



The Christian Role in Third World Development: *A New Era for Church and Mission*¹

Ted Ward

Outline of the Workshop

Recommended readings in preparation for the workshop:

Ted Ward. "*Acts of Kindness*" (Paper, available in the Document Archives, 1978 and 1981)
Maurice Sinclair. *The Green Finger of God*. Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1980 (Paternoster House, 3 Mount Radford Crescent, Exeter, UK Ex2 4J2)

Session 1—Tuesday. "Reflecting and Projecting—This Moment in the History of Christianity"

- What are the "third World's outlook, needs and capabilities . . . and how do Americans interpret them?
- The "hangover" from colonialism: effects on economics, government, self-esteem, and relations with expatriates.
- The political spectrum and its theological roots.
- What are the barriers impeding Christian leadership for national development?

Session 2—Wednesday. "Social and Political Contexts of Third World Churches"

- What are the differences in socio-political posture among the Third World churches?
- Influences of missions and missionaries on socio-political posture.
- The myth of political neutralism and the price of sustaining the myth.
- The trends toward left and right.

Session 3—Thursday. "Praxis of Responsible Missions"

- Opportunities for Christian influence through development.
- How can "old dogs learn new tricks?"
- What is being learned about learning and how it relates to the role of church and mission in Third World development.
- Theology of mission as a development issue.

Session 4—Friday. "The Paradox of Servant Leadership"

- Who decides what the Third World churches *ought* to do in reference to national development?
- Who decides what outside assistance the Third World churches *need*?
- What constitutes leadership toward national development?

¹ Workshop materials for Overseas Missions Study Center (OMSC) March 1-4, 1983

Session Worksheets

Tuesday: “Reflecting and Projecting—This Moment in the History of Christianity”

Range of evident characteristics of the “Third World:”

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Colonialism:

Its motives: _____; _____; _____

Effects on economics: _____

government: _____

outlook of the people: _____

The Gospel

Political Implications

What elements cited 1. _____

and associated in 2. _____

Luke Chapters 1-5? 3. _____

Range of perspectives on social action as a Christian concern.

Extreme Positive: _____

Why? _____

Extreme Negative: _____

Why? _____

Your Position: _____

Why? _____

Hindrances to Christian leadership in national development:

1. Continuing paternalism
2. Reaction and rejection of new ideas (within the culture)
3. Land ownership
4. Individualism
5. View of the church as supporter of the status quo
6. Lack of leadership training (unwillingness to set dates for transitions)
7. Lack of ability to plan and work ahead

Wednesday: Preparation for “Social and Political Contexts of Third World Churches”

Situations you have known or read about:

Case #1. Wherein the church (in general or specific) has taken an identifiable socio-political stance. Describe and identify reasons and consequences.

Case #2. Wherein the church (in general or specific) has taken a stance significantly different from Case #1. Describe and identify reasons and consequences.

What encouragement or discouragement do missionaries offer in socio-political matters facing the nation in which the missionaries serve?

How do you see the issue of political neutralism . . .

. . . for missionaries? _____

. . . for the church in a Third World country? _____

What pressures toward political extremism have you observed?

Thursday: Preparation for “Praxis of Responsible Missions”

Read Nehemiah, Chapters 1-10. Note sequence of needs evidenced and how each is met.

What are the positive outcomes which could emerge from asserting Christian influence and leadership in development of a given nation? Respond as specifically as possible.

What problems or unwanted by-products might emerge?

What are the roles for missionaries in the situation you have described above?

To what extent and in what ways is development a theological issue?

In what ways does your theology of missions (missiology) relate to the role of the national church in national development?

Friday: Preparation for “The Paradox of Servant Leadership?”

How do you define development?

Who should decide the objective of development?

What resources are needed for effective development?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the likely sources?

What leadership contributions can individual or corporate Christians provide for the development of the nation?

Differentiate the following:

Relief: _____

Rehabilitation: _____

Development: _____