving scarce resources, limited choices¹⁶⁰.

Building on the work of his predecessors, Bryant Myers has also made remarkable contributions to the growth of TD. In what may be considered the most significant publication on TD till date, Myers’ book, *Walking with the Poor* (1999, 2011), synthesizes the contributions of Christian, Jayakaran and others in an integrating framework that is also biblical¹⁶¹. He provides a relational understanding of poverty (the most important relationship being the one with God); suggests that the cause of poverty is fundamentally spiritual (sin of the non-poor and the poor is at the root cause of the “deception, distortion and domination” that keeps millions of people poor); and argues that there is also a *poverty of the non-poor* since it is harder for them to receive the gospel than the poor, and their identity is also marred, as they usually have a superiority complex, or “god-complex¹⁶².”

Key Voices

This section will discuss two important contributors to the emergence of the transformational development theory. Initially, Wayne Bragg will be examined and his bold

¹⁵⁹ Myers, 80.

¹⁶⁰ Myers, 80.

¹⁶¹ Myers, 86.

¹⁶² Myers, 86-89.

initiative resulted in the launch of TD in the early eighties. Second, the paper will discuss the efforts of Bryant Myers in extending TD to its present state.

Wayne Bragg and the genesis of transformational thinking.

Wayne G Bragg pioneered the transformational development framework in 1983 at the Wheaton conference on "The Christian response to Human Need" when he put forward the term *transformation* as a Christian alternative to development¹⁶³. By this proposal, Bragg not only expressed the serious concerns of many Christian development practitioners about the secularization of development, but also conceptualized their aspirations about a more biblical perspective to this important field¹⁶⁴. Consequently, Bragg distinguished himself as a prophetic voice analyzing the four main development paradigms of the time, and, with bold humility, suggesting a way forward.

Modernization was the first approach Bragg discussed. Also called diffusionism, modernization aspired to raise the standard of living through increasing production in developing nations. It assumed traditional societies are underdeveloped; modernization is inevitable; production equals development; benefits will trickle down to the most needy; and nation-to-nation aid fosters development¹⁶⁵. However, Bragg argued that modernization was inadequate because it only addressed material needs and "materialism often produces one-dimensional people¹⁶⁶."

¹⁶³ Myers, 95.

¹⁶⁴ Wayne Bragg. "Beyond Development to Transformation". *International Review of Mission*. 73, no. 290 (1984) 153-165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.1984.tb03262.x>

¹⁶⁵ Bragg, "Beyond Development," 154.

¹⁶⁶ Bragg, Beyond Development, 54.

Second, Bragg analyzed the dependency theory, which emerged from Latin America in the 1960s as a reaction to the “underdevelopment” created by modernization. Indeed, modernization, ultimately resulted in developing nations becoming “peripheries” or “satellites” owing to the colonial and neocolonial activities of the “centers/metropolis” (developed nations). This was because capitalism ensured that developed nations obtained raw materials from developing nations at low prices and sold manufactured goods to them at very high prices, thus perpetuating poverty, or dependency. Consequently, dependency theorists proposed state control. While this seemed noble at the beginning, it quickly resulted in corrupt state leaders. In response, Bragg pointed out that whether exploitation is executed by capitalist westerners (modernization) or socialist state governments (dependency), exploitation is still wrong. Bragg argued that the development proposed is still as “uni-dimensional” (materialistic) as modernization¹⁶⁷.

Next, Bragg turned his attention to the theory of global reformism, which accepts and promotes the essence of modernization while seeking equitable access between developed and developing nations to the fruits of western industrialization. Bragg suggested that this is a political and economic (not holistic) proposal, and it ignores the ecological implications of a quick technological fix and potential perpetuation of “selective (elite) development at the expense of the poor¹⁶⁸.”

Finally, Bragg addressed the self-reliance (or alternative) development theory, an approach based on the self-perceived internal needs of developing nations. Proposed by Julius Nyerere, a Christian and late president of Tanzania, this framework seeks to redress inequity and promote grassroots participation, in partnership with nature and solidarity with future generations. Bragg praised this

¹⁶⁷ Bragg, 155.

¹⁶⁸ Bragg, 156.

as the most noble of the development theories, but observed that it suffers from idealism and low support from the powers that be¹⁶⁹.

In view of the flawed assumptions listed above, and to present a definitive Christian response, Bragg proposed a transition from development to transformation¹⁷⁰. Transformation, as Bragg argued, is abundantly treated as a major theme throughout scripture¹⁷¹. Indeed, the creation narrative of Genesis 1-2; the deliverance of Israel from 400 years of Egyptian slavery; Nehemiah's reconstruction of Jerusalem; Jesus' death and resurrection are a small sample of the stories of transformation in the Bible. Transformation is significant because it promotes equity and evaluation *inter alia*¹⁷² but arguably its most significant contribution is the idea of holism, and inclusion of both material *and* spiritual change. In fact, Bragg argues that "material progress without [spiritual] transformation of the person is difficult to achieve and maintain," citing how greed, politicking and other vices often render significant and well-intentioned development efforts ineffective¹⁷³. Bragg also points out that even the USAID acknowledges that "churches and mission agencies are more honest and efficient at implementing programs than government or secular agencies¹⁷⁴." Additionally, Bragg stresses the point that "conversion to God is the primary transformation," and that transformation is a "joint enterprise between God and humankind, not just a mechanistic or naturalistic process¹⁷⁵." Done in collaboration with God, transformation creates a platform for the

¹⁶⁹ Bragg, 156.

¹⁷⁰ Bragg, 156.

¹⁷¹ Bragg, 157.

¹⁷² Bragg, 153

¹⁷³ Bragg, 157.

¹⁷⁴ Bragg, 157.

¹⁷⁵ Bragg, 157.

poor to have a “fully human life – life free from domination and oppression by other people¹⁷⁶.” Bragg¹⁷⁷ also notes that transformation should be contextualized for the target culture, and done properly, should “result in shalom with God, our fellow human beings, ourselves and with all the creation,” as well.

However, as significant as Bragg’s contribution was, it was not without weaknesses. Adam Faber¹⁷⁸ notes that, “Bragg’s perspective was controversial because of the redistributive nature of his proposal. During the Cold War any talk of redistribution was seen with suspicion and his ideas were largely dismissed.” Faber¹⁷⁹ citing Myers, further notes that a “key criticism of Bragg’s approach is his ‘romanticisation of the poor’”. In conclusion, although Bragg’s framework of transformation is fraught with a few flaws, he is still considered a significant pioneer in the thinking of transformational development today.

Bryant Myers and the extension of transformational thinking

Bryant Myers is presumably one of the most respected transformational development scholars today. Following decades as a development practitioner and leader at World Vision, Myers has now made the transition into scholarship as a professor at Fuller Seminary and as an author. In 1999 and 2011, Myers released and revised his seminal book, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*.

¹⁷⁶ Yoms,. “Transformational Development.”

¹⁷⁷ Yoms, 82,105.

¹⁷⁸ Adam Faber. “Testing the Principles of Transformational Development: A Case Study of Christian Education in Nicaragua”. (master’s thesis, Dalhousie University).

¹⁷⁹ Faber, “Testing the Principles,” 44.

Myers integrates theology and development studies to propose ways Christians can understand and effectively bring about transformation among the poor. Building on the research of leading development practitioners such as Wayne Bragg, Robert Chambers, Jayakuram Christian and Ravi Jayakaran, Myers provides a comprehensive discourse and definition of poverty. He criticizes the view of poverty that is limited to the material perspective alone, arguing, like the fore-mentioned scholars, that an important spiritual dimension exists to poverty. After agreeing with Bragg, Chambers, Christian and Jayakaran, Myers extends the thinking by suggesting that ultimately, poverty is caused by broken relationships with four important parties: God, others, the environment, and self¹⁸⁰.

