



Transcriptions

Involvement or Interference? How to Relate to a Needy World Ted Ward

Annotation: *Convocation Address, Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, April 28, 1978.* Ted Ward describes how Americans, in particular, can be of help in the world without undue interference in local contexts.



When we talk about involvement or interference we are talking about this matter of, how do we help? I'm not going to start, this morning, with some recital of statistics dealing with the reality of a needy world. I suspect the people here at Bethel College are well aware, perhaps in ways that many of the college students of the United States are not sensitive and are not aware, that indeed we do live in a needy world. I suspect that I could chill you with statistics unless you'd heard them before. You've probably heard, for example, that it is a fact that for every minute that we're standing here talking somewhere in the world 8 people are dying of starvation, and before 24 hours rolls around 12,000 more people will have departed this life in hunger.

Physical deprivation, emotional trauma, and isolation, spiritual blindness; these are the realities of the times. But I have great respect for the Mennonite contributions to relief and development in the world, and I have a particular respect for the Mennonite style of doing so. I've come to discover it to be a style of caring and sharing and loving and I have no intention, this morning, of treating you as people who are anything less than concerned and anything less than willing to be responsive. I don't intend to preach at you. I would just simply like to share with you some observations about what makes the difference in terms of effective and ineffective responses

to needs in the world. I think sometimes as Americans we feel somewhat helpless because the problems are so large and we are so small and we seem even to be, within our own society, a relatively small proportion of that society—relatively ineffective when it comes to affecting large-scale policy. I think there's a kind of a defeatism that sets in readily. And as individuals and as single persons, it's easy for us to say there's hardly anything that I can do that will make much difference. And I submit in the large picture that's probably true; therefore, I don't know that there's anything I can encourage you to do or any particular actions that you can take. I don't know that, for example, any greater attention than you already give to the matter of watching your lifestyle will make any great difference in the short term. It may make a difference to the long term, however, and it's some of that that I want to talk with you today about.

You are already aware that America is not only part of the solution for the problems of the world but, more important, America is a part of the problems of the world. And it is somewhat hypocritical for us to become preoccupied with the solutions for the problems of the world if we're not, at least, willing to be reminded of our role in creating those problems. No doubt about it, as we drive up consumption, as we raise the standards of living and set a kind of world pattern for acquisition, we do put a pressure on world resources; and we do affect others, who are emulating us and our styles, to do the same.

Now a new factor, just within the last several months—this whole complex is now working to yet a new dimension of the world problem that clearly is our own responsibility and fault—and that has to do with the instability of the world monetary situation. As our money becomes less and less stable, the world's money becomes more and more unstable and the probability of economic collapse in many countries becomes a high probability.

Within the American community, our lifestyle is already altering. It doesn't need to be preached about. It is already happening. Our cars are getting shorter and lighter weight and the speedometers don't read as high and, in fact, the gasoline is becoming expensive and money is getting a little harder to get hold of. This is going to have some very important effects and I suspect, within five years, that we will see some things happen within the Christian and the secular society of this nation that, at this point, might sound a little harsh; but I think we will adapt to them and accept them because they will be part of the reality we live with. We are involved in the world scene. There's no doubt about it. We are, in effect, as victimized by the conditions as anyone else in the world. Our victimization, our senses of loss, our sense of degrading of our own lifestyles and standards of living are perhaps less sharp, less crucial; but the fact remains that we have, not only the potential to help, but we have the potential to help wisely.

I'd like to pose for you the central issue, then, that good intentions to be of assistance, to be part of the helping community in the world—good intentions aren't enough. Sincerity is no substitute for effectiveness. It's one thing to want to do well, it's another thing to actually do well. It's one thing to want to help someone; it's quite a different thing to actually help someone. One of the problems is, of course, that sometimes those things we do out of a sense of kindness and a sense of concern seem to be like any gift not properly a matter of evaluation. When one gives, one should not be evaluated for having given. And I submit that this particular humane cultural notion is something that we have to wrestle with. It is important that we evaluate acts of kindness.

Illustration: You've all heard that Boy Scouts tend to help little old ladies across street corners, but perhaps you've seen the cartoon of the Boy Scout doing his good deed for the day to a little old lady who didn't want to cross the street. There are many times that humane acts that are out of tune with the needs of people may be, indeed, humane acts out of context and, thus, hindrances.

