

A WORLD VISION JOURNAL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Second Quarter, 2001

Global Future

Putting faith into action

George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury

A moral imperative

Rt. Hon. Clare Short

Faith in development

Values in development

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COVER PHOTO BY RANDY MILLER: ROMANIAN ORTHODOX VARATIC MONASTERY CHAPEL, IN VALEA SEACA, NORTHWEST ROMANIA

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Do we have faith in development?

'**HISTORICALLY**', claims The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr. George L. Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his article for this issue of *Global Future*, 'people of faith have been able to effect positive social change.' We have such people to thank, he says, for advances in education, and for the enactment of child labour laws. They are changing society for the better today, and will continue to do so in years to come.

The question on many people's minds, and one which this edition of our magazine attempts to address, is how people's values, faith and spirituality might be intertwined with such efforts to improve society. Some would argue that, like church and state, the two should remain separate. Development is most effective, and less likely to taint the purity of the culture it hopes to assist, when values and spirituality are kept out of the mix. Others argue, however, that it is impossible to divorce the two, and that we are better off acknowledging their presence in our development work, and attempt to understand how the two affect each other. And, they would add, to understand how values can, in fact, improve the quality of work being carried out.

'The role of the spiritual piece in the puzzle...is not warm and fuzzy,' says Dr. Minas Hiruy, of Ethiopia, in his article, 'rather, it is hard-edged and challenging, addressing individuals and their own world-views and values.... Much as development has a spiritual dimension, we certainly need to work on the spiritual poverty that is engulfing society.'

We all bring our baggage into whatever work we do, says author Kurt Bangart. We hope this issue will help further the discussion of what's in those bags, for better or worse. ■

— Randy Miller

Putting faith into action for the world's children

The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr. George L. Carey

THERE WAS A CHURCH just outside the gate of a busy factory. The vicar began to notice that every day ambulances would arrive and take injured people to hospital. The vicar asked to see the factory owner, and he suggested that instead of going a long way to hospital, it would be better perhaps to treat the injured people in the church hall. He said his people would be glad to help. The owner was delighted with the offer of help. Everyone was pleased with the arrangement; the owner was glad to get medical help for his workers, and the church felt that they were making an important Christian contribution.

One day, as church helpers reflected on the progress they were making, one said quietly: 'But, what is going on in the factory that causes such injuries? Perhaps we might be able to make such a difference that there will be less need for us to offer our services in quite that way.' The vicar, impressed with that argument, asked to see the owner and suggested that perhaps he and a few others might visit the factory to see what is causing such terrible injuries. The owner agreed, and the visit resulted in permanent changes to machinery, practice, training and education.

Charity and development

This story, told by Archbishop David Gitary, is, of course, about the balance between charity and development, about tracing the results of problems to their causes. It is about the need to resist the temptation to address problems in terms of aid alone. This is not to belittle the importance of aid in an emergency. Aid has its place. But unless we address the need for ongoing development, we shall be marking time for the next emergency to hit the world.



ANGELICAN WORLD/JIM ROSETHAL

Archbishop George Carey blesses children during a Eucharist service at the Primates Meeting in Oporto, Portugal, March 2000.

I salute the commitment of Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development in the UK, who has championed the halving of world poverty by the year 2015. If everyone were to pull together, it is still just possible. The consequences

Unless we address the need for ongoing development, we shall be marking time until the next emergency.

would be tremendous for many children. But achieving such a goal requires that our moral commitment to release nations from debt be met by their moral commitment to act nobly and generously for the sake of the very poor.

For morality is always a two-way street. It goes without saying that poor countries must have governments that put the people first and that are accountable to them. There must be trustworthiness in political and social life. Corruption is an enemy of the poor and compromises those many good people in poor societies who are struggling to change the way things are in their countries. Responsible governments will want their actions and their financial implications known. The sad litany of corrupt regimes in Africa during the last fifty years has left nations financially exhausted and people ruined. We have to capture the passion and the sense of outrage that such things should not happen in a world where the rich have so much and the poor have so little.

The challenge is also political. By this I mean that specific things can and should be done now to bring about change.

Strong tradition

Historically, people of faith have been able to effect positive social change. There is a strong tradition of Christians, for example, taking actions that have brought tremendous long-term benefits to many. Think of Shaftesbury and the outstanding work he and others did in bringing in the Factory Acts against child labour. Or Robert Raikes, pioneer of the Sunday school movement, which laid the foundations for so much of the educational system not only in England, but around the world. People of faith have changed society in the past, they are changing it at present, and we must change it in the future. How can we do this, especially with regard to fostering transformational development that improves the lives of children?

First, we must find ways of championing the many millions of children abducted and drafted into armed conflict as soldiers. We are of course delighted that the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution in August 1999 recognising the impact of armed conflict on children. We



ANGELICAN WORLD/JIM ROBERTHAL

must move forward with a clear resolve to provide effective legislation that will protect vulnerable youngsters. However, we are not so innocent as to believe that legislation will be the total answer. Unpleasant and desperate regimes will hardly respect international law, but legislation will be a start, and if it is backed by vigorous campaigning and appropriate sanctions, we stand a greater chance of helping those in greatest need.

Extreme measures

Second, we must champion the children forced into work. That there are 250 million child labourers, the vast majority under the age of 12, is a horrifying statistic. Most of them live and work in Asia. But in campaigning for them we must, of course, be aware that depriving them of employment does not provide the solution. People who have nothing are often forced to extreme measures. It goes without saying that the same tenderness and love that lead us to protect our children motivates very poor families. They have no wish to see their daughters forced into prostitution or their sons begging in the streets, or working long hours to earn a few pence to make carpets. Campaigns aimed at

ending exploitative child labour have to go hand-in-glove with campaigns for a living wage.

Third, we must find ways of providing education for the very poor. We can rejoice that there are more children in education in the developing world than ever before. As UN

The spiritual, moral and political challenges are imperatives for those of us who live comfortable and privileged lives.

Secretary General Kofi Annan has said, 'Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.' There is overwhelming evidence that education is the major way out of the poverty trap. The World Bank report for 1999 stated that education 'raises economic productivity, reduces maternal and infant mortality, reduces fertility rates, improves health and the educational prospects of the next generation.' Within the general aim of improving the quality and availability of education, there is strong evidence that to

improve the lot of girls would have a huge knock-on effect. It can not only change their lives but also the lives of their own children when they become mothers.

The spiritual, moral and political challenges are therefore imperatives for those of us who live comfortable and privileged lives.

Vivid memories

The many visits I have made to the developing world provide me with vivid memories of the very poor. I recall one such visit to Rwanda, a short while after the genocide of 1994. One of our bishops, Alexis, a Tutsi, who was fortunate to escape with his life, started his own adoption network, and within a few months, was caring for 1800 children. We met several adults who, because of huge need, were parents for up to 20 children. We met Innocent, a girl of 18, who was raped and left for dead, but survived. She gave birth to a child and now cares for 15 others. We met Clement, a lad of 17 who lost his entire family. He volunteered to care for others and has 10 in his charge. And we met Thaciene, a woman of about 70 whose entire family was killed, who now has a ready-made family of 17. I found incredible joy and love in these homes. The people have so little, but after the terrifying ordeal they have passed through, they have security at last and the hope of a better future. It is a hope that we are called to keep alive. That is the challenge: spiritual, moral and political. Let us rise to meet it! ■

Dr. George Leonard Carey is the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, enthroned on 19 April 1991. He is the author of 10 books dealing with theological issues, including our understanding of Christ, ecumenism, relationships with the Roman Catholic Church, and the existence of God. He has also contributed articles and reviews to many journals and periodicals.

Development: a moral imperative

Rt. Hon. Clare Short MP

FOR TOO LONG, international development has been the residual, after politics has played its hand. In political meetings, in writing, in the agenda of parliaments and most governments, hard politics is about trade and industry and taxation and social policy at home. Finally, after the real business is done, there is a residual that is overseas development, usually a relatively small aid budget to help the poor. This frequent marginalisation of development issues actually works against our own long-term interests in a stable and sustainable world. It also undermines development because, if the rules are skewed against the poorest countries, small handouts will not put things right.

The lack of commitment to development amongst the 'chattering classes' reflects a deeper and corrosive cynicism. Yes, all people have imperfections and, in the same way, all governments have their faults. However, through democracy, principles and idealism, they also can do much good. Some things can only be done through government at home and in other countries, and in the international system. Those who corrode belief that anyone of any principle or decency is in politics are corroding the prospects of genuinely changing the world for the better.

Anger at injustice

That cynicism can be seen in the media, but it can also be seen in the negativity of some protestors. Anger at injustice is a very important, radical force. But alone, anger cannot create. It denounces the injustice. But it is when people see that something finer and better is possible and demand that it is done that you get the possibility of transformation. Cynicism can feed anger, but it does not create that

greater vision, the all-important faith in development and its potential.

It was that ability to see a vision of social change and pursue it through social investment that transformed

Charity, of course, is a wonderful quality, but charity without a quest for justice is inadequate and incomplete.

the squalor of many European countries. My Parliamentary constituency is here in the centre of Birmingham, a city at the heart of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. A period of rapid economic change gave birth to both inequalities, the riches and the poverty, which stood side by side, and also new political movements. Today, we can learn many lessons from that time, about managing an era of history when new technologies are creating wealth on a global scale. Likewise,

with the Victorians, we can either make sure that those changes lift the poor out of poverty, or we can consign them to growing inequality.