Consequently, Myers' solution to poverty is holistic, aligning with the Old Testament concept of *Shalom* and the New Testament equivalent of *abundant life*¹⁸¹. Contrasting His mission with that of Satan, Jesus explains that while Satan desires to "steal, kill and destroy," the Lord's intent for the poor and non-poor alike is that all may have abundant life (Jn. 10:10). However, many, especially the poor, are unaware of this. An important reason for this, as previously mentioned, is because their identity has been marred. Therefore, Myers proposes that the goals of TD are twofold. First, the recovery of true identity and vocation. Myers argues that the "end of development for the Christian is true identity¹⁸²." Indeed, how wonderful it would be for the poor, regardless of how extreme their situation, to envision themselves as God does: made in the image of God and with the potential, like the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32), to come back to their senses and return to

¹⁸⁰ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*. 1999, 87.

¹⁸¹ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*. 1999, 114.

¹⁸² Myers, *Walking with the Poor*. 1999, 107.

God. Evidently, this returning to God must be both spiritual (in terms of believing in God) and mental (in terms of changing one's mindset to align with scripture)

Accordingly, Romans 12:2 exhorts believers to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind." Second, Myers proposes that the other goal of TD is the recovery of peaceful relationships with God, self, others and environment, with the "central relationship in need of transformation" being one's relationship with the "triune God, the God of the Bible¹⁸³." This is arguably Myers' greatest contribution, for when the relationship between God and the poor is restored, the journey of transformation is given a major boost. God is then free to implement His plans to bring about "a hope and a future," as Jeremiah 29:11 so aptly declares.

Although Myers transformational development framework is greatly respected, it is not without criticism. Lowell Ewert¹⁸⁴ insists that Myers paradigm offers no hope to people outside the Christian faith. Like Myers, this paper also offers little hope to non Christians other than a strong encouragement to consider being reconciled to the triune God, and thereby begin the journey of healing the marred identity Myers discusses. Ewert¹⁸⁵ also notes that Myers' paradigm seems silent on the development practitioner's need for technical competence. While agreeing that this is unfortunate, Myers arguably remains a significant voice in the discourse on transformational development today.

SECTION 3: SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

SYNTHESIS

¹⁸³ Myers, 118.

¹⁸⁴ Ewert, Lowell. "Review of Walking with the Poor." 2013.

¹⁸⁵ Ewert, Lowell. "Review of Walking with the Poor." 2013.

In this section, I will present reflections on the key voices of transformational development among men and youth in low-income communities against the background of the biblical and theological foundations earlier discussed. This will involve areas of agreement, disagreement, and gaps among the theorists discussed. Finally, I will present a conclusion that is specific to my topic.

Wayne Bragg's framework of transformational development is groundbreaking in placing God at the core of the development process and promoting holism (integrating material and spiritual development), unlike the modernization, dependency, global reformism and self-reliance theories before it. Given the large-scale failure of these secular theories to bring about sustainable change, despite the significant resources allocated in their support, Bragg's bold proposal of a Christian alternative must be applauded. However, Bragg fails to provide specific details of God's involvement in the development process. Myers addresses this gap by making two important proposals. First, the recovery of humanity's marred identity. Paul notes that the human identity is marred by Satan, who is responsible for *blinding* the minds of those who do not believe (2 Cor. 4:4). This blinding of the mind, Myers explains, affects everyone: the poor and non-poor. It is based upon false self-perception and is responsible for the inferiority complex that often characterizes the worldview of the poor, stealing their confidence, making them feel unworthy of the *Shalom*, or abundant life, freely available to all through Christ. In contrast, this marred identity results in a superiority or "god" complex among the non-poor. Regardless of economic status, Paul advocates for recovering our marred identity "... by the *renewing* of your mind" (Rom. 12:2, emphasis added). Myers' second proposal of restoring peaceful relationships with God, self, others and the environment is equally important. I will adopt the three fore-mentioned elements in Bragg's and Myers' theories. However, I will add to Myers' theory of recovering our marred identity by proposing that biblical meditation is an important *pathway* to recovering the marred identity. Perhaps one of the most neglected disciplines of contemporary Christianity, meditation may be seen as the art of carefully, prayerfully and intensely pondering over scripture and asking pertinent questions that

help unveil inherent truth. Richard Foster observes that biblical meditation leads to a multifaceted transformation, including moral transformation¹⁸⁶. Additionally, as illustrated by the examples of Nehemiah, Daniel, and the Lord Jesus (three individuals highlighted in Section A of this paper), godly character is an important factor in the process of transformational development. Nehemiah, for example, starts his involvement in the transformation of Israel by passionately repenting for the sins of the nation (Neh. 1:4-11). Similarly, Daniel and his three friends honored their relationship with God by refusing to “defile” themselves with food offered to Babylonian deities (Dan. 1:8). My third addition to Bragg’s and Myers’ theories will focus on the need for significant prayer in the process of transformation. The Lord Jesus, undeniably the most significant change agent in history, illustrates this through a culture of prayer (Mk. 1:35). Evidently, prayer, offered sincerely and in faith, invites God’s intervention upon whatever situation the seeker may be experiencing. My final addition to Bragg and Myer’s theories is on the need for taking appropriate practical action. This is a complex factor that defies simple definition as it may involve problem identification, needs assessment, sustainability, evaluation or any of the other transformational development principles discussed in Section A of this paper. The important thing to note is that in addition to spiritual activity, transformation often requires consistently taking equally important practical steps. Accordingly, James 2:20 says that faith without corresponding actions is useless.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines several scriptural texts and theological literature to determine the biblical and theological foundations of transformational development. The history of transformational development is also discussed, focusing on the frameworks of two important theorists. The result is a new framework of integrating theology and development that combines

¹⁸⁶ Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1999), 37.

elements of the two key voices with new elements drawn from the biblical foundations of the topic. The elements of this new theory include honoring God as the initiator of transformational development; recovering the marred identity of the poor and others in the transformational development process through biblical meditation; restoring relationships between low-income communities and God, the residents, their neighbors, and their environment. Other elements include godly character; heartfelt prayer; and taking appropriate practical actions towards transformation in low-income communities. It is thus hoped that Christian men and youth in low-income communities will find this theory useful in facilitating transformational development in their communities.

Appendix C—Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report

INTRODUCTION

The following report is based on my NPO design workshop and details my NPO statement; scope and constraints; context; root causes; and definition of "done." Other topics covered include three big ideas; napkin pitches; description of stakeholders and one-on-one interviews; an annotated bibliography and appendix.

NPO STATEMENT

Combating underdevelopment in low-income communities by training local agents of change.

NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

By the end of this doctorate program, a short course will exist to equip potential change agents in low-income communities with the resources needed to facilitate holistic discipleship. The course will be practical and include spiritual formation, mental health interventions, community engagement through door-to-door visits, social media campaigns, and vocational training. At this point, it is difficult to estimate the exact costs associated with the course. Scope, boundaries and costs will be defined/evaluated as the course progresses.

NPO CONTEXT

My NPO context includes non-Christian youth and adults living in low-income communities. The primary target community will be Duncan Village, an informal settlement within East London, South Africa, that is inhabited by Black and Colored low-income families. With an estimated population of about 80,000 people, Duncan Village is characterized by a high incidence of street children, African Traditional Religion, syncretism, substance abuse, poverty, poor infrastructure, illiteracy, and crime. Some effort has been made by various organizations towards church planting, feeding schemes, early childhood development, primary healthcare,

small business development, and job readiness training, with little visible results in terms of widespread behavioral and economic transformation. The number

of participants per course will be capped at 6-15 individuals, ages ranging 18-60, to allow for learning effectiveness.

ROOT CAUSES

Four critical factors emerged as the root causes of my NPO: hopelessness, distraction, idleness and pride. Based on generational poverty, systemic corruption and oppressive leadership, several residents of low-income communities simply cannot see how their circumstances will change, and have thus lost motivation to seek solutions. One effect of this is becoming distracted from meaningful work to idleness and producing children without nurturing them (fatherlessness). Consequently, there is a high incidence of street children who are not envisioned as community members with value or the potential for significant social contributions in future. Accordingly, these children are also not equipped with the spiritual and vocational training needed to fulfill their calling. Feeling unappreciated and disempowered, many street children grow to become youth that seek significance in surrogate families like gangs, further eroding their character and worsening the incidence of crime, dysfunctional families, and poverty within their communities.