The issue then is how do we assure that we go beyond good intentions and stand responsible for the consequences of having tried to help? I'd like to deal with five problems in reference to this issue. We'll deal with them one at a time specifically and I hope that you will think about these as they relate to the things that you read about, hear about, and perhaps have participated in, in reference to international development, international aid. But more particularly may I suggest that, since the crux of our effectiveness in the larger picture depends on our effectiveness at an interpersonal level right here and now in life, that each of these problems has, at least, some application to the life that you're living right here at Bethel College.

The first problem in reference to this very crucial issue of helping or hindering is that response to needs, itself, is not a reliable basis for helping people. Now that may seem a bit controversial and perhaps even seem confusing until you think about it; but I think that with a few illustrations I'll make it become real to you. Response to needs is not a reliable basis for helping people. In the first place, needs tend to look very different to insiders from the way they look to outsiders. Outsiders are rarely able to plan or to implement effective development. In the field of international development and foreign assistance this has been learned the hard way. Outsiders do not make good planners. The best that an outsider can do is to develop planning competencies among the insiders. This is a role that I have played. It was mentioned in the introduction that I've worked in quite a number of countries which sounds very trite, especially when you realize that you couldn't possibly have been very long with very great depth in any of those, and I will confess to that readily. But I operate within a model that is somewhat different. It's a model of assistance in terms of short term and brief exposure so as to avoid the creating of a dependency on the outside resource, and I deliberately get out fast—which model I suspect is one of the things that, in the future, missions may have to look closer at—the potential that we can help in brief form to the enhancement of local leadership competencies and then move ourselves out of the situation before we've created dependency.

The second aspect of this problem is that quite often needs, however they are defined, tend to be statements of symptoms rather than statements of causes. Most of you are well aware of the phenomenon of beggars. And you're probably aware that in many parts of the world when you encounter a beggar, a person who is a citizen of that country or a person who is a conscious, cognizant, development person or has some understanding of the development process will caution you not to give to a beggar because it tends to perpetuate that kind of inhumane relationship between donor and receptor. But what we don't understand sometimes is that the condition of poverty, itself, is usually a symptom of a deeper cause. And when we begin to relate in terms of illness by providing medicine, in terms of poverty by providing physical resources or funds, in terms of other needs, as we respond in terms of meeting that need as if it were symptom, we are not dealing with the problem in any basic way. It requires careful analysis to determine what sorts of causes exist that result in bad health, in malnutrition, in poverty, in general. And when we respond to needs, our tendency is to respond too quickly and to respond, ultimately, to the symptom rather than to the cause.

The third aspect of this problem is that many people don't conceptualize their situation in terms of needs anyway. I had a startling experience on one occasion in Indonesia when I'd been sitting with the village chief and the city council, as it were, for a long period of planning—we'd been together perhaps two hours that evening—and we were in a succession of evenings of just talking through what that village was like, what these people were like, what they what they aspired to, where they were going, where they had come from in terms of their own traditional history, trying to understand that community a bit better. And one of the people in our party was a technologist who persists always, in any situation, to ask the question, what do you need? What are your needs? As if people were able to respond somehow knowledgeably to, "Well, our needs are these: one, two, three, four, five." And he had been badgering this poor chief all evening over this matter, "But tell us, what are your needs?" And, of course, the truth is that many people don't like to admit having needs. And that is true, not only of Americans, but it's also true of people that are, you might say, in somewhat more primitive conditions. They don't like to be pushed to having to lose that face over the issue of needs. Finally, the chief had heard enough of this and he just decided he would answer. So he said, "Now just a minute. I will try to think for you of some of the needs of which I'm aware in our community." And we waited and we waited and we assumed that he was organizing some kind of a magnificent response, maybe philosophically deep. And finally he held up one foot—he'd been sitting on the ground cross-legged—and he held up one foot and held it in his arm and said, "See this shoe?" He says, "We don't have a shoe repairman in this village." The irony of that was that he was the only man that we'd seen in that village wearing a shoe; everyone else wore sandals or nothing. And he wasn't trying to be cute. He just didn't see his village in terms of needs. He saw it in terms of people who were doing things. And when we approach problems from a needs orientation, we quite often find ourselves in a very unreliable posture.