Of course even the most socially minded of Victorian philanthropists tended to view the poor in Africa in an appallingly paternalistic or imperialistic way. The discrepancy in those values reminds us that when people say charity begins at home we must be clear that it should not end there. The countries of the developed world slowly learnt (to differing degrees) that to have a healthy society you needed to invest in social action and give people decent housing and banking systems. They also learnt that you must address the causes of poverty at their roots.

Beyond the charity box

Archbishop Oscar Romero, of San Salvador, once said: 'When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.' This call to us to open our eyes to causes is at the heart of the international discussion. In essence, we must lift the debate away from a focus on the charity box. Charity, of course is a wonderful quality, but charity without a quest for justice is inadequate and incomplete. To have real meaning, charity must be



SCOTT KELLEHER

'A comparison of most countries between their moment of independence and the present time shows that life expectancy, literacy and other key indicators have largely improved.'



DAVID DOBSON

'Today, there are 6 billion people on earth, and there will be 8 or 9 billion by 2020/2030.'

accompanied by a belief in politics, democracy, the role of the state, and the duty to provide equally for all.

In Britain, in the last century, it was Christian social activists: people like F.D. Maurice, Charles Gore, Charles Kingsley, and also movements heavily influenced by Christian teaching, such as the Chartists, who argued that the wealth being created should be used for the benefit of all. R.H. Tawney argued that society held wealth only in stewardship to make sure the resources of humanity were used to lift all. At the time, many of these Christian writers and activists were seen as dangerous radicals, misinterpreting what the Bible had to say in the New Testament.

Those Victorians were thinking about the future and considering the need to view society as a whole, mutually dependent body. Now is the time for the international community to view development in the same way. Yes, every country has commercial and political interests, and there's

nothing wrong with commercial and political interests. But development for the poorest of the world is a longer-term perspective that ultimately will benefit all of humanity. An example of what can be done can be seen in ODA levels.

If the UK were committing aid at the level of 0.7% of GNP (the UN target), this would represent £7 billion

Implementing a vision for social change does depend on having the governmental tools to make policies work.

(US\$10 billion), as compared with £100 billion (US\$143 billion) spent each year domestically on social security. Unfortunately, UK aid levels were cut drastically from 1979 to 1997 until our commitment was only 0.26% of GNP. Now the British government is trying to underline its faith in devel-

opment and its belief in the future by raising that investment substantially. Already, aid has climbed and will reach 0.33% by 2003/2004. New spending will be focused on poverty reduction, and on helping countries put in place the government systems that manage their own public services well, enabling those governments to improve life for their people.

Bureaucratic inertia

Just as social reformers in Europe turned the instruments of local and national government into tools of social change, so today we can see that instruments do exist for making pro-poor policies work. One of my biggest lessons learned from the last four years in government has been that bureaucracies are full of inertia, rather than necessarily resistance. In relation to debt relief, we knew reduction on its own might actually lead to new problems with both governance and debt. We also believed something positive could be done. The UK government felt new systems of governance and social policy should accompany debt relief to ensure that the poor would benefit. As a result, the UK encouraged the IMF and the World Bank to change their way of operation in these countries, a process that led to Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

Implementing a vision for social change, therefore, does depend on having the governmental tools to make policies work. An important lesson of the 20th century is that people need income, work, healthcare and education in order to develop and see their children flourish. This requires decent politics and decent government. We have seen through the 20th century that too much state results in oppression, lack of freedom and a grossly inefficient economy. With too much market, which we saw at its crudest in Latin America, you also get oppression and use of the military to oppress people.

For a while, the arguments of neo-liberalism, roll back the state, let

inequality grow, etc., did take over the world. The neo-liberals believed that out of greed would come greater wealth, and eventually a trickle-down effect. This vision of development was tested across the world. It led to unemployment, inequality and declining services. Neo-liberalism was also applied and tested across Africa and the developing world, and led to a sense of brutal change. It was a philosophy of development that led to the world's poorest people being charged for the most basic services, thereby denying them healthcare and education.

If we are to see our faith in development realised, we must not have too much state, and certainly not have markets left to themselves. Instead, there must be a proper and sensible balance, an effective and honest state that is democratic and respectful of its people and their pluralism and diversity. A state that uses the market, not allowing it to be abused or monopolistic, in order to help people fulfil their potential.

Some development campaigners talk as though market forces are always destructive, and will never be beneficial in the developing world, and this is quite untrue. If we are faithful to our ideals, then we value empirical truth. Our ideology should never blind us to the lessons of history. An effective state allows the market to be creative, and manages the abuse of the market, but encourages the forces in it that are productive for people.

Beyond destruction

Similarly, what kind of international governments do we need? The protestors of Seattle, Prague and Davos say: Destroy. They would have us destroy the World Trade Organisation, the IMF, The World Bank, and multi-national companies. Yet we must remember that the Davos meeting included those like Thabo Mbeke who sought to argue the case for Africa. Governments of developing countries have a right to be able to engage in conversations

with leaders of big companies and global institutions.

The anti-globalisation movement has the potential to be dangerous to the long-term prospects of the poor. Many of those involved do mean well, but destroying all international institutions that are inter-governmental and have some democratic accountability is not the answer. The World Trade Organisation, for example, operates on a one-country, one-vote basis. It makes rules by consensus that are applied equally to all. If it goes, the rich and powerful will simply continue to make the rules of world trade. And, without the voice of developing countries, they are unlikely to make them fairer.

An effective state allows the market to be creative, but encourages the forces in it that are productive for people.

We should believe, therefore, in development as a moral and just cause. We should also be confident that change can be made to happen through the right policies and institutions. Indeed, at present there are 6 billion people on this planet, and there will be 8 or 9 billion by 2020/2030. It is actually development that increases survival rates and makes populations grow so fast. The phenomenal growth of world population is a challenge to the planet and its resources, and we need to use them fairly. Yet when people talk about development they often fall into the trap of portraying only failure. That's not true.

A comparison of most countries between the moment of their independence and the present time shows that life expectancy, literacy, child survival, and other key indicators have largely improved. If we want a decent and just world, we have got to apply what we know to make those improvements available to everybody. Developed countries must see the

importance of viewing global society positively, and then accept the need to invest in its future. They must use their influence to create the kind of world that can set out systematically to end poverty. It is a goal that is completely achievable over the next 30 years. Our urgent task is to ensure that the one-fifth of humanity in absolute poverty can get increased levels of income, can see their children in education, and can have access to basic healthcare.

Commitment to act

This is the greatest moral issue facing humanity, and it is do-able. If we do not have faith in development, and the commitment to act on that faith, we will see growing poverty, growing conflict, massive refugee problems. Already, we have more refugees in the world than ever before, most of them being hosted by poor countries. There will also be growing environmental degradation, because, without other prospects, people inevitably will cut down trees. And, even though the land will not last long, it's better than having nothing. Growing environmental degradation, turbulence, trouble and catastrophe will come back and bite people everywhere.

We are a generation living at a time with enormous prospects for advance. In the rich world, we have seen absolute poverty largely disappear. Yes, there are still issues of dignity and inequality, but the squalor of the past is gone. Realistically, we can aim for those conditions to be removed from our world entirely in the next 30 years. Our moral imperative should be that such poverty is removed from the human condition. This means believing in principle, politics, democracy, and an effective and just state that serves its people in all the ways those original Christian social activists recommended. ■

Rt. Hon. Clare Short, MP, is UK Secretary of State for International Development. This article was adapted from a speech given in March 2001.

Are there any absolute values in international development?

Anthony Cary

IS THERE SUCH A THING as value-free development? For years, much of the international development community believed that this should be the aspiration. Poor nations should be given the means for their betterment, but those providing the assistance should have nothing to say about the governance of the countries concerned. Liberal orthodoxy held that it was wrong to suggest that one society was superior to another. It was politically incorrect, and an affront to multiculturalism, to suggest otherwise. If dictators oppressed their peoples in the name of traditional values or Marxism-Leninism or any other creed, that was their business. We had no right to judge them, and, in an increasingly secular society, no basis upon which to do so.

Happily, that is no longer our approach. The European Union, which, with its Member States, provides some 55% of all international development assistance and some 66% of all grant aid, takes a close interest in the governance of the countries in which it operates. We do not seek to impose

We wanted our contribution to be 'neutral'. Yet it was, and is, bound to challenge existing belief systems.

particular traditions, beliefs or religious convictions. We try not to engage in cultural imperialism. But we do subscribe to the idea that there are certain unalienable rights that should be enjoyed by all people as part of their shared humanity, including, incidentally, freedom of worship. Increasingly, we insist upon respect for such rights as a condition for develop-

ment assistance.

As Chris Patten put it in his 'East and West': 'It feels much the same if you are beaten up by a policeman in Britain or Indonesia...The censorship of the press, openly or by stealth, has the same effects on the health of every society. Forbidding men and women to worship as they wish is an offence against conscience right around the globe. Denying the right of peaceful protest is everywhere unwarranted. No alleged national traditions or cultural standards can make right in one place what is wrong in every place.'

Essential elements

Furthermore, corrupt and autocratic governments are likely to misuse development assistance, either to maintain repression or for private enrichment at the expense of their populations. The European Union therefore includes a commitment to democratic government in the 'essential elements' clauses that are included in its agreements with developing countries.

By what right do we do this? I said that we tried not to indulge in cultural imperialism, but is not this insistence on 'good governance' an example of exactly that? After all, until late in the 19th century, 'democratic' was a pejorative adjective, suggesting populist capitulation to the rule of the mob. By what right do we presume to tell other countries how they should govern themselves?

This is one facet of a much deeper philosophical and religious conundrum. Are there absolute values, or are all codes of rights (even of so-called 'fundamental human rights') merely a reflection of the values, prejudices and faults of the society, and the age, from which they spring?