THREE BIG IDEAS

- **Door-to-door visits:** to engage community, identify potential change agents and facilitate spiritual formation and community development through informal conversations
- **Social media:** to engage youth and facilitate spiritual formation and community development using relevant content.
- **Vocational training:** to provide the skills needed for holistic personal and community transformation.

DEFINITION OF 'DONE'

Twelve local individuals managing thriving indigenous and holistic, community development projects in Duncan Village, three years after launching the NPO project.

3 CONCEPT PITCHES

	Door-to-Door	Social Media	Vocational Training
Big Idea	Door-to-Door visits to engage community, identify potential change agents and facilitate spiritual formation and community development through informal conversations	A community development campaign on Facebook and WhatsApp targeting Duncan Village youth with Christian music, videos and other culturally-relevant content in English, Xhosa and Afrikaans.	A three-year training with three cohorts (renewable energy; catering; tailoring) aimed at preparing adults and youth for employment or launching a small business
Audience	Non-Christian, unemployed and semi-literate adults and youth in Duncan Village, a low-income community of about 80,000 Xhosa and <i>Colored</i> people in South Africa's Eastern Province.	Duncan Village youth aged 18-35 including, but not limited to, Non-Christian students, drop-outs, the unemployed, and formerly-incarcerated persons	Non-Christian, unemployed and semi-literate adults and youth in Duncan Village, a low-income community of about 80,000 Xhosa and <i>Colored</i> people in South Africa's Eastern Province.
NPO	Underdevelopment, a condition integrating a combination of some or all of the following: hopelessness, poverty, illiteracy, mental illness, moral degeneration, and poor sanitation	Underdevelopment, a condition integrating a combination of some or all of the following: hopelessness, poverty, illiteracy, mental illness, moral degeneration, and poor sanitation	Underdevelopment, a condition integrating a combination of some or all of the following: hopelessness, poverty, illiteracy, mental illness, moral degeneration, and poor sanitation
Benefit	The user benefits through gaining intimacy with God and improved living conditions; while I benefit through the joy of seeing a community transformed.	The user benefits through gaining intimacy with God, hope and skills; while I benefit through the joy of seeing a community transformed.	The user benefits through gaining vocational skills; while I benefit through the joy of seeing a community transformed.
Approach	Training local change agents, or <i>persons of peace</i> , who are intrinsically motivated, culturally-intelligent and respected, but may lack spiritual formation and community development skills.	Mass campaigning and education to re-direct public opinion towards God and transformation	Training economically-disadvantaged adults and youth to gain vocational skills that can help secure dignified jobs or start a viable small business
Risks	Restricted movements due to Covid (or another pandemic/epidemic), cultural mistakes, community disinterest, or	Stiff competition in an overcrowded market. Sometimes devices and data are lacking. Relevant and exciting	Trainers may fall ill or have no passion for community empowerment.

	natural disasters, such as storms, could severely limit execution of the NPO.	content generation may be a challenge.	Participants may have little motivation for change or other mental health challenges hindering engagement.
Assumptions	Based on the duration of Jesus' earthly ministry, any community can experience holistic transformation within three years.	Transformed youth transform others quickly and in innovative ways	Integrating this with Christian community development could result in sustainable transformation
Benchmarks	(1) Identify at least one change-agent monthly for the first six months and (2) train these within three years to manage an indigenous development project	(1) At least 100 new followers of Jesus due to the campaign and (2) at least 5 new community development facilitators within 3 years	Independent assessments show that 70% of participants demonstrate intermediate competence in their trade and evidence of discipleship after 24 months
Other Approaches	Other organizations address the NPO through evangelism, discipleship, skills training, community health, and/or prayer. My approach is unique because it is the only one that will combine door-to-door visits, with social media campaigns and vocational training in Duncan Village.	Other agencies are engaging youth through sports, clubs, evangelism, and prayer. This is unique because as far as we know other agencies are not addressing this NPO through social media programs specifically designed for Duncan Village youth.	Local public schools and small businesses also provide vocational training. We are unique because we are faith-based, non-profit, open to formerly-incarcerated persons and integrate community development in our offering.

DESIGN WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

The design workshop participants include a missionary, life coach, carpentry trainer, community elder, young adult, carpentry student, and an entrepreneur representing.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

The individuals in the one-on-one interviews include an anti-human trafficking campaigner, a business consultant and an international mission agency leader.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Myers, Bryant L. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. New York: Orbis Books, 1999.

Walking with the Poor examines poverty from a social justice perspective to argue that poverty is essentially "relational;" its cause is "spiritual;" and acts of *shalom* by followers of Jesus are evidence of the character of a loving God, who continually invites to "new life.." the author, Bryant Myers, has been a respected Christian development practitioner, author and professor for more than four decades.

Building on the theories of Hibbert and Christian, Myers proposes that Christians reject the duality in the western worldview and the god-complexes of the non-poor. Perhaps the most significant strength of the book relevant to my NPO research is the idea that poverty is essentially relational. Consequently, my engagement with the poor will seek to restore the broken relationships between the poor and God, themselves, their community, and environment. In other words, restore *Shalom*. Discussing a little more on technology's role in development could extend the already wide impact the book, otherwise *Walking with the Poor* should remain a significant frame of reference in transformational development for many years.

Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. Selangor, Malaysia: PVM Harvest Resources, 1989.

Celebration of Discipline is an outstanding modern-day resource on spiritual formation that addresses my NPO research from a contemplative perspective. Based upon the devotional classics of Augustine, Teresa of Avila, Francis of Assisi, and several others, best-selling author Richard Foster argues that the spiritual superficiality of this generation can only be addressed through practicing the spiritual disciplines by grace and with joy.

One important strength Foster brings to my research is by providing the pathway to spiritual formation; for unless my NPO stakeholders experience spiritual renewal, holistic transformation would not be attained. In addition to being Bible-based, *Celebration* also highlights several historical examples of ordinary people who experienced renewal. Its only weakness is that the examples of devotional masters are

almost exclusively western, which could unintentionally downplay the importance of examples from other world regions. Regardless, *Celebration* continues to address some of the deepest spiritual questions of this age and equip many with the tools needed for spiritual renewal.

Lee, Kuan Yew. *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story - 1965 - 2000*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000.

From Third World to First is a political memoir that chronicles the story of Singapore's transformation from an obscure island state in the 1960s to the respected country that it is today. Written by the country's first prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, the book provides a contemporary example of national transformation based upon local initiative, discipline, and education.

Lee's seminal work is relevant to my NPO research because it provides an articulate, non-western narrative of large-scale transformation conceived and successfully executed by non-westerners. This affirms the Biblical concept that God does not discriminate and dispels concerns that remarkable transformation is only possible through foreign aid. A second strength is that as a non-Christian book, it highlights how Biblical principles are always effective, even when implemented without an awareness or acknowledgement of the source. An obvious weakness of the book is that it excludes God from the equation of development, presumably because the author is either uninformed or misinformed in this regard. Despite this, God has graciously blessed this narrative and it should continue to be address the yearning of all developing countries and earn the respect of the world.

APPENDICES

DESIGN WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

My discovery workshop was held on October 25, 2021 at Community Church in Duncan Village from 11:00 – 15:00 with the following stakeholders in attendance:

- Wife/Mother/Missionary
- Single Mother/Life Coach/Electrical Engineer
- Single Mother//Formerly-incarcerated person/Crochet Trainee in low-income community
- Husband/Father/Unemployed Community Elder/Formerly-incarcerated person/Carpentry Trainee in low-income community
- Young Adult/Single Male/ Formerly-incarcerated person/Carpentry Trainee in low-income community
- Adult male/Single/Community youth leader/ Carpentry Trainee in low-income community
- Adult male/Single father/ Carpentry Trainee in low-income community

The session followed the format suggested in the DLGP 895 assignment guidelines with water, juice, and healthy light snacks provided.