The second big problem is that whatever is given may not fit. Perhaps you've heard some of the horror stories that are told about famine relief. Various kinds of emergency relief tend to produce in us a kind of an instantaneous compassionate giving mentality and we send all kinds of things whether or not they are relevant. Now I'm not going to perpetuate the apocryphal story about the persons who send used teabags to missionaries, nor am I going to refer to the many times that wool overcoats are sent to Zaire. But it is a fact that sometimes, even in highly sophisticated relief programs, we do some very strange and quaint things not altogether realizing that there are some problems of "fit" between whatever is given and the nature of the problem. One of the things that Americans, for example, cannot seem to get through their heads, with reference to the Third World, is that distribution systems rarely work backwards. Even in our own country, they don't work backwards. The distribution systems tend to work in one direction. And if you have a distribution system that is in the habit of bringing raw food stuffs from the rural to the urban and going back—if you please, the trucks going back empty—it's very difficult for people to understand that if you brought food in and put it on the docks, the same trucks couldn't be turned around and work backwards to take food back out to the rural countryside. But the fact is that it doesn't work because distribution systems are quite often bound up in their own tradition and in their own way of doing things that quite often does not function. So you hear horror stories about either the great loads of grain rotting on the docks or the tremendous amount of corruption as these trucks are loaded and then disappear. Well, in many parts of the world, the way a truck driver works is he gets paid at the end of the trip. And if you simply turn that around and pay him at the head end of the trip in order to take the load to the countryside, he has no particular reason not to take that truck and unload it at the first possible point which may be just down the street from the dock. Now this is not necessarily because people are *per se* eager to hurt their own, so much as it is a question of unredeemed human

nature and it's tendency to take the easiest cheapest way out of any situation. Which is exactly what we do quite often in sending that massive amount of relief in the first place because we send, for example, wheat to a region that has no comprehension of the use of wheat in any practical form except as paste. And we send what amounts to, into a rice district, the raw materials for massive amounts of paste, enough to paste every citizen in the country to the wall. And then we wonder why it rots on the docks. In our own country, we don't eat raw wheat, we process it. We have mills; we have elaborate distribution for that product. And you can't run systems backward, even in time of emergency. And we don't understand that there must be a "fit" between a help given and a meaningful assistance received. In the recent earthquakes in the world, we've heard more of the typical sorts of stories. We've heard Guatemalan stories about new villages being built with all metal roofs so that from now on they don't cave in and kill people. Well, there aren't an awful lot of Guatemalans who can survive under a tin roof. They tend not to be very functional in the in the tropical sun. But after we have some more baked Guatemalans, maybe we'll discover this.

One of the classical stories that I remember so well: a friend of mine who was, at this point, AID Director [US Agency for International Development] in one of the Andean Republics—which will go nameless because the tape is rolling—he had a larger budget, as the AID chief, than the national budget of this particular country which helps to tip you off which country. He had a very good friendship with the police chief. And during this period in the '60s, it was clear that the police were under a great deal of duress from the Leftists who periodically had riots in the streets. And the police had these shields to ward off the stones. And the streets were all cobblestone in the capital city and the people would tear up the streets and throw them at the police. And the AID chief had been working for months to try to figure something big and meaningful that he could suggest to this country that would make some sense in terms of a help. So he took the police chief to lunch one day and he said, "I want to make a suggestion. You know, I've noticed in these riots that the people tear up the streets and throw them at the police. What I would like to suggest is that we bring in and build a huge asphalt plant and pave all the streets of this capital city with asphalt," which was a very reasonable kind of a task; would have been nothing for an AID project. The chief of police jumped up, fists in the air, yelling, "Assassin! Assassin!" And finally the AID chief calmed him down enough that he could talk rationally. He says, "I didn't mean anything offensive. What did I say? What did I do?" He says, "Don't you understand?" He says, "The fact that they have stones to throw gives them an opportunity to feel that they're doing something. If they don't have the stones to throw; if you cover them with asphalt, they will get guns." That was a real event.

The third problem is that whatever is given in the process of helping can, and often does, create secondary problems. One of the classical secondary problems of development is urban poverty. And there's a very curious relationship that is now understood fairly well between the mechanization of agriculture and the deepening of urban poverty. Because as agriculture is mechanized in rural countryside of many of the developing nations, as machines are brought in, people are put out of work. No longer is there a legitimate claim on the community rice basket. If a man and his wife and his children are pushed off the rice paddy by the mechanization, if they are pushed out of their family rice mill by the establishment of a big new mechanized community rice mill, they lose their right to the community rice basket and they become immediately relief cases. And in much of the world there is no organized relief, so the only thing for them to do is to move to the city where, because they have no particular skills that make any sense in the city, they simply join the ranks of the massive unemployed in the urban centers. I don't know that Americans can really comprehend this until they realize that a huge city like Jakarta, Indonesia—which is like one of

your top ten American cities in size—has now established a police cordon around it and a barricade and police guards at all the street and road crossings in and out of the town in order to check and make sure that anybody coming in to that city has a work card, has a promise of a job, because there are already more unemployed in the city than they can possibly tolerate. And this is forcing people now to build new ancillary communities just outside the police cordons full of people who are begging and starving, and this in a country that is referred to as “developing rapidly.”