Traditional world-views depend upon faith in received wisdom and the revelation of absolute codes of behaviour and morals. Weight is vested in the authority of ancient texts and stories. Religious belief is comforting both for its certainty and for the link it provides with the past: carrying for-

We do not seek to impose particular traditions, beliefs or religious convictions in areas where we work.

ward the accumulated wisdom of many generations about how societies can function most successfully, and how individuals should behave to find happiness and fulfilment. Belief gives meaning to individual existence.

Science, by contrast, strives to be rigorously neutral, and systematically sceptical. Its theories are understood to be provisional. Truth is not revealed, but must be discovered gradually through the rigorous testing of consecutive hypotheses, each better than the last at explaining phenomena. Scientific knowledge is built upon a foundation of doubt, deliberately maintained. In the ideal scientific community old men should rejoice to see young men prove them wrong. Even something as pure as mathematics should be understood as an artificial construct rather than a clear window upon truth, beauty and universal order.

Hard to reconcile

These two ways of thinking: one swallowing revealed wisdom whole, the other seeking to discover truth through painstaking research and observation, are very hard to reconcile. Some would argue that they are necessarily opposed. They generate tensions within individuals, just as they shake the foundations of societies. The history of Western civilisation since the Enlightenment has been one of turmoil, as the inexorable advance of

science has challenged people's deepest convictions.

That turmoil is even greater when societies collide: when East meets West; when North meets South. There are many, especially in the Islamic world, who believe that the disruption caused to value-systems by the advance of science reflect the failure of lesser faiths to control the corrosive effects of scepticism. But the pressures of modernity upon their own societies are growing, and may prove irresistible.

Today, the international development community is in the front line of this inescapable conflict. Until recently, as noted above, science, and the intellectual engine that drove the process of decolonisation, caused many to reject the efforts of past missionaries (whether religious ones, or secular messengers of 'Western values') as arrogant paternalists. Waning confidence in the intrinsic superiority of our own culture left us feeling

We do not seek to impose particular traditions, beliefs or religious convictions in areas where we work.

unqualified to offer any prescriptions for governance or behaviour. Virtue, in our brave new liberal world, began to be defined as non-judgmentalism.

A challenge to belief systems

We wanted our contribution to be 'neutral'. Yet it was, and is, bound to challenge existing belief systems.

'Suppose you are a tribesman', said Don Cupitt in his 'Sea of Faith', 'and you see a medical team arrive in your area and cure the blind in hundreds. You are bound to be impressed- and your gods are bound to shiver in their shrines. Your traditional beliefs and values no longer seem quite so all-inclusive, immutable and perfect as they used to be. Suffering which you have regarded as sent by the gods in punishment for ritual offences now



RANDY MILLER

'Religious belief is comforting both for its certainty and for the link it provides with the past: carrying forward the accumulated wisdom of many generations about how societies can function most successfully, and how individuals should behave to find happiness.'

turns out to be caused by things like parasites...and to be curable quickly and cheaply.'

What is being introduced is of unquestionable worth. But it cannot be neutral, because it is laden with consequence for the values of the

society into which it is introduced.

It would be wicked, in the name of neutrality and non-judgmentalism, to withhold the benefits of development and science: medicine, clean water, productive agriculture, decent housing, from people living in poverty. By

the same token, it would be wicked not to insist upon good governance and respect for fundamental rights as a condition for development assistance.

As for good governance, we should not require any particular constitutional form. Yet a democratic mandate is most likely to ensure that resources will be managed for the public good in a transparent and accountable way. Democracy is not an absolute. But, as Churchill said, it is the least worst form of government yet devised.

As for human rights: in an increasingly secular society, many feel that they lack a secure external foundation

for their moral framework. That is their misfortune. But even they should not be afraid to demand respect for

Democracy is not an absolute. But, as Churchill said, it is the least worst form of government yet devised.

values that they simply 'know' to be true, and which governments of all persuasions have in any case acknowledged in countless international declarations and charters.

So we should not be afraid to

uphold values. But let our collective lack of certainty about our own belief-system (whatever the depth of the faith of individuals) make us think carefully about cultural bias in determining the values that we deem to be 'universal'. And let us beware of mistaking the word for the thing. Corrupt public administration is an iniquity whatever the constitutional packaging. The world has seen many venal governments that called themselves democratic; and it has seen some benign autocracies, too. ■

Anthony Carey is Head of Cabinet for Chris Patten, European Commissioner for External Relations, European Union.

The EU: unity in outreach

Tim Clark

THE EUROPEAN UNION provides approximately half of all public aid to developing countries, and, in many cases, is also the main trading partner. Its activity covers all the regions of the world. This effort reflects the essential solidarity which is an underlying feature of its international activity. The exercise of such solidarity must be seen as a major political challenge. There is also a widespread belief in the European Union that, in accordance with its founding principles, the Union needs to stress solidarity in every forum and ensure that it is considered, particularly in the other industrialised countries.

Mutual belief

That solidarity might be termed a mutual belief among people of different cultures in common values of community and mutual respect. We frequently distil these values as sustainable, equitable and participatory human and social development. In

essence we are saying that development must be focused on real people, their rights and aspirations.

The solidarity that emerges inevitably means addressing the issues that lie behind inequity and injustice. For example, democratic institutions that work are a condition of sustainable development. Good governance, which includes the fight against corruption, and the rule of law, are decisive in strategies to reduce poverty. In that connection, the European Community is well placed to help strengthen partner countries' institutional capacities. Community action is more neutral than that of individual donor states, with their own historical baggage. Community solidarity and the Community's integrated approach to co-operation are therefore major assets.

The European Union has also increasingly become aware that at every stage of execution of development activities we must mainstream cross-cutting concerns such as the promotion of human rights, gender equality, children's rights and environmental concerns. Protection of the environment must be included in the definition and implementation of all Community policies, particu-

larly in order to promote sustainable development. Those cross-cutting topics are at once objectives in themselves and vital factors in strengthening the impact and sustainability of co-operation.

Underlying commitment

The European Commission also seeks to show its underlying commitment to solidarity by working not only with governments but also side by side with civil society. This co-operation with civil society includes human rights groups, grassroots organisations, women's associations, child-protection organisations, farmers' organisations, trade unions, consumers' associations, religious organisations, cultural associations and the media. The selection of civil society partners is based on the way they respond to people's needs, their specific competencies, their democratic character, the transparency of their operations and management and their ability to strengthen civil society in partner countries. ■

Tim Clarke is Head of Unit of the Democracy and Human Rights Unit in the EuropeAid Cooperation Office, European Commission.

Listening in to the World Faiths Development Dialogue

Andrew Rogerson

DESPITE SOME extraordinary social and scientific advances in many areas, the state of the world is not as it should be. The billions of people to whom education, an adequate health service, decent housing, clean drinking water and the means to a livelihood are inaccessible, the ever-more rapid destruction of our planet, and the millions of refugees forced to flee armed conflicts are all an indictment of our age. This is particularly true in an era in which the solution to these problems is at hand, and in which many enjoy more luxury than ever before.

The easiest way to deal with this critical situation is to cast the blame on others. But the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) believes that the time has come for us all to take responsibility for what is going on around us. This means that those whose ideas and perceptions of reality are furthest apart will try to understand each other better and take creative action to see where their different skills and resources might be pooled to make a contribution toward changing the world.

Worldwide repercussions

Two such actors on the development scene are the religious communities and the multilateral development agencies. In our globalised world, they are coming increasingly into contact with each other, their areas of interest overlap, their disagreements have worldwide repercussions. Up to now, their relationship has been characterised largely by mutual suspicion and even prejudice. This may often be based on a lack of mutual understanding, but there are important areas of profound disagreement that need to be addressed in serious debate. There are also many areas of consensus and opportunities

for collaboration, which need to be discovered and made the most of.

In 1998, the Archbishop of Canterbury and World Bank President James Wolfensohn jointly sponsored

The WFDD believes that the time has come for us all to take responsibility for what is going on around us.

the setting up of the World Faiths Development Dialogue, with the aim of adopting a more constructive approach. The process has been extremely difficult, but some progress has been made over the past two and a half years. Probably the most important piece of work has been a first attempt to find some common ground amongst people of the world's different religions about the nature of poverty, the aims of any development process, the values which should underlie it, and the criteria on which policy decisions and practice should be based. This began as an inter-faith comment on the first draft of the World Bank's World Development Report 2000, on the topic of poverty, but it was subsequently published as a little booklet called 'Poverty and Development', which, to our delight, the Swedish Mission Council has now translated into Swedish.

Focus on poverty

The WFDD has also initiated inter-faith work with a focus on poverty in Tanzania,

Ethiopia and Guatemala. Again, this has been extraordinarily difficult, but, in Guatemala, the group, which includes Catholics, evangelicals, the Jewish community, and leaders from the indigenous Mayan spiritual tradition, is working very closely with the Ministry of Education on the values underlying a new educational curriculum. This is being drawn up as part of the peace process in that country. In Tanzania, an effort is being made to co-ordinate more closely the health work carried out by religious bodies, which accounts for 40% of the Tanzanian health services. But maybe the most important aspect of the work has been the mere fact of bringing together different religious organisations and showing how, if they work on a common agenda that concerns them all, they can become a force for unity and social cohesion. ■

Andrew Rogerson is the the World Bank Special Representative to the European Union Institutions in Brussels.



RANDY MILLER

We need to try to understand each other better, and take creative action to see where our different skills and resources might be pooled to make a contribution toward changing the world.