REVISITING THE NPO

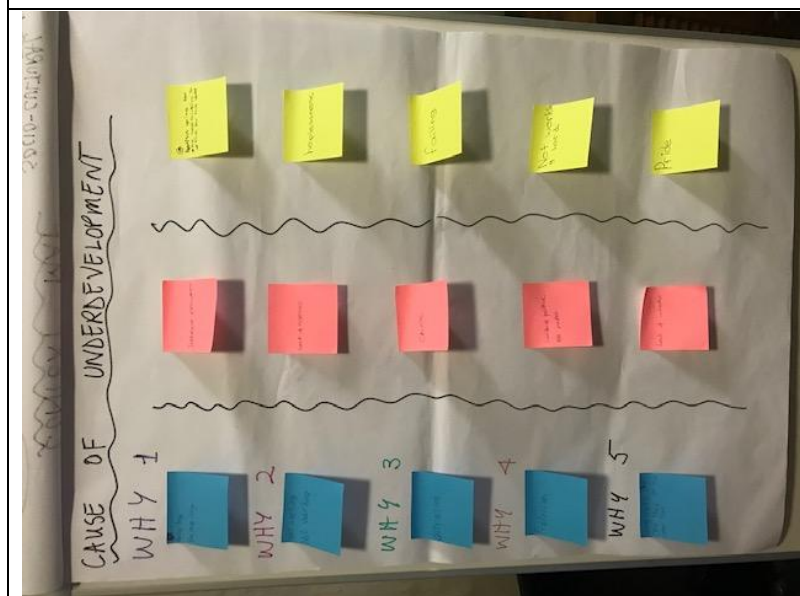
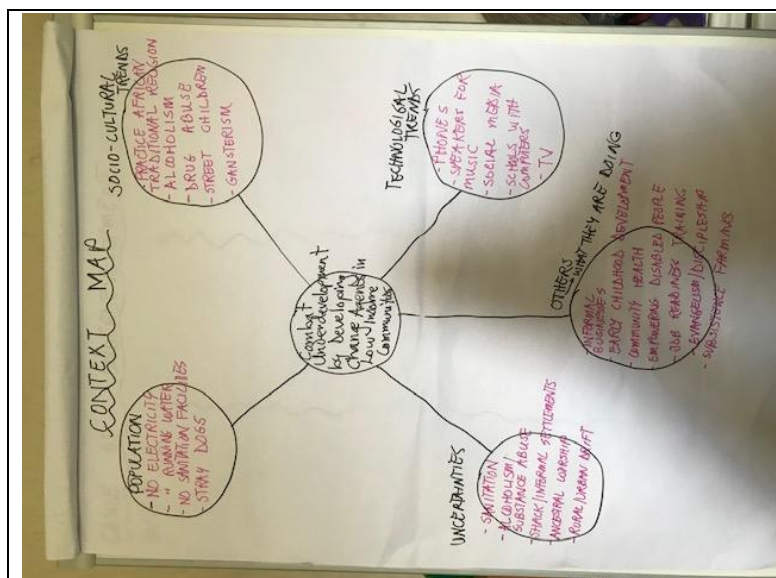
The workshop started with a welcome, prayer, brief introductions, ground rules and an overview of activities. Following this, we discussed the key issue we were trying to address and its importance; the primary audience; social/cultural factors shaping the NPO; and evidence of its value. The first activity was concluded with an affirmation of the NPO Statement: **Combating underdevelopment in low-income communities by training local agents of change.** Subsequently, using the *Context Map* we examined the context of low-income communities, focusing on the population, socio-cultural trends, technological trends, what other organizations are doing, and uncertainties. Second, we played the *5 Whys* game, thereby discovering the four root causes described at the beginning of this report.

EXPLORE AND CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Using *Forced Analogy* as well as *Post-up* and *Affinity Diagram*, we discussed what we know about underdevelopment and explored how combating underdevelopment might relate to a wrestler. We agreed that both activities are similar in the following ways: both have opponents; will be resolved after much diligence; require significant strategy; require in-depth knowledge of the opponent. Next, we explored how the NPO may be addressed using a wrestler, revealing that a wrestler could be a brand ambassador; train stakeholders in wrestling; sponsor educational programs for stakeholders; use personal experience as a basis to teach stakeholders about healthy living. Finally, we explored how a celebrity, Dr Gary Parker, one of the world's leading cleft-lip and palate surgeons, would address the NPO. This resulted in the conclusions that he would perform free surgeries for stakeholders in need; mentor emerging surgeons; raise funds for educating the stakeholders; and advocate for the stakeholders before the government and business communities. We concluded the workshop with the \$100 Test and the results are presented below:

\$100 TEST		
Item/Topic/Issue	\$	WHY?
Door to door visits including old age homes	\$35	Provides immediate feedback. Shows care. Highest opportunity for influence
Social media	\$30	It is easy and safe, especially because we may not know the people
Vocational Training	\$20	Creates employment. Unemployment now at 45%
Music video	\$10	People are very interested in music and dance. Songs remain for a long time in people's heads.
Address Woundedness	\$5	Unless addressed, it will be as if pouring water in a bucket with holes

On a scale of 1-5, I would rate the workshop at 4 because a few stakeholders did not engage as much as I would prefer, although I tried to ask several open-ended questions. One participant was grieving the recent loss of a family member though. Otherwise, I was very grateful for the availability of all participants.



FORCED ANALOGY

FORCED ANALOGY - ASSOCIATION TRAITS

- THE DISCIPLINE OF A WRESTLER IN TRAINING AND DIET CAN INSPIRE DISCIPLINE IN CHANGE AGENTS IN STUDY + BEHAVIOR
- THE AMBITION + DETERMINATION OF A WRESTLER CAN INSPIRE CHANGE AGENTS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES.
- THE PATIENCE + CAREER PLAN OF A WRESTLER CAN ENCOURAGE/INSPIRE CHANGE AGENTS.

FORCED ANALOGY

- HOW IS COMBATING UNDEREMPLOYMENT LIKE A WRESTLER?
- BOTH HAVE OPPONENTS
- WILL TAKE A LOT OF HARD WORK
- BE STRATEGIC.
- KNOW THE OPPONENTS WEAKNESS.
- HOW MAY I ADDRESS THE NPD WITH A WRESTLER?
- BRAND AMBASSADOR
- TRAIN PEOPLE IN WRESTLING
- SPONSOR TRAINING PROGRAMS/SCHOOLS.
- USE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO TEACH ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
- HOW WOULD DR GARY PARKER ADDRESS THE NPD?
- PROGRAM FREE SURGERIES
- MENTOR/TRAIN EMERGING SURGEONS
- RAISE FUNDS FOR TRAINING
- ADVOCATE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO PROTECTS SCHOOLS, WORLD GOVERNMENTS + COMPANIES.

What we know about underdevelopment

ONE-PAGE POST-WORKSHOP MESSAGE TO STAKEHOLDERS

Dear friend,

As you may remember, on 25 October 2021 we discussed the Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) of **combatting underdevelopment within low-income communities by training local change agents**, and came out with the following findings:

1. **Summary of NPO:** Underdevelopment - or a decline in discipleship, character, education, vocational skills, income, employment, sanitation and infrastructure
2. **Three big ideas:** door-to-door visits; social media campaigns; vocational training
3. **Definition of done:** 12 locally owned and run projects three years after the NPO project

4. **Benchmarks of success:** one change agent monthly for the first six months; 100 new followers of Jesus after three years; 70% of project participants competent in vocational skills after three years
5. **Other key insights:** positive music is a major way to reach participants, especially youth. This can be included in the social media campaign.
6. **Areas requiring further research:** mental health.

Request for additional information or corrections: In view of the above, if there is any additional information you can provide or corrections that need to be made, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Once again, I am very grateful for your participation in this workshop and for offering such excellent contributions towards my NPO research.

Wishing you God's richest blessings,

Henry Gwani

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS DOCUMENTATION

Following the discovery workshop, I conducted one-on-one interviews with three additional stakeholders and the summary is outlined below.

