



# Relief and Development: *The Reformation Hangover*<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. The Reformation Hangover: Dichotomies of Word and Works

Key Issues:

- 1) The valid purposes of Christian mission
- 2) The relative merits of *strategic* and *practical* motives
- 3) Eschatological differences regarding church and Kingdom
- 4) The awakening to holism in ministry

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) What purposes of the Christian mission unite the concerns for relief and development with the motives of proclamation?
- 2) What dissonances arise out of dichotomization?
- 3) Do theological shifts underlie the reconciliations between “presence and proclamation” which seem apparent today? What trends are visible?

Practical Implications:

- 1) Can and should anything be done to hasten the reconciliation process (Focus #3, above)?
- 2) Diagnose the relationship between your agency and its donor public. What ambiguities exist? Can and should they be clarified?
- 3) Which publics are apt to be positively affected by theological arguments about articulation of the facets of the mission of the church?
- 4) Are any pragmatic arguments for articulation acceptable?

## 2. Confusion of Relief and Development

Key Issues:

- 1) Compulsive intervention. Fools rush in . . . heart over head and head over heels.
- 2) Recognizing the hazards in relief: how much dependency is good?
- 3) The building of humane relationships amidst disparity. Possible?
- 4) Relief and development: the procedural misuse of holism.
- 5) Piece-meal development assistance and relief activity tends to delay revolution.
- 6) Confusion about concepts, nomenclature, and fads has led to heat rather than light.

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) In what ways does the “shrinking world” account for the increased attention to relief operations?
- 2) To what extent does the failure of relief operations motivate development assistance?
- 3) What accounts for the emergence of the term “holism” or “holistic”?
- 4) Can frustration of freedom be condoned in the name of Christian mission?

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Practical Implications:

- 1) What specific operational practices can help to minimize dependency?
- 2) Consider the possibility of a “platoon” approach to the separation of relief and development activities.
- 3) Consider the worth of distinguishing rehabilitation as a sort of “spacer” between relief and development activities.

### **3. Management Systems: Military Campaigns, Service Corporations and Semi-Private Entrepreneurs**

Key Issues:

- 1) Historically, the management approaches to missions, to relief operations, and to development assistance are very different. Whether it is in the nature of things or just a series of historical accidents, the ways that relief, development and mission are managed are very different.
- 2) Do these three functions inherently require different forms of management?
- 3) What problems in the field can be traced to ineffective or inappropriate management systems?

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) Should every mission organization be involved in all three sorts of operations?
- 2) What major changes in management style are needed if an agency intends to deal with more than one of these operations?

Practical Implications:

- 1) Does your organization operate more like the army, ServiceMaster, or Amway? What are the implications for what it is likely to do best?
- 2) What would you suggest about differentiating separate management divisions within your organization in order to bring more appropriate management styles to bear on the different aspects of ministry?

### **4. Competing Forms of Naïveté**

Key Issues:

- 1) Inappropriate relationships are imposed on proclamation, on relief operations, and on development assistance by imagery from formal education.
- 2) Inappropriate procedures from the Western world’s adult education dictate a “needs assessment” procedure.
- 3) Tensions arise over the discrepancies of image and metaphor among those who engage in mission’s various activities.
- 4) Educational differences among the three sets of people account for misunderstanding of the role and viewpoints of the others.

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) The dissonances among sectors of mission activity may be less a matter of smart people and dumb people than that our bright spots don’t match. Where does specialized knowledge tend to isolate people?
- 2) What should “regular missionaries” know about relief activity? about development assistance? How much do specialists in these latter areas need to know about missions in general?

- 3) Given the popularity of the holism proposition, why isn't it more thoroughly evident in the orientations of people going overseas?
- 4) The compulsion to know the "needs" of another person before planning a way to relate to that person can be seen as just another form of control. Is this a valid concern?

Practical Implications:

- 1) In what ways do your overseas personnel relate to nationals as if they were in a teacher-student relationship? What steps could you use to change this orientation?
- 2) What expertise could be better tapped within your personnel and their national-person counterparts so that a more clearly peer relationship could be established while people are helping each other?
- 3) What do your people know about conscientization? Who could help them learn more about what it means and how to bring it about—for themselves and for others?

## 5. Delivery Systems: Differing Ways to Play Change Agent

Key Issues:

- 1) The medium is the message; what message is implied by the intervention of "outsiders?" "The medium is the message," –but there are three crucial media—insiders, outsiders and culture.
- 2) Who sets the agenda for change?
- 3) When is manipulation valid?
- 4) What roles can outsiders play in proclamation? in relief operations? in development assistance?

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) Is the "real needs" versus "felt needs" dichotomy valid?
- 2) How much "cultural damage" is tolerable? Is the answer the same regardless of the sector of ministry, i.e., proclamation, relief, development?
- 3) Is the task of the church to lead social change? to follow? to operate on a different agenda?

Practical Implications:

- 1) The Christ-and-culture perspective of your personnel in the field will determine their posture as change agents. In what ways do their perspectives vary from each other? from the national Christians with whom they work?
- 2) It may be a wrong mind-set to see oneself as a change agent, especially in the earlier use of the term. What do you think?
- 3) What examples of the change agent's activity and outlook can we infer from Jesus? from Paul?

## 6. Uses of Local Middlemen: Contractors, Subjects, and Servants

Key Issues:

- 1) Local people are always "used" by outsiders. In what ways?
- 2) Local contractors are often not Christians. When is this criterion important and when is it not?
- 3) Being a servant of Christ often obliges people to be servants of "outsiders." Is this ever valid?

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) When should nationals be participants in planning?
- 2) What is the proper role for national persons on evaluation teams?
- 3) What encourages national persons to be more assertive? (Should we?)

Practical Implications:

- 1) Does your organization “borrow” (or steal) leaders from the national churches?
- 2) Who agrees with your answer to #1?
- 3) What do you do about the double standard of salaries? Why?

## **7. Images of Success: Agreement That Life is Important is the Common Ground but What is Life?**

Key Issues:

- 1) Technology and bureaucracy push in essentially inhumane directions.
- 2) Access to funds drives the machine of relief.
- 3) *Delivering* is often confused with *helping* in the measurement of effects.
- 4) Development assistance has few immediately measurable outcomes.

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) How can accountability and freedom to develop be reconciled?
- 2) What evaluative procedures are consistent with the essence of development?
- 3) At what point should the success of a relief activity be assessed?
- 4) What sort of lifestyle is to be sought through development? (i.e., what are the criteria for development outcomes?)
- 5) Is *reciprocity* a realistic criterion for mission activity?

Practical Implications:

- 1) In your experience, what excessive or over-invested emphases have become more a liability than an asset?
- 2) What could be done to make evaluation more a tool than a master?

## **8. What Needs to be Done Depends on Where You Sit**

Key Issues:

- 1) What relationships should exist among the proclamation, relief, and development functions of the mission of the church?
- 2) What is the future of the special-purpose organization in mission?
- 3) What personnel will be more needed and less needed in mission deployments in the years ahead?
- 4) In what ways will the national church take different roles and responsibilities in the years ahead? What implications does this have for mission planning?

Focus for Discussion:

- 1) What are the most significant encouragements that you have gained through this week of study?
- 2) What are the most important challenges that you have encountered through the discussions this week?
- 3) How do you stand on the issue of development and relief as a frustration of inevitable revolution?

Practical Implications:

- 1) What do you intend to share with your colleagues in your organization? How do you intend to do it?
- 2) What actions, if any are merited, do you intend to take in reference to your own area of responsibility in your organization?
- 3) What agenda of reading have you identified for yourself?