We need to be candid about our own values

Kurt Bangert

IN INDIA, development practitioners met unexpected obstacles when introducing coconut trees to a village. The villagers believed that only upper classes were allowed to have such trees, and that a low-caste person planting a coconut tree would instantly die. Only when the oldest villager offered to risk his life (he planted the tree, and lived) did the project proceed. Question: Is development possible without dealing with traditional values and indigenous spirituality? Is it possible without at times challenging the world-views that tend to perpetuate poverty and powerlessness?

A doctor at a Christian hospital in Uganda was about to perform surgery on a non-Christian patient who, frightened as he was, asked the Christian physician to pray to his God so that the surgery would be blessed. Question: Is development possible without being candid about our own spirituality and values?

Development means change. Not only in infrastructure and facilities, but

also in people's minds: a change of thinking, of expectations, of ideas and values. Starting a school in an illiterate community will presuppose, and precipitate, value changes in elders, parents and children. The parent-child relationship will alter, their hopes and aspirations will differ, and ultimately education will impact religious myths, beliefs and a community's world-view.

Unforeseen consequences

And yet, changes brought about by the development process can have unforeseen and undesirable consequences. It is impossible to predict all consequences even of a small alteration in a complex system. Each society is a living organism and constitutes a delicate cultural equilibrium that is easily shaken. Changing one minor aspect of a society may jeopardise the whole, for the whole is more than the sum of its constituent parts. The introduction of new techniques to tribes in New Guinea in the middle of the last century, which greatly simplified the

men's work, had enormous social repercussions. Hence, development workers ought to be on their guard lest they allow one seemingly positive change to have disastrous consequences on society as a whole.

Development workers must be aware of the holistic nature of an indigenous culture. Holism refers to the totality of a society's lifestyle and ideas: the roles people play, their festivals and fairy tales, their marriage and funeral ceremonies, their art and architecture as well as their spirituality, religious myths and traditional values. Development workers are frequently confronted with the all-pervasive power spirituality plays in the lives of the people they work with. Religion is intricately woven into the fabric of many societies in the developing world. Development workers are well advised to learn as much as

Communities must be empowered to control the process of change and to be guardians of their own values.

possible of that society's history, beliefs, and spiritual realm. However, to successfully work amongst indigenous people, more is required.

Development practitioners must also demonstrate their own spirituality. To gain the trust of the people they work with, they must document their own religious integrity and spiritual motivation. Many Westerners have banished God from everyday life, and, although they may be Christians, they tend to be modestly moot about their own spirituality. Indigenous people often have difficulty understanding development workers who, while introducing miracle cures and technological wonders, leave God out of the picture. Societies in the developing world may not appreciate being proselytised, but neither do they understand or esteem those who pretend to have no religion at all.



'Religion is intricately woven into the very fabric of many societies in the developing world,' says author Bangert. In this image from Phnom Penh, Wat Phnom sits atop a tree-covered knoll in Cambodia's capital, and is clearly visible from nearly everywhere the city.



They believed that only upper classes were allowed to have such trees, and that if a low-caste person planted one, he would instantly die.

Development workers must recognise that there can be no value-free development. Some professionals may believe in value-free development. But nothing could be further from the truth. The professionals themselves cannot be value free, nor can the development they facilitate. Development workers carry in their baggage the values of their own profession, their culture, their religion or ideology, and it is better to be aware of them and to admit them, rather than to deny them. But more importantly, the changes deemed necessary may require important value changes in the people development workers are working with, and may even require the introduction of new values, such as a girl's right to reproductive health (to prevent genital mutilation), or the virtue of saving beyond the needs of today (an indispensable quality for microcredit systems).

Perpetuating powerlessness

Sometimes, world-views and traditional thinking appear to perpetuate poverty and powerlessness. The Indian

caste system, often justified by religion, may be an example. In such cases, the development practitioner, while attempting to preserve as much of the traditional culture as possible, will challenge the views and values obstructing empowerment and a sustainable life. However, it could be harmful to simply undermine those

Communities must be empowered to control the process of change and to be guardians of their own values.

values without making a conscious effort to substitute them with clear, alternative values to which people can knowingly assent. Development is as much about identifying and abolishing bad practices and values as it is about introducing and reflecting new ones.

Communities must be empowered to control the process of change and to be guardians of their own values. Development will only be suc-

cessful if the people agree and desire to develop themselves. This essentially means that they determine the objectives and priorities of their development, control the pace of the process, decide about the changes they think are needed, and define the values to be preserved, altered, or newly adopted. It is this conscious effort of reflecting one's own values which, instead of unconsciously allowing the system to break down, ultimately serves to keep the system intact.

Development must frequently be assessed. To ensure that the holistic system stays intact and that the changes implemented serve the community as a whole, recurrent participatory evaluation is needed. Besides factors of survival, health and economics, it is important to also evaluate values: How did changes impact values and vice versa? A maturing community should keep the discussion about its values and world-views constantly on its agenda. ■

Kurt Bangert is manager of public relations for World Vision Germany.

Balancing work and faith

Sharon White

CAREER CHOICE is perhaps the most difficult decision faced by many Christians, such as myself. For most of us, who are not drawn to full-time Christian work as pastors or in some other capacity in a Christian institution, the thorny issue is how to serve God in secular work. Some Christians take the view that no profession should be out of bounds. They argue that we can serve God as cleaners or financial executives, provided we conduct ourselves according to the guidelines of our faith.

Whilst I respect this view, I have always personally been drawn to public sector work. I wanted to help people in a more direct way, and have always thought it important that Christians work inside public institutions, as well as stand as advocates outside them. Important early influences for me were Christian writings on social justice, and my upbringing as a child of West Indian immigrants in a lower income neighbourhood in London. There, I saw first-hand how public services, especially education, could dramatically transform families' economic prospects.

More complex

My experience, as a Treasury civil servant, and now World Bank employee working on social security and poverty issues, has inevitably been more complex than I expected, and certainly more full of compromise.

For one thing, the overall policy environment is to a large degree externally determined, and may not always be easy to change. At the Treasury, ministers ultimately prescribe decisions on the scope for and design of additional social programs. At the World Bank, the programmes and policies are set by shareholders. This environment may be more or

less conducive to promoting the interests of the poor. For example, in the early 1990s I was involved in drawing up plans which would have



RANDY MILLER

'I saw first-hand how public services, especially education, could dramatically transform families' economic prospects.'

weakened the safety net for future pensioners retiring without significant personal wealth, as the government of the time was concerned to keep a tighter rein on costs.

For another, policy decisions typically have positive and negative effects,

Policy formation within governments and international financial institutions is a product of compromise.

for different groups within society, or for individuals versus broader society. I recently was involved in a situation where a new government, determined to build a reputation for good management of the economy, decided to stick to the spending plans of its predecessor. These plans included reductions in the amount of support payable to single parents who were

out of work. On the one hand, the government had to establish quickly that it had truly abandoned its past practice of 'tax and spend', to retain the support of more fiscally conservative voters, and to increase its credibility with the financial markets. On the other hand, the precise cuts in spending were hard to justify and alienated important advocates for the poor amongst civil society. The policy debate was further complicated by the fact that the government's early budgetary stringency allowed it in later years credibly to increase substantially support for children and families, and for the public services, more than compensating families for the early loss of benefits.

Competing interests

In addition, policy-makers often have competing interests to balance, not all of them high-minded. There will be political interests, particular constituencies that need to be accommodated, and questions about the government's own longevity. There will also be civil society groups, business organisations, and unions whose interests all need to be weighed. In providing advice within such an environment, I think the job of the Christian is to push for the approach that will have the greatest impact on the poor, but to be realistic enough to accept that, at the end of the day, the argument may be lost.

Where I come out is that Christian policy makers need to take a pragmatic attitude to work. Policy formulation within governments and international financial institutions is a product of compromise. Sometimes you win the argument. More often, the outcome of the debate is 'second best'. The key then is to use that experience to improve the result when the issue is revisited. ■

Sharon White is a senior economist in the Poverty Reduction Strategy team at the World Bank. She was previously an economist with the UK Treasury, and spent from 1997-1999 as a member of the UK Prime Minister's Policy Unit.

Working from the grass roots

Father Benigno P. Beltran, SVD

SMOKEY MOUNTAIN was a huge garbage dump in the heart of the city of Manila. When Mother Teresa of Calcutta visited the site a few years before she died, she remarked that this place where 25,000 people lived on and off the garbage should not have been allowed to exist in a predominantly Christian country. But of course that raises the question of the extent to which our systems of faith are able to influence and shape the systems of values out of which we act.

After years of advocacy, demonstrations and consultations by the Basic Christian Communities in Smokey Mountain, President Fidel V. Ramos finally decided to rehabilitate the dump. This was met with stiff opposition by a number of scavengers who did not want to leave their surroundings, no matter how squalid, because scrounging in the garbage heaps was the only way they knew how to survive.

The resistance by some in the dump community is not hard to understand. Scavengers face a constant struggle for survival in which the social injustices at the heart of their predicament can seem distant and untouchable. In such circumstances the values that others associate with development (including environmental concerns) can seem very alien.

Divergent value systems

International values consultant Brian Hall defines values as 'the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly.' Values guide our behaviour, and if there are polarisations in Philippine society, it is because there are divergent value systems (despite the commonality of faith) that inform the ways of life of

the citizens. Thus, even among scavengers in the same garbage dump, different value systems led people to behave in different ways toward a vision for development.