Interviewee A - Filmmaker, Conference Speaker, Human Trafficking Activist, Missionary

- In full agreement with findings from the workshop.
- Underdevelopment also includes lack of security, negative economic growth and poor leadership, low access to markets, low industrialization
- Poor leadership and corruption are also root causes of underdevelopment
- Meditation and praying with understanding are critical
- Vision is critical. Where there is no vision, people perish; and where there is vision, people flourish

Interviewee B - College President, Author, Scholar

- Underdevelopment also includes marred human identity, poverty of values, lack of self-confidence, poor leadership
- Combining relief and development is the most effective way to
- Areas of further research include the incarnational model, delayed gratification, visionary and responsible leadership
- Persons of peace are indispensable in any work of sustainable development

Interviewee C - Business Consultant, Author, Scholar

- The sacred-secular divide is a key contributing factor in underdevelopment
- Managing change may be the most significant factor in helping low-income communities
- Use a "systems approach." However, amount of time used in engaging each demographic could vary according to need.
- Farming, Water and sanitation, and building skills are critically needed in low-income communities, not just white-collar jobs
- Transformational leadership is also needed
- Discipleship may be carried out through character education.

Appendix D—Milestone 4 Design Research Report

INTRODUCTION

The following paper outlines my design research report for two of the three ideas that emerged from my NPO design workshop in 2021. It provides details of two prototypes, an essay on the background of both prototypes, and based on the above, which of the two was chosen as the most viable prototype.

PROTOTYPE A: DOOR-TO-DOOR

- **Prototype description and scope:** A two-hour door-to-door community engagement involving five one-on-one and small-group interviews of eight adults within five families of Duncan Village, a low-income community in East London, South Africa. The interviews focused on finding out the needs, assets, history, achievements and aspirations of Duncan Village.
- **NPO Statement:** Addressing underdevelopment within low-income communities by training local agents of change.
- **Research question:** What is the most effective way to train local agents of change within low-income communities?
- **Assessment benchmarks:** At least 10% of people engaged (a) providing significant responses to our questions, (b) expressing interest in asset-based community development¹⁸⁷, and (c) expressing interest in long-term engagement.
- **Participant description:** Eight (four male and four female) adults, including five *colored* (Cape Malay) and three black African residents of Duncan Village. It was also a combination of married and single, mainly unemployed, middle-aged and senior citizen (above 60), skilled and unskilled individuals. The group of participants included a building engineer and community leader responsible for overseeing security within his street.
- Summary of Learnings
 - What worked:
 - Greeting first. Respectful approach to questioning. Introduction of self and subject matter. Most participants engaged expressed happiness with being interviewed and gave meaningful suggestions. Expressing gratitude for participation.
 - What could be improved
 - Providing a written questionnaire for those who will prefer to write and submit immediately, rather than interviewing everyone

¹⁸⁷“What is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)?” Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation, <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Documents/WhatIsAssetBasedCommunityDevelopment.pdf>

- Recording participant's verbal response on an app (for participants who do not mind) would simplify the process of capturing feedback and allow for more eye contact
 - All facilitators fluent in *Xhosa* and *Afrikaans*. In this instance, only one of the two facilitators was fluent and served as translator, as needed.
- What matters to participants
 - Security: surprisingly, security was expressed as a major need by participants.
 - Practically every participant supports the need for vocational training as part of developing local change agents
 - The revival of sports as a part of community life was also expressed
 - Local municipal leaders who significantly engage with community and address community needs
- What was the important discovery?
 - There seems to be almost no awareness about asset-based community development (ABCD) or the understanding that significant development can take place by committed private community members working together with current assets, sometimes without government intervention. Instead, almost all interviewed are expecting local municipal or city leaders to transform their community.

PROTOTYPE B: VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

- **Prototype description and scope:** A two-hour group session for eight residents of Duncan Village, a low-income community in East London, South Africa, to watch, analyze and explore applications from a documentary that integrates vocational training with community development. Finding the right documentary was challenging until I came across the TERO Vocational Training documentary. Hosted by the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO), a Native American nonprofit, the documentary highlights how vocational training in carpentry is being used as an effective tool for community development among economically-disadvantaged Native Americans. Following screening, I used several questions to find out about the assets and challenges within Duncan Village. I also explored levels of hope regarding the (a) possibility of community development in Duncan Village and (b) interest in attending a proposed three-year accredited, but low-cost vocational training program integrating the concepts highlighted in the documentary. Other questions explored participants' specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) plan for holistic community development using local resources.
- **NPO Statement:** Addressing underdevelopment within low-income communities by training local agents of change.

- **Research question:** What is the most effective way to train local agents of change within low-income communities?
- Assessment benchmarks
 - At least 25% of participants (a) demonstrating a *new* sense of hope that their communities can become better, (b) articulating a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) plan¹⁸⁸ for holistic community development using local resources, and (c) expressing interest in attending a three-year accredited, but low-cost, vocational training program integrating the concepts highlighted in the documentary.
- **Participant description:** Eight (three male and five female) black African adult residents of Duncan Village. It was also a combination of married and single, mainly unemployed, middle-aged (25-50 years), skilled and unskilled individuals. The group of participants included students, mothers, kindergarten teachers, community development practitioners and the unemployed.
- Summary of Learnings
 - What worked:
 - Viewing and analyzing a vocational training and community development documentary helped to illustrate what might have been an abstract concept. After the documentary, participants demonstrated a good understanding of the concept and follow-up questions.
 - What could be improved
 - In future, instead of a documentary, an actual vocational training class for making a simple carpentry product could be organized. This would give participants a more personal experience and appreciation of the concepts under discussion.
 - What matters to participants
 - Fostering environmental sanitation, affordable quality housing, child evangelism, early childhood development (ECD), youth development, and empowering residents to economically support their families. Other interests include training in small business development, music, dance, sports, and time management.
- What was the important discovery?
 - There is significant interest in integrating vocational training with spiritual formation, small business development, environmental stewardship, sports, and creative arts (music and dance). There was an expression of interest in the

¹⁸⁸ Victor Lipman. "Why 'SMART' Job Objectives are Exactly That." (Forbes, 2016).
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2016/11/02/why-smart-job-objectives-are-exactly-that/?sh=668594923d56>

following aspects of vocational training: the construction trades, renewable energy, tailoring, catering, music, sports, and dance.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ESSAY ON EMERGING SOLUTIONS: DOOR-TO-DOOR AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

Introduction.

The following essay provides the academic background for two ideas that emerged during my DLGP850 workshop and one-on-one meetings: (a) door-to-door community engagement and (b) vocational training integrated with spiritual formation and community development. These ideas are studied with the hope that they could serve as vehicles for training local change agents, or leadership development, within low-income communities.

Door-to-Door Community Engagement.

In this paper, the term *door-to-door* implies engaging a community by systematically visiting every individual household for the advancement of God's kingdom. The primary intended activity is holding conversations surrounding the lordship of Jesus. Leadership training is meant to develop out of this. Yet, following the model of Jesus, conversations should be done in a way that is loving, respectful and as natural as possible. In other words, there is no formula for conversations. Instead, an approach driven by common interests and steered towards the lordship of Jesus is encouraged. For example, if the community member encountered is running an informal business by selling boiled corn from home, the conversation could begin by the facilitator asking with genuine interest about how business is going and buying some corn, if so inclined. This opens the door for *natural*

conversation as Jesus illustrates in his engagement with the woman of Samaria¹⁸⁹ and with Philip before feeding the 5000¹⁹⁰. Thus, door-to-door is aimed at intentional yet natural engagement, connection and relationship building for the purpose of promoting Jesus. Studies show that door-to-door is a community engagement strategy that is often used with success. For example, according to Jeremy Deck, "When ZPC [a local church] began in the early 1980s, members went door-to-door connecting with their neighbors¹⁹¹." Connecting could lead to relationship which provides a platform for evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development.

In addition to verbally presenting Jesus, door-to-door has been used for other related purposes. These include mental health interventions¹⁹², creating awareness¹⁹³, community sensitization¹⁹⁴, immunization¹⁹⁵ and other important community benefits. All of the fore-mentioned activities have been used as mission strategies that complement evangelism in communicating the lordship of Jesus. Regarding leadership development, research shows that

¹⁸⁹ John 4. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the *New King James Version Maxwell Leadership Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

¹⁹⁰ John 6:1-7.