Health improvement is another example of a giving that produces secondary problems. There is a kind of a sad relationship between health improvement which tends toward reduced mortality, which then tends toward malnutrition, which then tends toward health problems. It's a vicious cycle. You go from solving a health problem, to reducing mortality, to putting more strain on the food supply which produces health problems. Round and round it goes.

The fourth of the problems that I will identify with you is that real problems, that are underlying cause problems in the Third World, are quite often untouchable except through political and social reform which usually means bloody revolution. Especially in reference to bi-national aid such as our own government's AID program and even, to some extent, in the World Bank activities and other forms of aid, the contracts that are drawn up are government-to-government which means that, in many instances, we must play the projects of aid and assistance through the management of governments, many of which are, by any standards, self-seeking, elitist, and corrupt. This is a very serious problem because there are many things that you would like to get at that you cannot get at. For example, elitism itself is a root cause of much of the world's ill. Elitism is almost untouchable. Inequitable access to resources, particularly in terms of inequitable land use and land ownership, is almost an untouchable. And issues of justice themselves, especially as it relates to totalitarian governments, is almost an untouchable. And until these sorts of problems can be dealt with, everything else we do—in terms of beneficent aid—seems to be futile.

The fifth problem is that receiving, itself, (receiving in the sense of a person at the opposite end from the donor, the giver, the receiver) the receiving act, itself, can lead to dependency and loss of dignity. Most of us, as young people, certainly were aware or are aware that there is a kind of a resentment of parental and paternal postures; that we learn to fight back against and find ourselves and begin to build a kind of selfhood and identity through that process of resenting and pushing back these parental or paternal kinds of giving that we've been experiencing all through childhood. Are you aware that many adults in the world have never come free of that because their lives depend on being treated continually as a child and being continually handed out to and receiving as a powerless person? This tends to produce a loss of dignity or, to put it more practically, some lives emerge never having any sense of dignity.

It produces also a perpetuation of colonial mentality. The fact that the world is no longer dominated by colonial powers has very little to do with the fact that many people in the world are still within a colonial mentality: a colonial way of looking upward at systems that are patronizing them; that are providing from above, that are controlling from above. In many parts of the world that were formerly colonial—the British colonies, the French colonies, the Dutch colonies—the fact of subjugation is still real. Many people have not even any great sense of liberation, of having been pulled out from under a colonial authority, because countrymen of their own—particularly those who have rich outside nation friends—have simply replaced the repressiveness of the colonial power.

Thus, we have much of the world caught up in a kind of offense of man-to-man which is a kind of internal colonialism with most of the ills of the old colonialism still present.

What is development? Is it an economic issue? If we take such indicators as Gross National Product, it forces us to overlook the reality such as in Brazil where the Gross National Product is coming up beautifully. But if you look closely at what's happening in Brazil, industry is expanding. It seems that there are more jobs, and especially in the urban centers you see all kinds of hustle and bustle. But if you look in the really tough agriculture regions of Brazil and in many of the small towns of Brazil and you watch this over a period of time, what you see is that the rich are getting much richer, a middle class is developing, and the poor are getting much poorer, and the poor are still 80% of the people. That's the fact of life in economic development.

Is it technology transfer? Is it simply taking tools and skills and machines so that other people can build for themselves? That's what the national corporations would tell us. But if you look closely at what it is that is transferred in this technology transfer, you can't help but feel that some of it is very inappropriate technology. One of the saddest truths is that many of the people of the world are now coming into cash economy out of a barter economy simply so that they can buy Coca Cola.

Is development mechanization? Is it moving into a kind of machine age? If you take a look at a country again such as several in Southeast Asia and several in Africa where particularly automobiles and trucks, motorcycles, and the like, are forcing tremendous amounts of national investment in the resources necessary to provide roads and the like, you have to wonder if this really has an awful lot to do with the development of those nations.

Is development urbanization? Indeed, all you must do is to visit the outlying districts of almost any city in the world to discover that in those suburbs in the Third World is where you find poverty at its most extreme. Never forget that your city in the Third World is invert from the city in North America. Our hardcore center is our poverty center. Right? It's the opposite in most of the world. The people who are on the margins of the community are also in marginal need.