In 1986, Filipinos toppled a dictator in a bloodless revolution. When another People Power revolution, on 20 January, toppled the regime of Joseph Estrada, the movie actor turned politician, the new government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

We make decisions from our symbolic universe, from our paradigm of reality and the values that support it.

promised a moral renewal program and other vision-values based on the Constitution of the Philippines. Unless these ideals become ingrained as part of the life of the people and the culture of institutions, many fear that People Power revolutions which circumvent the Constitution will more likely repeat themselves. Perhaps mob rule could even prevail in the country. The danger is that justice, peace, accountability, service and transparency may continue to remain a dream.

For the core values of the Constitution to become reality, the values of the people (the governed and the governors alike) must go beyond the 'survival', 'self-preservation', 'safety', or 'security' phase of human existence. A vision for development should move people to higher values, but this is difficult to do when more than half of the population live below the poverty line and many are functional illiterates. A vision for development ought to move people from concern for 'self' to concern

for 'others' and, ultimately, concern for the whole planet. It is perhaps in forging this basic commitment to selflessness that faith can underpin the search from common political and social values necessary for progress.

Higher goals

Finding this bridge of values is essential. There has to be an alignment of values or ideals among the governed and the governors, among the citizenry and the leadership so that nobler and higher goals can be achieved. A development worker must discern the continuum of values that are shaped by the divergent world-views of people in the same country or region. There is a developmental process in the fashioning of a value system out of the representational world, the symbolic universe that we create to make sense of our experience. We see the world through the value system that we have fashioned, and which has fashioned us in turn.

Values exist not only within us, but also in the institutions within which we live (family, school, place of work, community, the church, government, etc.). Therefore, institutions like the church, government and development agencies can also influence the kind of values individuals have, drawing on faith as a reference point for more selfless and constructive values.

Development work is conditioned by whether we are able to find those shared values that cut across other divides. Therefore, it is important for development workers to be familiar with the values held by the people with whom they work. These issues have profound implications for the development work that one is doing.

What we understand of the nature of reality shapes our spirituality, by what we think life's meaning for us is. This in turn defines what we value and give priority to in our lives. We make decisions from our symbolic universe, from our paradigm of reality and the values that support it. ■

Fr. Benigno P. Beltran, SVD, is a long-time resident of Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila, Philippines.

No easy options: the challenge of faith-based values

by Minas Hiruy, PhD

VALUES AND SPIRITUALITY

on one hand and development on the other seem to have had a love and hate relationship, particularly since the turn of the 20th century. As modernism had its impact, the appeal to values dissipated pretty much in every society. Significant in this loss of confidence has been the push for a value-free society. Logical positivists and reductionists have gone counter to ethics, seeing them as having no analysable property and denying their link to value judgements. Partly as an outgrowth of this development, situation ethics emerged. Being antithetical to moral imperatives, it can be argued that situation ethics have essentially been as good as no ethics to the

Disillusion with constantly shifting ethics has led to renewed interest in faith-based values.

degree that this approach licenses just about any thought or behaviour under clever rationalisations. It is in this murky climate that author and philosophy professor James Rachels laments, 'We can try to become clearer about what our values are and about the possible alternatives. But we can no longer ask questions about the truth of our convictions.'¹

Smorgasboard of themes

Interestingly, disillusion with constantly shifting ethics (and also the scale of the challenge presented by poverty) has led to renewed interest in faith-based values. This reconsideration is manifested in the development landscape with a smorgasbord of normative themes such as gender bal-

ance, ecology consciousness, fairness as justice, equity, child rights, minority rights, moratorium on child soldiers, etc. Ethics is certainly out of the cage, no longer relegated to only religion or moral philosophy.

By the same token, development actors and institutions have begun to reflect this trend, determined not only to profess but also to apply the evolving tenets. The public sector, as one important force in development, has been making a number of reforms with an ethical bent. From these efforts have arisen important norms, such as good governance, devolution, stakeholder involvement and ethics in government. Stirrings of this type created a revolution of sorts, impacting not only the behaviour of the public sector, but also of the whole development arena.

The same awakening has also been reflected in the private sector. Capital has begun to weave ethics into its motto and workings under a new conscience called corporate citizenship. With this consciousness a new equilibrium has evolved, tempering the dangerous polarisation between what appears to be self-interest on one hand and public interest on the other. Corporate citizenship manifests itself in a number of ways, being supportive of policies that address, for instance, the environment, that reinforce human rights and advance fairness as justice.

Similarly, the NGO sector has been strengthening its ethical contour, though it is no secret that this sector came into being basically to right the wrong of service delivery systems, and to deal with poverty in a more humanistic and responsive way. Recent 'mixed ratings' have prompted the sector to confront itself in the light of these original ideals. This soul

searching has led many NGOs to subscribe to one form of code or another, and to subject themselves to the scrutiny of an ethics panel or board. Determined to be a change agent, the sector has assumed activities like research and development, peace making, civic education, community empowerment, advocacy and policy influence, in addition to its care and welfare focus.

When one profiles current devel-

The public sector, as one important force in development, has made a number of reforms with an ethical bent.

opment thinking, three important values stand out: sustainability, partnership and globalisation. As interrelated as they are, these values may figure in the making of a 'development architecture' down the road. Sustainable development underscores the importance of being need-based, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and transformational. Partnership tries to bring in the 'life boat' scenario at play, underscoring the interdependence of development actors and appealing to themes like inclusion and coalition building. Globalisation, in its best showing, tries to underline the narrowing of differences in an eventual culmination of human civilisation 'from One Earth to One World'.

Partnership idea

Sustainable development has not achieved its goals due to the uncontrollability of external and internal factors like unfavourable trade and political instability. The partnership idea is not without its deterrents as well, to the degree that it has not been blessed with transparent, fair and clear interests and abiding commitments. Globalisation is penetrating not territories but social orders. Information technology, which has been the instrument to spread and

instill its milieu, has been doing a good job in winning the hearts and minds of a growing number of people.

Momentous change

In the final analysis, it appears as if development thinking is in a tailspin. Michel Faucon, while underscoring the poisoning of the world for a momentous change, could not avoid admitting, 'Nobody knows where this is heading.'² This brings the question: What, then, is the quagmire? One has to admit that development formulas will continue to stumble, not for their bad intentions, but for their failure to consider context, including the loss of the spiritual equation in their calculation.

Even where faith is considered as a factor, we have to ask whether the thinking goes far enough. Though some new thinking in development does reflect faith influences, it can be argued that these references fail to go the final distance in embracing the harder underlying requirements of a development perspective that is sustainable. In effect, they lack the compelling drive toward love, peace, sacri-

Even where faith is considered as a factor, we have to ask whether the thinking goes far enough.

fice, etc. Without these elements, can development so easily appeal for the trust, confidence, wholeness, supportive relationship and healing that are necessary in any work of community development? Equally, we can ask whether it is possible to offer compelling compassion to replace the injustice that is so ubiquitous at all levels in society.

Hard-edged and challenging

The role of the spiritual piece in the puzzle in bringing about a working human community is indeed clear and timely. That role, however, is not warm and fuzzy; rather, it is hard-edged and



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Sustainable development underscores the importance of being need-based, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and transformational.

challenging, addressing individuals and their own world-views and values. This is where spirituality impacts development in a profound way. From a Christian perspective it can be argued that trying to apply spiritual values is superficial without serious engagement with the personally and socially challenging message of Christ. The scale of development challenges the world over is obvious enough. But it would be an illusion to continue to assume that our human ingenuity alone would be the source of the

panacea. Much as development has a spiritual dimension, we certainly need to work on the spiritual poverty that is engulfing society. ■

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¹ James Rachels, "Can Ethics Provide Answers?" Hastings Center Report (June, 1980), p. 34.

² UN-Non-Government Liaison Service, The United Nations, NGOs and Global Governance (Geneva, 1996), p. 64.

Breaking the silence in Uganda on HIV/AIDS

Rev. Gideon Byamugisha

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE of Namirembe, in central Uganda, is no stranger to the effects of HIV/AIDS. With 55 parishes and 320 local congregations, it is considered the mother diocese of all the Anglican dioceses in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Boga-Zaire, (now DRC). It is one of the worst HIV/AIDS-affected areas in the country, and has an extremely high number of orphans.

The diocese recognised long ago that the AIDS situation in Uganda defied simplistic approaches and answers, and began to search for a meaningful and effective response. At the time, however, many in the church believed that AIDS was a result of increased sexual sin. Others were convinced that AIDS was a result of faulty relationships. Still others pointed to a general lack of information, skills and services regarding HIV/AIDS and its prevention.

Cultural reluctance

But the government of Uganda began implementing policies that fostered an exchange of information. Discussion in the country about AIDS and its effects paid off. People began to realise that HIV was an opportunistic virus, and that one reason it thrived had been because of our cultural reluctance to discuss sexuality.

The diocesan leadership thus opted to employ an open, non-judgmental approach to dealing with HIV/AIDS, and sought closer partnerships with people living with the virus, young people and parents. I, as an HIV-positive priest, was appointed to head the AIDS programmes in the diocese. In addition, a number of post-test clubs for people with HIV/AIDS were opened. These provided opportunities for counselling, positive living skills and spiritual support.

In each local church, volunteer educators and home-care providers are trained to provide awareness and education on vital issues like HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, nutrition, immunisation, and sanitation. They also take care of more mundane chores, as well. They clean patients' houses, yards, and household utensils, wash soiled clothes and bedding; fetch and boil water; grow and harvest food for the sick and the orphaned, and provide nursing care.