¹⁹¹ Jeremy Deck. "Won't You Be My Neighbor." (DMin, diss. George Fox University, 2020), 7.

¹⁹² Yeo, Lyn Hui Wen, Freda Cheng Yee Mah, Elliot Yeung Chong, Angela Hui-Shan Lim, Shu Tian Ng and Huso Yi, "Does Gender Matter to Promote Mental through Community Engagement among Older Adults?" Health <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13607863.2020.1855106>

¹⁹³ Nathan Chianelli. "Examining the Barriers to Community Engagement in a Low-Income Lafayette Community," *Purdue Journal of Service-Learning and International Engagement*. Winter, 2019. <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1189&context=pjsl>

¹⁹⁴ UNICEF. "Community Engagement and its Implications for Latrine Coverage and Better Hygiene and Sanitation Practices." 2017. <https://nru.uncst.go.ug/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/1157/Community%20engagement%20and%20its%20implications%20for%20latrine%20Coverage%20and%20better%20hygiene%20and%20sanitation%20practices.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁹⁵ UNICEF. "Community Engagement"

door-to-door has been used as a data collection tool¹⁹⁶, and in creating awareness, recruitment, breaking down barriers, and improving credibility¹⁹⁷. Yet it is not without drawbacks. For example, due to suspicion towards strangers, some community members are reluctant to engage with an unknown person who knocks on their door¹⁹⁸. This is understandable given the high levels of housebreak-ins and other related crimes that characterize many parts of the world. Yet, perhaps owing to deep-seated spiritual hunger, many community members have expressed openness to engagement through this important strategy.

Door-to-door is discussed significantly in the Bible, although often not in an explicit way. For example, inspired by God, Moses commissioned a strategic and in-depth research and spiritual mapping project over Canaan. Although *door-to-door* is not explicitly used in describing this expedition, the details required (strengths, weaknesses, demographics, agricultural potential, levels of security, soil fertility), suggest a similar task; howbeit at a larger scale and from a military intelligence perspective. Accordingly, Anastasia Boniface-Malie comments that this effort, just like a door-to-door one, involved a survey and report¹⁹⁹. Second, the incarnation models home visits as would be done in a door-to-door campaign. As expressed in the words, "the Word became flesh

¹⁹⁶ Hockey, Peter, Alexandra Tobin, Julliette Kemp, Janet Kerrigan, and Kitsell Fleur. "Global Health Partnerships: Leadership Development for a Purpose," *Leadership in Health Services*, Autumn, 2009. <https://www-proquest-com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/docview/210501081/AA86CD40C203427FPQ/1?accountid=11085>

¹⁹⁷ Kaye, Gillian. "Grassroots Involvement," *American Journal of Community Psychology*. Spring, 2001. <https://www-proquest-com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/docview/205347344?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>

¹⁹⁸ Kaye, *Grassroots Involvement*,

¹⁹⁹ Boniface-Malie, Anastasia. "Commentary on Numbers 13:1-33," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive, 2006), 186.

and dwelt among us," Jesus *left* his home in heaven and came to *visit* humanity on earth²⁰⁰. Accordingly, Samuel Ngewa stresses that the incarnation was a "temporary dwelling with a purpose, namely, to reveal God ...²⁰¹" This highlights the previously stated idea that a key reason for a door-to-door campaign is the advancement of God's kingdom.

Perhaps few other portions of scripture discuss the concept of a door-to-door engagement in as much detail as Luke 10:1-12. Here Jesus commissioned 72 disciples (and, by extension, the global church) to go to "every town and place" with a message of peace and God's reign. In other words, the church is called to reach everyone (knock on every door), yet with the understanding that in some cases we will not be welcome. John Paul Isaak contends that Luke 10:1-12 suggests an "intensive campaign" that holds underlying principles "for all time²⁰²." Adding to this, David Lim, a veteran missionary from the Philippines, cautions that for door-to-door to be effective, practitioners must "go simply, go strategically and go servantly²⁰³."

Finally, the early church's practice of meeting daily in the temple and from house to house²⁰⁴, demonstrates the principle of intentional community engagement not only in large public spaces but also in more private settings where it is easier to foster intimate and meaningful relationships.

²⁰⁰ Luke. 1:68. John. 1:14

²⁰¹ Ngewa, Samuel. John. "Commentary on John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive, 2006), 1253.

²⁰² Isaak, John Paul. "Commentary on Luke," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive, 2006), 1225.

²⁰³ Lim, David S. "Effective Disciple-Making Made Simple (Luke 10:1-9)." https://www.academia.edu/12247114/Disciple_making_Made_Simple_Luke_10_1_9

²⁰⁴ Acts 5:42 and Acts 20:20

Vocational Training, Integrated with Community Development and Spiritual Formation.

A multi-disciplinary approach to leadership development could be a critical success factor for developing leaders within low-income communities. Studies show that some important interventions in this regard are vocational training, community development and spiritual formation. Vocational training, in strategically-selected careers, could empower low-income communities with the skills needed to make a meaningful contribution to society, earn a decent wage, and improve quality of life. Community development that is asset-based and from a biblical perspective has fostered remarkable transformation in several communities around the world. Spiritual formation is arguably the most important activity in the world. Consequently, just before completing his earthly assignment, Jesus commissioned his followers to “make disciples” of all people groups²⁰⁵. In this paper, spiritual formation will include spiritual disciplines, mental health (emotionally healthy spirituality), as well as the concept of missiological discipleship.

Vocational Training.

In this paper, vocational training will be defined as training related to a “specific trade, occupation or vocation in which a student or employee wishes to participate.”²⁰⁶ In view of this, and South Africa’s “critical need for technical and artisan skills,” it is unfortunate that vocational training is “stigmatized” in the country due to the legacy of Apartheid²⁰⁷. This seems to be a reflection of the

²⁰⁵ Matthew 28:18-20

²⁰⁶ UNESCO. TVETipedia Glossary. (2016)
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/filt=all/id=545>

²⁰⁷ Center for Development Enterprise. “Vocational Training in South Africa: Strategies for Improvement.” (2012). <https://www.cde.org.za/vocational-education-in-south-africa-strategies-for-improvement/>

trend in other countries. Research shows that in some communities within the USA and Tajikistan, there is only a “moderate interest” towards vocational training among high school students²⁰⁸ and it is mainly rural dwellers and economically-disadvantaged individuals who enroll in vocational training programs²⁰⁹. Despite all these, vocational training has several advantages. For example, John Turnridge found that vocational training is a significant missionary strategy that can “aid in the spread of the Gospel²¹⁰.” Turnridge maintains that it can provide spiritual leaders with a “common ground of communication” with a large portion of the congregation or mission field, especially if this is within a low-income or middle-income community²¹¹. David Lim asserts that vocational training in skills that “fit the local market” is critical to mission and transformational leadership development.²¹² This is true because engaging community is not limited to spiritual activity alone, and vocational training can provide an excellent platform for seeing God at work within a non-spiritual context.

In his seminal paper, John Walsh also argues that vocational training is important to addressing the needs of minority group members in at least four ways. First, the over-concentration of the less-privileged within “jobs at the lowest end of the skill ladder.²¹³” It is remarkable that

²⁰⁸ Haney, Randall McGarey. “Secondary Student Perceptions of Vocational Education.” (Ded diss., University of Florida, 2002), 100.

²⁰⁹ Safarmamad, Farid. “Factors that Influence Students’ Decisions to Enroll in Initial Vocational Education and Training Lyceums in Tajikistan” (PhD diss., Old Dominion University, 2019), iii.

²¹⁰ Turnridge, John Elton. “The Role of Vocational Training in the National Spread of the Gospel.” (MDiv thesis, Western Evangelical Seminary, 1972), 58.

²¹¹ Ibid, 59

²¹² Lim, David. “Developing Indigenous Leaders: Lessons in Mission from Buddhist Asia,” in *Developing Indigenous Leaders: Lessons in Mission from Buddhist Asia*, ed. Paul de Neui (Pasadena: William Carey Library 2014), 83-110.