Can we learn anything from the history of aid about this process? I think we can learn, for example, that aid itself tends to go through a cycle or a series of steps beginning with the notion of relief in which people respond to symptoms and give in terms of relieving symptoms. And I think that it is a perfectly appropriate response for a Christian to be tuned to relief. I'm not against it. I'm just afraid that if we stop there or if we don't build on relief or design relief in such a way that it can be built upon, that it is a short-term solution and has no long-term value.

Rehabilitation is what generally follows relief. And I would like to suggest that we define rehabilitation in terms of relating to those ways in which a person's own capacity to deal with his own basic causes of need can be stimulated. In other words, as we relate to people in need in rehabilitation work, we don't do the rehabilitating for them. We help them find the resources and find the wherewithal and find the frame of reference and emotional strength to deal with their own problems. But even this is not development. Development, to me, goes beyond rehabilitation. And it is concerned with the freeing up of the internal competencies, that process that sometimes is biblically called "redemption" where we buy back from the power of sin—even as God buys man back from the power of sin—so that man can become, not as if some kind of a puppet of God, but can become autonomously functioning in a collective society of human beings; the body of

Christ, the church, able to function and stand as persons and stand with integrity. This, to me, is development.

There is a natural progression, as we see in the history both of modern missions and also in the history of the foreign aid movements since World War II. Each of these is almost parallel to the other. Both began with the notion of helping. They moved then from the helping posture to a training posture and then to a reciprocity posture.

Now let me go back over these. Helping seems to be a reasonable way to think about working across culturally and working in missions and working in aid. But the problem is that when we help, in the sense of helping by giving, we inevitably create dependency. It's a little bit like the person who begins to feed the birds at the first snowfall. If he doesn't keep that feeding up through the winter as the snow cover stays on, you're going to have some dead birds on your hands because the birds have broken their migrating pattern in order to stay for that handout. And there's something about this act of giving that produces a very vicious outcome of dependency, and we have to watch it very carefully.

The second function is the training function where, through training, we improve upon this notion of giving, helping by giving. But training tends to produce hierarchy and hierarchy, itself, is the soul of elitism. Training can produce a tendency of people to look for other people to train. It's as if here's your foreign expert training this level of people who must then turn around and find somebody that they can train so that they will turn around and find somebody that they can train, and you ultimately create what amounts to a kind of a technocratic hierarchy of knowledge; not altogether different from what we do in formal higher education.

The third element, which I believe is just dawning on us in international aid and just dawning on us in missions at about the same time, is that the third mode option is reciprocity, itself: the building of a relationship of two-way flow of supports, assistances, helps, companionship which leads then to a relatedness which has about it an emancipatory quality. This allows me then to come back to my proposition that development is best defined as humane relationships among people. And whatever we do that facilitates humane relationships among people, allows people to take their place within a society as a humane autonomous person within interdependencies of that society, such facilitation is development at its best.

So, then, how can we help? Perhaps there's a prior question: should we help? Christians, I believe, have a different answer for this from the people in the secular society. Behaviorists, of course, would put us down, too, and tell us that everybody who does anything generous or kind is ultimately doing it in a kind of remote self-interest. No matter how you define it, it ultimately comes back to whatever good I will get out of it. I reject that. I reject that like I reject most of behaviorism. I think that it is a failure to come to grips with the reality of the human soul. We can be accused of trying to gain friendship—to make points for Jesus. We can be accused of trying to sharpen our skills at the expense of letting other people be the ground in which we sharpen them. And, of course, the United States is always accused of expanding markets through whatever it does, whether it's missions or foreign aid or foreign military. All of that notwithstanding, I believe that there is, in the international world community for the Christian today, an inescapable reality: World community is not a choice. It is not a decision. It is upon us. The interdependency of the world is clear and has gone past the point of any return. Christians then today have, as never before in the history of

mankind, a sense of consciousness of their being world citizens. It is one thing to be a pilgrim, to be a sojourner, to be a person wandering through a nation; but it's quite a different thing to realize that the nature of that sojourning puts one into a strong identification with other sojourners in other nations and, therefore, we are part of a world citizenship. We need to be about our Father's business just as clearly as Jesus was about his Father's business as a young person in Jerusalem. When people seem to say, "Why are you doing that? Why did you spend so much time in Jerusalem? Where were you?" He answered, "I was about my Father's business," and that is, as I see it, the major answer that Christians should develop with reference to, why are you so concerned about international development and being in other people's countries?