The diocesan leadership opted to employ an open, non-judgemental approach to dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Many young adults who choose to be sexually active now are at least aware of how HIV/AIDS is spread. Many undergo voluntary HIV tests and remain faithful to sexual partners known to be negative. There is increased condom use among those sexual partners who have been diagnosed HIV-positive, and those as yet unaware of their HIV status. According to local and national surveys, the age at which young people first engage in sex has risen. We believe this is due in part to religious leaders, parents, teachers and people with AIDS providing young people with accurate information in an open, caring way.

For many of us in the church, HIV/AIDS has served as a spotlight, exposing issues related to sexuality and sexual behaviour which, until recently, we had not been willing to confront directly. Today, for us church leaders, to refuse to give advice on safe sex might as well be regarded as

sinful, since in so doing we would be shying away from our mission to protect life, to preserve bodies, and to nourish souls.

Our people may not be able to stop virulent viruses from hovering around them, but they at least can be helped to prevent them from entering their bodies. I am quite sure that if I had had accurate information on HIV/AIDS and some knowledge about self-protection and places where I could turn for help, I probably would not be infected with HIV today.

Greatest challenge

The massive number of HIV-positive individuals in our communities points to a responsibility we must continue to address. In the words of Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, 'The protection of the current and future generations of adolescents and young adults from premature illness and death is a responsibility of the highest order and is, in many countries, the greatest contemporary challenge.' We must continue to foster a climate in which safe sexual behaviours are encouraged, and information about preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS is provided freely. Can we rise to that challenge?

If what we have seen in Uganda is any indication, I believe we can. By being compassionate and open in dealing with this subject, we can save lives, restore a sense of wholeness to those with the virus, and prevent further suffering among those who are affected by it directly or indirectly.

It seems to me, in the final analysis, that AIDS issues are matters of justice, equity, and responsibility for one another in our global village. ■

Rev. Gideon Byamugisha heads the Health Programmes in the Diocese of Namirembe, Uganda, as one part of the many responsibilities he holds in the global response to HIV/AIDS. He was the first practising priest in Africa to declare publicly that he is HIV-positive. His books on HIV/AIDS can be accessed from The Archbishop Carey Regional Resource Centre, P.O. Box 14297, Kampala, Uganda. E-mail: namid@infocom.co.ug.

A global values revolution

Tom and Christine Sine

WHEN THE BERLIN WALL was torn down and the Soviet Union imploded, nearly all of the world's Marxist economies were thrown into the trash bin of history. Today, for the first time ever, virtually every nation on earth has joined the free market race to the top.

There is much to celebrate in this new one-world economic order. Many, including a number of people on the margins, are benefiting from this economic lift-off. Through the Internet, people of many different cultures are connecting with one another, and educational opportunities are spreading to areas in the world where they are desperately needed.

The 'battle in Seattle' called attention to the fact that some are concerned about the negative impacts of globalisation. There are causes for concern. This new global economy works much better for the top 20% of those who have assets than the bottom 20% who don't. And accelerated global economic growth isn't good news for the environment, either.

Values revolution

However, the concern I raise in 'Mustard Seed Vs. McWorld' about globalisation is one that few are talking about. We believe that economic globalisation is spawning a values revolution that is expressed in a number of different ways. Economists, who are the strongest advocates for economic globalisation, tend to work from the assumption that economics are neutral and value-free. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Clearly, this new global economic order not only places highest value on economic efficiency and economic growth, it also is seeking to persuade people all over the world that the ultimate can be defined in economic

terms. That is not a neutral or value-free assumption. No world religion would ever settle for defining the ultimate in economic terms. Yet few people of faith are speaking out regarding this remarkable values assertion of this new global economy.

One of the most visible aspects of this values revolution is the creation of a borderless global youth culture in the past decade. Let me be clear, I am sure that marketers of globalisation have no malicious intent. They are simply trying to expand their market share and keep their shareholders happy. But the values consequences are far-reaching. Young people all over the world are being colonised by American pop-media and global consumerism. The global young are wear-



JANE SUTTON

ing the same jeans, drinking the same soda and listening to the same CDs.

Everywhere we travel on this planet we find that young people have much more in common with North American youth culture than the cultures in which they were raised. It is important to recognise that the marketers of this global consumer culture aren't just moving product. They are actively at work persuading the young to change their values so they will want to buy the same products.

What we are witnessing is the homogenisation of planetary cultures, starting with the young. Traditional values and deeply held religious beliefs are rapidly being supplanted by the

creation of a global culture of consumption in which growing numbers are being persuaded to adopt the same tastes, preferences and addictions. Many commentators have not only raised concern regarding this trend toward cultural homogenisation, but they have also argued that it is contributing to the rising nationalism and ethnic unrest in a number of parts of the world as people struggle to retain their sense of identity.

Economic globalisation is spawning a values revolution that is expressed in a number of different ways.

There are obvious benefits to this new global economy. We must work to help our poorest neighbours develop the assets necessary to play on this field, and we must seek to counter the damaging side effects of rapid growth on the environment. But this new global economy is the farthest thing from neutral or value-free. It is the spawning of a global values revolution.

People of faith must find creative ways to enter into conversation with global economic leaders regarding the values impact of economic globalisation. Local leaders must help their people find in their faith and their traditional culture values that transcend the values of consumerism, materialism and individualism. We must help people find a greater hope and a more promising future while not ignoring the potential benefits of economic growth, particularly for our poorest neighbours. ■

Tom Sine is an author, teacher and international consultant in futures research. His books include the best-selling 'Mustard Seed Conspiracy.' (See our review of 'Mustard Seed vs. McWorld' on page 24 of this issue.) Christine Aroney-Sine is an Australian physician. She was medical director for Mercy Ships for 12 years and now works as a consultant in international health care. She is the author of the MARC book 'Survival of the Fittest: Keeping Yourself Healthy in Travel and Service Overseas'. She and Tom live in Seattle, where Tom directs Mustard Seed Associates.

No such thing as values-free development?

Jaisankar Sarma

KURT BANGERT, in his article for this magazine, has suggested that there is no such thing as value-free development. Development does not happen in a vacuum. Communities have their world-views, belief systems and values, which govern their behaviours, practices and responses to development interventions. My experiences as a development practitioner tell me that I must agree. Working with local communities in countries across Southeast Asia quickly brought home to me the fact that development activity divorced from the transformational needs of people (changes that are intangible: values, attitudes, relationships, etc.) will not be effective in the long term. Sustainable changes to the practices or behaviour patterns of people are not possible without addressing belief systems and world-views underlying these practices.

Sustainable changes are not possible without addressing people's belief systems and world-views.

How can development practitioners address people's belief systems and world-views? There are no simple answers, but there are some things to consider. Kurt has reminded us that development workers bring their own biases to their work. One such bias is that spirituality does not have any role or place in development work. Yet people in most communities where we work are deeply spiritual, and their spiritual beliefs influence every aspect of their lives.

I would build on this foundation of accepting both that we bring our own biases and that communities are often

inherently spiritual. I would argue that if we are serious about facilitating lasting change, then we have to change the way we see operational development activities, particularly those that are community based and community led. We need to create flexibility and openness for the spiritual dimension even in the most technical and mundane methodologies. Micro-credit and drilling wells may seem to be spiritually neutral to the outsider, but does it seem to be so to the community?

Stories and folk songs

In effect, we need to go beyond accepting the 'spiritual' dimension toward becoming intentional about understanding people's belief systems and world-views, and engage with them in ways that are appropriate. Our baseline studies need to become more holistic. We should spend more time observing, listening and learning from people. We should learn from traditional stories and folk songs we find in communities. We should not limit our baseline studies just to quantitative methods of data collection. Focus-group discussions can be an effective tool for understanding different beliefs and opinions.

Religious literature is full of resources for development work. Stories, poems and parables can provide a useful framework for facilitating reflection on issues that affect communities. People's faith influences the way they see their daily lives. As development workers, our views of people and communities need to become more holistic. Whether our development objective is conflict prevention or the reduction of high-risk behaviour to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS, religion has a major contribution to make. Religious institutions and religious leaders are an important part of

any civil society. They have a role to play in bringing about sustainable change.

We must also always be sensitive to the influences of those biases we ourselves bring to the table, and this is true not just for those who would see development as entirely a secular activity, but also for faith-based NGOs. For Christian agencies like

We must always be sensitive to the influences of those biases we ourselves bring to the table.

World Vision, relief and development philosophy is strongly influenced by a biblical world-view. Such a world-view can be advantageous, as physical and spiritual realities can be understood as part of a seamless whole. However, while being authentic about their own orientation, relief and development workers from such faith-based agencies must be sensitive when they work with communities of other faiths. They must not impose their world-view on the people with whom they work. On the contrary, development workers from such agencies should seek meaningful ways to dialogue with people and religious leaders in a spirit of mutual respect. There is a lot of common ground in which to work together. No religion holds the monopoly on good values.

Finally, relationships are the basis for the transformational dimension of development work. At the end of the day, the development worker is transformed as much as, if not more than, the people with whom he or she is working. Without relationships and a willingness to learn from one another, values transformation on either part seldom becomes a reality. Life begets life and commitment produces commitment. ■

Jaisankar Sarma is International Projects manager for Ministry Standards testing in World Vision's Washington, D.C., office.

Upside-down paradigm

Valdir R. Steuernagel

MY COUNTRY, Brazil, is known for a few things, and soccer is one of them. When we decide to play good soccer it is difficult to defeat our national team. We also dance well, and at Carnival you can see people dancing in the streets.

But we also have the *favelas* (shantytowns), with their deep levels of poverty. And they are also well known. In the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro, the favelas are known for their size, their location, their hills, their drug trafficking, and a high level of violence.