²¹³ Walsh, John Patrick. “Vocational Training to Improve Job Opportunities for Minority Groups”. *Buffalo Law Review* (1964), 151.
<https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview/vol14/iss1/19>

although, Walsh expressed this in the 1960s, his comments are still valid today. Walsh also observes that the “lowest skilled occupations are not only the lowest paid, but they have the highest rates of unemployment.”²¹⁴ Thus, a vocational training intervention will not only provide skills but can also help resolve the unemployment crisis. Third, Walsh predicts that employment for “unskilled and low-skill workers in future years will be increasingly scarce and sporadic²¹⁵”. The reality of this statement is what has perhaps lead to the frantic scramble for scarce and critical skills among the governments of the world. Finally, Walsh points out that vocational training is important because a significant “proportion of minority workers lack the educational attainment and vocational skills needed to move into the technical, skilled, or white-collar occupations which offer the best future job opportunities²¹⁶.”

Several portions of scripture indirectly refer to the concept of vocational training. For example, God’s mandate to Adam regarding cultivating the Garden of Eden²¹⁷ suggests that Adam was endowed with the relevant agricultural skills to fulfil that responsibility. Similarly, God equipped Bezaleel with skills in metal-work, masonry, woodwork and building engineering, thereby qualifying him to serve as project manager for the construction of the tabernacle²¹⁸. Any one of the forementioned skills could easily qualify as a critical skill in many countries around the world today. It is interesting that the same God who blesses people with spiritual gifts also endows men and women with vocational skills. Indeed, as James observes, every good gift (spiritual or vocational)

²¹⁴ Walsh, Vocational Training, 151

²¹⁵ Ibid, 152

²¹⁶ ibid, 152

²¹⁷ Genesis 2:15

²¹⁸ Exodus 31

comes from God²¹⁹. Given the important place vocational skills hold in scripture and the widespread research on the subject, it may be concluded that vocational skills are an indispensable tool in addressing the leadership development needs of low-income communities.

Community Development

As previously explained, it is important to integrate vocational training with community development (CD). In this paper, CD is defined as a process of “understanding our neighborhood assets and creating new connections among them²²⁰.” In contrast, the traditional approach to CD has been one that is need-based and aimed at meeting needs, usually identified by expatriate community development practitioners and not local community members. Championed by John McKnight and other Christian leaders, asset-based community development (ABCD) has become a significant tool for community transformation. According to Wayne Bragg, “development that is Christian is transformation of the person and social structures that frees persons and societies to move toward a state of increasing wholeness in harmony with God”, themselves, others and the environment²²¹. Bragg is recognized as the pioneer of transformational development²²² (TD), which is essentially Christian community development. Like secular forms of community development, ABCD and TD also seek to address poverty, *but* see this as a multi-dimensional web of restrictions

²¹⁹ James 1:17

²²⁰ McKnight, John L. “Regenerating Community: The Recovery of a Space for Citizens,” Northwestern University Institute for Policy Research (2003), 13. <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/publications/publications-by-topic/Documents/regenerating.pdf>

²²¹ Bragg, Wayne. 1984. “Beyond Development to Transformation,” *International Review of Mission* 73, no. 290 (April 1984): 165, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.1984.tb03262.x>

²²² Myers, Bryant L. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 95.

that is spiritual (fear, bondage); mental (limited perspectives, mental blocks, poor self-image); social (limiting restrictions); and physical (involving scarce resources, limited choices)²²³.

Spiritual Formation

The final element that will be integrated with vocational training is spiritual formation. In this paper, this refers to three key things: (a) discipleship training that fosters growth in the spiritual disciplines, (b) emotionally healthy discipleship or mental health from a Christian perspective, and (c) missiological discipleship, emphasizing evangelism and missions. In his groundbreaking book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster discusses 12 spiritual disciplines that are critical to the formation of followers of Jesus²²⁴. These disciplines include meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, celebration and guidance. Although these disciplines foster well-rounded followers of Jesus, there is a mental health element that also helps. Accordingly, Lyn Westman, mental health consultant for the international Christian charity Mercy Ships, proposes an approach to discipleship that is from a mental health perspective, and thus provides an emotionally-healthy approach. Accordingly, Westman's framework integrates spiritual formation with various mental health models and gives a biblical perspective on stress; coping and the healing process; mental, neurological and substance use disorders; and ways to care for women, combatants, prisoners and other groups vulnerable to trauma²²⁵.

²²³ Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 80.

²²⁴ Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), v.

²²⁵ Westman, Lyn. *Understanding People, Mental Health and Trauma*. (Unpublished manuscript, 2019), xviii.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, research shows that engaging community through a door-to-door campaign is most effective if the encounter is limited to verbal conversation only. It provides the opportunity for face-to-face contact in private settings where people can be engaged significantly for Jesus. Over time, a large number of people can benefit from a consistent door-to-door campaign. Unfortunately, this approach is limited if the need for visual aids and practical illustrations arise. On the contrary, integrating vocational training with community development and spiritual formation is effective in addressing several low-income community challenges with practical demonstration in the use of tools and other teaching aids. However, compared to door-to-door, it is limited with regards to reaching a large number of beneficiaries and considerably more expensive.

MOST VIABLE PROTOTYPE (MVP).

Based on my prototyping exercise and background research essay, integrating vocational training, with spiritual formation and community development in a leadership development program is my most viable prototype. There are several reasons for this. First, although a door-to-door campaign is effective in facilitating community engagement based on verbal communication (evangelism, church planting, mental health, etc), it is limited in fostering skills development, practical demonstration, and the use of several tools as teaching aids. Second, vocational training will provide the skills needed for professional development in the respective disciplines needed within Duncan Village. This includes construction skills for quality housing; plumbing for water and sanitation needs; etc. Further, integrating spiritual formation implies fostering growth in biblical meditation, study, prayer, evangelism and other spiritual disciplines. Merging spiritual formation

with professional skills training has significant implications for confronting the sacred-secular divide responsible for nominal Christianity and secularism within Duncan Village. Hopefully, this will foster intimacy with God as well as a marketplace discipleship-making movement. Similarly, incorporating asset-based community development could help make the vocational training intervention relevant to the expressed interests of the community. Remarkably, community engagement through a door-to-door campaign, can be easily included in the vocational training program as a regular exercise. This way there is an intentional approach to community engagement in a way that is meaningful and effective in representing Jesus and serving community.

In conclusion, a training program that integrates leadership development with vocational training, spiritual formation, and community development is also viable because of my experience as a vocational training project coordinator, missionary, and community development practitioner. To this end, my next step will be the development of a training manual for a three-year accredited program that integrates leadership development with vocational training, spiritual formation and community development for potential change agents within Duncan Village.

APPENDIX

There are three items in the appendix, namely:

- An excel spreadsheet documenting feedback from the door-to-door campaign (sent as an attachment)
- The video that was viewed during the vocational training prototype exercise (sent as an attachment)
- Photos of feedback pages from the vocational training prototype interview (shown below)

Du

1. Assets - Small projects, youth development, braai shop
2. Challenges - lack of skill, lack of education
~~poor~~ poor environment
3. a) Yes because skills it can limit a jobless people
they can provide whatever they want in their homes
- b) Plan - Train ^{business skill} 50 people in Durcanillage one year
so that they can able to take their family
- c) Yes interested because it can change life
of many people.
- d) Youth projects because they have a lot of ideas
- e)
- f) ^{si} Business skill life skills
- g) Teamwork because it help for communication and also
build a relationship
- h) Yes very important
- i) Yes because is the way you motivate people
- j) Yes cause is good everybody have information

DV - Duncan Village

1. Assets - Car washing business, tuck shops, building of informal house structures, Meat selling, Corn selling
2. Challenges - Money, sporting activities, unemployment, drugs, theft.
3. Lessons learnt.
 - (a) Yes. It will give something to do. They would have skills to earn money & provide for their families
 - (b) Train 50 women in sewing & crochet in Duncan Village by 2027.
 - (c) Yes. because if it is in my community I would not have to commute.
 - (d) South African businesses like Spar, professional builders, welders,
 - (e) Builders, plumbers, electricians, fitness physical
 - (g) Yes there would be a real need for Teamwork, Time management, work ethic
 - (h) Communication is very important in any organisation
 - (i) Yes people want certification.
 - (f) I don't think it would be necessary. If the parents have been trained well & the training is useful, the parents would be able to train the children.