Redemption is what it's all about. The people of God are godly insofar as they respond in compassionate love to the conditions of the family of man. Our Lord said that the greatest commandment was that we love the Lord our God with all our hearts. But he quickly added, "The second is like to it," and he gave a second—which was not a commandment in the Decalogue sense, the Ten Commandment sense—it was a principle equal to, and the other aspect of that first principle of man in relationship to God, man in relationship to man. Inseparable.

The relatedness of reciprocity is the state of humanity that is the most God glorifying. It glorifies God less than that we are giving and receiving inside a fellowship of the redeemed. Let's face it. What we call missions or church-to-church sending and sharing began in Acts 11 with an act of a church (Jerusalem) sending to another church (Antioch) not a street corner evangelist, but an encourager whose name was Barnabas, who then apparently was invited by that church to stay and provide a help—two years of teaching. And then was sent on his way by that church, in the company of one Saul of Tarsus, to carry funds back to that sending church in Judea where, by that time, a poverty had arisen. In other words, those first sending acts of the new church were reciprocity acts. One of the reasons that missions is sour in the world today is because of the vast difference between the have and the have not nations. And we tend to be the givers and we don't see any particular value in receiving. I think we need to learn, to listen much more, and respond much more to our foreign brethren who come and share with us something of the reality of lifestyle in the Third World in order to prepare us to be competent to deal with lifestyle changes in our own nation which are going to be upon us very rapidly. If you want to learn something about living in simpler lifestyle, deal with one of your foreign students who is a familiar person with the Christian community in another country.

In closing, I would share with you some very positive and, I believe, complementary observations from the field. In the first place, young people, in my experience as a person in development I have a profound respect for younger and short-term people in the development field. This began with my awareness that many of the people in the Peace Corps had some integrity about them and some quality to them that was not present in some of the hard-bitten old-timers. I believe that if a person knows just enough to realize how little he knows, he is just right to move into cross-cultural work. And if he's over-educated before he gets into cross-cultural work, he probably will come arriving as a defensive person feeling that somehow he's got to demonstrate and prove that he knows what the answers are. If you feel any tug on your heart for service of a humane sort in the Third World, may I urge you to find ways to respond to it while you're still young enough to be honest about what you don't know. And then when you get there, don't put on an act.

The second observation from the field is that the style of a person's family and church and school background shows through loud and clear, especially in terms of the urge to dominate and to be dominated. A young person who has come into international development work from a background where he has not been dominated in his educational experience, in his home experience, in his church experience but he has been treated humanely as a responsible human being and has not been constantly badgered about by those trying to push him this way and that, such a person does not feel quite so obligated to find foreign nationals to push about this way and that. We tend to treat others the way we were treated ourselves. And I believe it is a very serious problem within formal education, that we take very conscientiously the way we relate to one another in our educational environment recognizing that the way we relate in this environment—fellow-to-fellow, teacher-to student, student-to-teacher—is the way we will seek out relationships to relate to other people in other facets of life, and that can do us in when we get into Third World contacts. Or it can be our great source of strengths, and I would suspect that in many of your homes, and family, church situations, and in your school situation that that is quite a possibility. I hope so.

Third, those from previous experiences wherein the style of life is reciprocal, give and take, and sharing love seem far less often to do the hindering harmful acts in the world. It is not a matter of technological know-how. It is not a matter of skills in reciprocity. It is a matter of lifestyle of reciprocity.

Now I'm here to suggest to you today only one thing and that is that lifestyle issues, as it relates to North America and the Third World, are the lifestyle issues of Christian community: involvement with one another in sharing, in respect, in compassion, and concern. And if you want to prepare yourself for the future that is inevitably upon us, there's no better time to start than today and there are no finer people to start it with than those that are sitting right to your left and to your right and in front and in back of you right here. And that lifestyle issue is, as I believe it, far more important than any question of energy consumption because those other issues of energy consumption, food, all the rest, follow from an orientation of compassionate sharing concern. Americans are increasingly becoming individualistic to the point where people are typically saying, "I don't care about anybody but me."

The Christian community should be a startling contrast. Our concerns should be, yes, to find our identity, to feel autonomous, to have a sense of integrity within ourselves so that we can be ourselves; but do you know that it is a beautiful value within all of that to say, "And part of the person that is me, that I want to be, is a person that is sensitive and concerned about other people. That's the 'me' that God is trying to make over as he is redeeming me in my spirit." We should be controlled by one principle; the principle that Jesus referred to when he said in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give you: that you love one another, that you live one another even as I loved you." A love to the sacrifice of life itself, that you also love one another.

Thank you.