However, those hills are also becoming known for their churches. In some places, the churches have become a place of refuge, a haven of survival in a place where life is cheap. But once they enter these churches, people discover that they are more than simply sources of refuge, they are sources of real fulfilment in their lives.

Rich source of meaning

In places like Brazil, the poor find strength, hope and community through faith. They discover that the teachings of Christ can provide a rich source of meaning in their lives. And

Society tells us that, to be successful, we have to climb to the top of the corporate ladder, or the social ladder.

that, in the midst of suffering and violence, there is a way of living that offers real hope. Faith impacts directly on values, it challenges prevalent and potentially oppressive social mores.

Society tells us that in order to be successful, we have to climb to the top of the corporate ladder, or the social ladder. We have to grab as much

power, money and knowledge as we can. Only then will we be somebody of worth. Only then will we be truly happy.

Many people have made that journey to the top only to discover that it does not offer the fulfilment or happiness they hoped it would. This is what we are discovering at the beginning of the new millennium: we are part of a



GUSTAVO BALAREZO

disenchanted society. We are disenchanted with those myths and stories that kept urging us upward, toward some illusive goal at the top of the ladder. We continue to crave something more meaningful in our lives.

But there is a voice coming from other sectors of our society, from voices a few rungs down the ladder, from the poor attending the open-door churches of the hills of Rio de Janeiro. And they have something to say to the rest of us. The poor are telling us there is a way of life that has nothing to do with climbing to the top of some ladder. Our capacity for creativity does not have to be limited by our cash flow. Our ability to dance through life does not need to be tied to our achievements. Furthermore, we often find that the more we have,

the less we want to work and play together in community.

It is neither easy nor desirable to live in poverty. Anyone who thinks it is romantic is out of touch with reality, and has never experienced it. Nobody should be poor. Unfortunately, there are those who are because we live in a society that either does not want to

The poor are telling us there is a way of life that has nothing to do with climbing to the top of some ladder.

or does not know how to distribute its richness and resources equitably. But despite this injustice, the poor often demonstrate how to give real value to life.

Life is made up of small and simple things. Waking up everyday and greeting the family, having breakfast, brushing teeth, going to work, and so on. We need to remember that there is beauty in the simple things of life. Those things make up so much of our daily routine. Going to some big event like the Academy Awards every night would be boring! Eating barbecue at every dinner would make us sick. The poor remind us that it is important to value the simple things in life.

I suppose I am talking to myself here, really. If I surrender to the temptation to climb the golden ladder, I will never be truly fulfilled. But I also am talking to the NGO community. I am inviting all of us to learn from the poor, and with the poor. We need to get off that ladder in order to meet life as it is, even though we may find it difficult at times. However, as the poor can teach us, by looking beyond our upward climb, by reaching out to one another and working together, as Christ described, we can find true fulfilment. ■

Valdir Steuernagel is board chair for World Vision International, and director of the Centre for Mission and Pastoral Studies in Curitiba, Brazil.

Priorities for a new Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

Linda Hartke

SILENCE IS NOT AN OPTION

for the Christian. Nor is inaction. Injustice and suffering compel our advocacy in a world that desperately needs people of faith working together to foster positive change. This call to action could not be clearer in the face of the devastation that HIV/AIDS is bringing to individual lives, families and communities; and in light of the injustice bred by global trade practices that place profits and politics over people and the environment.

With these urgent needs in mind,

Even during these critical times, we have no doubt that people of wisdom and integrity are present.

the World Council of Churches in December helped create and launch the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, a network of churches, NGOs and others who have pledged themselves to tackle initially the issues of global

trade and HIV/AIDS. For each issue, this new Alliance will develop an educational approach as well as a specific strategy to bring about change.

Churches and NGOs have joined the Alliance by committing themselves to 'speak out with one voice against injustice, to confront structures of power, practices and attitudes which deprive human beings of dignity and to offer alternative visions based on the Gospel.' This commitment to joint action brings with it enormous strength and responsibility.

The Alliance's 'Covenant for Action' provides a flexible and open instrument, enabling participating organisations from the broad ecumenical family to work strategically on priorities identified as common to our witness and work. Many will participate: the WCC and its member churches, regional ecumenical organisations and fellowships, church agencies, specialised networks in the South, Christian world communions, international ecumenical and Roman Catholic organisations, and World Vision.

Acts of justice

In his opening address to the founding meeting, WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser said the time has come to take a courageous new step together to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation. 'The Alliance intends to continue and strengthen a commitment [whose] roots go back to the very beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. The Gospel must not remain a message of private salvation but [must] be translated into acts of justice and peace, affirming human dignity and offering reconciliation and fullness of life for all.'

The Alliance is designed to strengthen the prophetic voice and impact of ecumenical witness on the crucial social, political and economic issues of the day. It will do this by pooling the resources and experience of its partner bodies. It is also expected to depart from the institutional



logic of most ecumenical organisations, based on church or community membership and, instead, seek to encourage voluntary participation based on commitment to certain issues.

From a list of more than 170 suggested issues, the Alliance founding meeting selected two for attention over the next four years:

* Global economic justice, with a focus on global trade

* Ethics of life, with a focus on HIV/AIDS

Even during these critical times, we have no doubt that people of wisdom and integrity are present.

In choosing to work on global economic justice, the Alliance recognised that trade is dominated by a few economic powers: transnational corporations, governments and multilat-

eral institutions. This makes it extremely difficult for many countries to access world markets equitably, and has a devastating impact on the livelihoods of millions of families in the south. 'Advocacy work...is particularly needed at the level of the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union.' participants said.

Churches need to speak out

The Alliance identified the HIV/AIDS pandemic as one of the gravest challenges to health and also 'to prospects of social and economic development and global security.' HIV/AIDS' impact is a symptom of 'systematic economic problems such as under-investment in health and unequal access to effective treatment.' It is thus a particularly appropriate issue for churches. While governments and private companies need to be involved, 'churches need to speak out on causes, prevention, treatment and consequences.'

The Alliance also views peace and

conflict resolution as urgent concerns, and will thus encourage strategic partnerships in this area.

The call to action could not be clearer for the individual Christian, churches, and church-related organisations. A final communique issued at the founding meeting stated: 'The Christ we follow tells us that when we minister to the sick, the hungry, the stranger and the prisoner, we are ministering to Christ himself. His identification with the marginalised, his rage at the moneylenders and his willingness to challenge established social boundaries in view of the Kingdom of God lead us to a life of confronting unjust structures of power in solidarity with the excluded. With this conviction and with trust in the grace of God, we launch this Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.' ■

Linda Hartke serves as Co-ordinator of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and can be reached at e-alliance@wcc-coe.org.

Without a steering wheel

Leaderwell Pohsngap

DEVELOPMENT without values is like a car without a steering wheel. The engine may be good, the body beautiful, and the tank full of fuel. But start it going and it may run over many people along the way. Education, economic development and social mobility are important for any person. But holistic development occurs only when a person meets not only his basic physical and social needs, but spiritual and emotional needs, as well.

Inner strength

The same principle applies to a community. People need livelihoods, shelter, health and education, and

these are important to consider in any development strategy. But one needs to also think of developing the inner strength of a community to help everyone become a contributing member of society. Therefore, holistic development must continue to do several things.

One needs to also think of developing the inner strength of a community to help everyone become contributors.

It must equip people with tools for earning a living and achieving an education. It must encourage people to live in harmony with their neighbour and the environment. And it must challenge people to consider

the rights of others. Very often, the rich and powerful in communities, even those who started out poor, trample upon the rights of the poor and needy.

I do not understand how a person or a community can attain holistic development without values. We must aim at value-based development. And this is possible through spirituality, a spirituality of being and doing. Such an approach focuses on values to help everyone fulfil their potential. Spirituality also demands ethical standards of justice, love and mercy. Therefore, everyone can take part in infusing development with values. ■

Rev. Leaderwell Pohsngap is board chair for World Vision India and a member of the board of directors of World Vision International. He is also president of Union Biblical Seminary in Pune, India.

Spiritual foundations for global development

Bradley Nassif

HOW DOES FAITH influence the nature of development work conducted in communities around the world? Is there any evidence that would suggest that the presence of a spiritual element in development work has had a positive influence in the long-term well-being of a community?

Of course there are two ways to look at such questions: from the perspective of someone with faith, or from a perspective that is entirely secular. Is it inevitable that these perspectives should view the answers to the questions differently? Perhaps not. If we take Christianity as an example, it is true that a church, para-church, or educational institution such as a seminary can apply Christian values directly. These values, however, can also be applied on the personal and corporate levels without being overtly Christian in language or orientation. A secular organisation can utilise spiritual values by translating them into a trans-cultural and trans-religious vocabulary that applies to people everywhere, regardless of what nationality or religion they may belong to.

God's primary purpose for humanity is relational, to bring about wholeness in people's relationships.

The reason for trying to capture such values from a variety of perspectives is that they increase the potential for connectedness with the underlying values of the communities concerned. Faith, after all, brings a powerful dimension to all things relational. Again, if we use the Judeo-Christian tradition as an example, it is clear that God's primary purpose for humanity

is relational, to bring about wholeness in people's relationships with each other and with God. An interesting anecdote to illustrate this would be the social policy of the Byzantine Empire. After the Empire had turned to faith as a key organising principle, it became the first socially motivated system in the history of the world devoted to caring for the sick, the needy and the disabled. Divine philanthropy was enculturated throughout the Empire: St. Basil, one of the great theologians of the Trinity, organised the first hospital in our modern sense of the word.