Assets
 *stokshops
 *taxi rank
 *braais

K2 challenges/needs

*People ~~no~~ don't have jobs/lazyness

*the people are drinking and smoking too much/even kids

*Poorness

3. Yes it will show that someone ^{cares about the community} ~~wants to change~~

b) Train 20 kids in Langa/help ~~people~~ ^{kids} with homework/school work by 2023.

c. Yes I would be interested. Because I want to learn some thing that help me earn money.

d. Mercy ships, ~~light of hope~~, Dawn town christian center.

*~~school~~ school skills, hand skills, life skills.

g. Team work.

h. Yes.

i. Yes.

j. Yes.

k.

- D.
1. Assets: Informal Bussness,
 2. Money, keeping dog in a safe place and were kids play.
 3.
 - a) Not really. Because the people are ^{and things like that} bit lazy.
 - b) Making better buildings all over Langa by 2027.
I will train about 500 people.
 - c) Yes. Because I want to earn money. (💰)
 - d) ~~Defenely~~ building. My sponser would be building
prossenal
 - e) Building of course, cleaning and
 - f) I don't think so. I think they have teamwork.
 - h) Yes.
 - i) I ~~don't~~ really don't know.
 - j) Yes. Because they understand there age mates.

1) Asset - Sport, music, Farming

2) Challenges - drugs abuse, teenage pregnancy, lack of education

3) a) ^{Yes} Hope - If they have training of many things to keep them busy

b) Plan life skill 100 youth in 2 years different villages to take them out from street

c) Yes because they can gain information and be equipped how to maintain life for future

d) Social works, Sport and culture, Health

e) Skills needed - more farming skill baking

g) Timeliness To take time is very important

h) Yes very important

i) Yes to motivate more about training

k) Yes if people are full equipped by information they can develop more in their areas of life

Assets - Dance, sports, informal businesses, drama

2 Challenges - Alcohol, drugs, unemployment, teenage pregnancies.

3. (a) Yes they will have hope & be motivated to do the same.

(b) ~~Helping~~ ~~to build~~ ~~affordable~~ ~~houses~~ ~~(wooden)~~ ~~by 2027.~~ Help 50 people in Gugulethu to build affordable houses (wooden) by 2027.

(c) They would be interested because it would be relevant to the community needs.

(d) Experienced builders, local/international businesses, build it Sango (community counselors)

(e) Building, plumbing, etc.

(f) Safety, commitment, Responsibility.

(g) Yes very.

(h) Yes people want certification.

(i) Parents only, parents can pass skills onto the young ones

- a) * My friends
 * Braais
 * ~~Car~~ car washes
 b) * drinking/even kids
 * smoking/even kids
3. a) There will be hope, because ^{some} people want to learn
 b) ~~I~~ I want to teach 7 year olds how to read and
 write.
 c) Not all of the people some of them are lazy.
 d) ~~among~~ Mercy ships, Down town chisten center.
 e) life skills
 g) ~~Time~~ Time lines
 h) Yes
 i) Yes
 j) ~~Yes~~ Yes

- 2.
- a) ~~* Being~~ Being able to keep the environment clean
 - d) ~~* Drinking~~ Drinking at a young age
 - * staying out late
 - * ~~Doing~~ Not Listening to your parents
- 3) a) Yes. I think are willing
- b) Teaching ~~th~~ so young children to follow the lord by 2025.
 - c) I am pretty shore. Because sometimes there are ~~are~~ azy
 - d) A organization that deal's with kids.
 - f) ~~* Listening~~ Listening to there parents
 - g) ~~* Not~~ Not fighting.
 - i) ~~* Yes~~ Yes.
 - l) Yes. Because the parents need to hear what the kids think.

Appendix E—Project Appendix Documentation

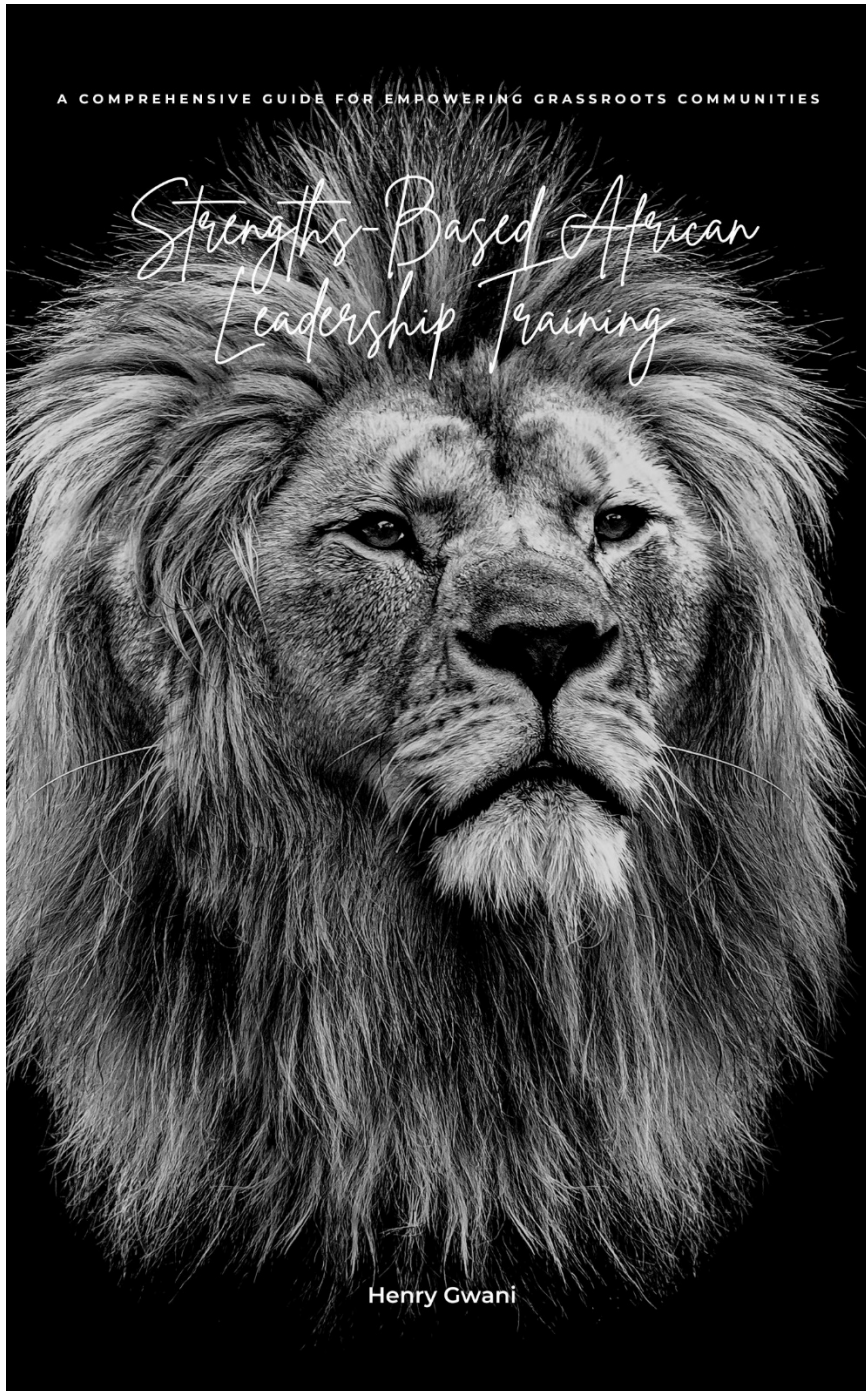


FIGURE 13: BOOK COVER FOR STRENGTHS-BASED LEADERSHIPS TRAINING

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