Spiritual and cultural legacy

Similar observations could be made about the homes that Christians established and maintained for the poor, the orphaned, the blind and the aged. Medical centres offered surgical and maternity services, as well as psychiatric care. All of these expressions of social welfare by the Byzantine church and state (despite the obvious problems that come from such an alliance) were nothing other than the practical outworking of an understanding that the nature of God is love. The spiritual and cultural legacy of Christian philanthropy continues today in Russia and Eastern Europe, centres of the Orthodox Church. Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian and other Christians of the Middle East have done the same even longer than the Byzantines.

On a personal level, faith sees people and situations the way God does. It sees the potential for change, integration and wholeness. People of faith who work in development organisations of various kinds are called to translate their own communion with God into a form of social communion with their neighbours in the work-

place. In the same way, on the corporate level, faith will inspire leaders to take creative action to make the structures as well as the people in them reflect these values in a way that connects with the deepest levels of human need and suffering.

The values inherent in faith are therefore deeply relevant to those who approach the issue of development from a wide range of perspectives. Hope is faith directed toward the future. It means never giving up on

The values inherent in faith are deeply relevant to those who approach development from many different perspectives.

people, having the courage to deal with the reality of their lives and the potential for change. In an organisational context, hope means never giving up on situations. It brings our business and organisational ventures into greater conformity with what will one day be characteristic of the new heavens and the new earth. Of the three virtues, hope is probably needed most because it is the one that gives people the confidence that faith and love are possible.

Finally, love calls us to support another's dignity and integrity. It calls us to stay with people and affirm their dignity and self-worth although we may find them unpleasant, or they do not meet our expectations for development.

God loves the world, and we, too, are called to serve others so that the whole person, body and soul, may be fully humanised and divinely transformed. ■

Bradley Nassif, PhD, is professor of Eastern Orthodox Theology, Antiochian House of Studies (USA/Lebanon), and is the author of the forthcoming 'Westminster Handbook to Eastern Orthodox Theology', Westminster/John Knox Press.

Country profile: Mongolia

Alison Preston

HOME TO JUST 2.5 million people and some of Asia's last pristine ecosystems, Mongolia has one of the lowest population densities in the world. Nomadic people have probably been herding livestock on Mongolia's plains since 2000 BCE, and today Mongolia has one of the last remaining horse-based nomadic cultures, and the highest number of livestock per capita in the world. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union left this former satellite nation in crisis. As massive agricultural subsidies and industrial leadership were withdrawn, thousands of families became trapped in a cycle of unemployment, poverty, poor health and low self-esteem.

Many Mongolians consider their finest era to have been in the 13th century, when the armies of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan conquered territories from Eastern Europe to the Pacific. Chinggis Khan consolidated the Mongol tribes into the first Mongol state in 1291. However, the Mongol empire crumbled and came under Chinese rule from 1691 until 1911, when Mongolia's aristocracy and Buddhist lamas (with Russian support) declared Outer Mongolia independent. Mongolia then quickly fell under Soviet rule.

The collapse of communism came suddenly, with peaceful demonstra-

tions in the winter of 1989-90 calling for democratic elections. In March 1990, the ruling politburo resigned and was replaced by reformists. Elections were held in 1992. Suddenly, Mongolia was landlocked, with only one rail line from Russia to China providing it access to the outside world. Previously dependent on massive subsidies, Mongolia also faced the task of de-collectivising enormous state-run farms. The cost of maintaining these privatised farms proved too much for the new owners, which led to massive unemployment and a serious loss in grain and fodder production.

Fierce winters

Many former employees of state farms turned to herding livestock, for 79% of Mongolia is meadow or pasture, and in 1998, livestock numbers had grown to 33 million. However, these new herders were quite inexperienced in bringing their livestock through the fierce winters, when the ground freezes down to 3 metres and the land is covered in snow for 40-60 days in the South, and 150 days in the North, where the temperature can reach -50 C.

In 1999-2000, Mongolian herders faced their worst winter in 60 years, with an estimated loss of 2.4 million livestock. An estimated 6 million live-

stock are expected to die over the next few months. As the crisis continues, with ongoing drought reducing pasture growth, the United Nations has appealed for US\$11.7 million in emergency relief for Mongolia.

Mongolia's economy struggled through soaring inflation in the early 90s, and then the Asian economic crisis. Between 1991 and 1996, the cost of daily necessities such as food, clothing, housing, transport and education rose by 5,148%. By 1998, 70,000 families were estimated to be living in poverty, the majority of them led by single mothers. In Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia's capital, semi-slum, low-cost housing areas are growing. The water and sanitation systems in these homes are inadequate, and most families have lost access to electricity through inability to pay bills. The numbers of children living on the streets is also soaring in Ulaan Baatar and other cities, as children flee domestic violence and substance abuse at home.

Mongolia has inherited the welcome legacy of a 97% literacy rate among adults. More than 90% of the population speak Khalka Mongol, and Russian is widely spoken. Children learning Mongolian now use both the Russian Cyrillic script and the 800-year-old Turkic Uighur script that was banned for 50 years. Democracy in 1990 also allowed a resurgence of Mongolia's Tibetan-Buddhist spirituality. Monasteries have acted as centres for cultural life for centuries. ■

Alison Preston is international communications correspondent for World Vision Australia.

World Vision's response

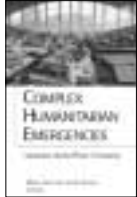
World Vision was invited to support emergency relief work following severe snowstorms in Mongolia in 1993. In May 1995, World Vision opened an office in Ulan Baatar, Mongolia's capital. Since then, World Vision has focused on sustainable community development and build-

ing on the capacity of local staff. Through instigating community gardens, World Vision staff are supporting families to improve their food security, income, the health and nutrition of their children, and sense of community. Soaring numbers of street children prompted World Vision to establish three centres for children to live in a secure, loving

environment where they attend school, develop social skills, and begin to face the trauma experienced in their difficult home lives and living on the streets. World Vision also continues to respond to emergencies, such as the past two winters, which have claimed an estimated 2.4 million livestock. ■

Publications

World Vision



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Special Report, February 2001 HIV/AIDS and Human Development in Africa

Moses Domba, Joe Muwonge and Don Brandt

By the end of 1999 more than 80 percent of the people infected with or killed by HIV/AIDS were Africans. Most of Africa's increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS may be attributed to conflict, poverty and cultural and behavioral practices. World Vision believes that HIV/AIDS in Africa now must be a global concern today because of the terrible human costs tomorrow.



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Tibebe Eshete, Siobhan O'Reilly-Calthrop

It is widely agreed that the global proliferation of small arms is responsible for greater prolonged conflict, instability, crime and deeper poverty. World Vision is concerned with the impact this is having on children and presents valuable lessons learned from peace-building programs and the implications for Humanitarian NGO's and governments with similar programs.

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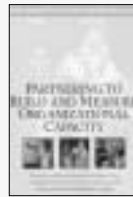
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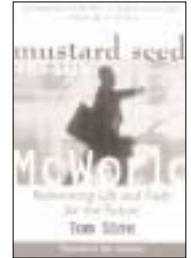
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'Mustard Seed vs. McWorld: Reinventing Life and Faith for the Future'

by Tom Sine; reviewed by Don Brandt

THE MAIN PROBLEM with reading 'Mustard Seed vs. McWorld' is that I find little with which to disagree. This makes writing a critical review something of a challenge. Perhaps this is to be expected. The author is a respected futurist who has gained a reputation as a crusader for environmentally friendly and socially just lifestyles. Not surprisingly, these topics reverberate, sometimes loudly but often subtly, throughout the book.



Screams for help that accompany life in the fast lane are Sine's special concern. The culprit is the lure of some perceived earthy salvation achievable through over-consumption. Created is McWorld, a consumer-driven pseudo-paradise whose reigning god is economic globalisation. Sine shows the power of McWorld and how institutions, such as the Western church, are crumbling before it.

The question begging for an answer is 'How has McWorld taken such a masterful position in people's lives in the West, especially among people of faith?' Sine's answer is dualism. Western civilisation has acculturated people to live in a universe that artificially separates the physical from the spiritual. Modernisation further encouraged this division between the tangible and unseen.

We could become depressed while reading 'Mustard Seed vs. McWorld', but Sine won't let us. The book is filled with scores of remedies that include staffing food banks, promoting community organic gardening, strengthening local businesses, starting food co-ops, helping people understand life in multicultural communities, and sponsoring innovations in affordable housing.

'Mustard Seed vs. McWorld' is more than a good read. It is a prophetic and challenging word that all need to hear. ■

In it for the long haul

Clive Calver

WHEN YOU SEE a suffering child, I'm sure your heart breaks. Mine does, too. I feel compelled to do something to help.

For me, it goes deeper than raw emotional response. As a Christian, I believe God wants us to help the poor and needy because that's the example Christ set for us. That's what Christian faith-driven development is all about. When the church helps the hurting, we're living up to the mandate of Christ, who called us to love people and show them his love and his compassion.

Many people are put off by the church's involvement in development because they think it's a covert way of proselytising people. Let's get something straight. We are not scalp hunters in disguise. We simply believe that people are made in the image of God and should not be suffering. We want to see societies that are just. I like what former Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple said about the church: 'The church is the only society on earth that exists solely for the benefit of its non-members.'

I believe the church plays a powerful role in development by offering hurting people hope. Millions of people see no way out of their desperate situations. By contrast, the Christian

faith offers meaning and purpose. When the church feeds the hungry, cares for the sick or builds schools or homes, it brings a powerful message of hope and love.

Faith-driven development is wrapped in compassion. Suffering people respond to kindness and tenderness. In many ways, our motivation

When the church helps the hurting, we're living up to the mandate of Christ, who called us to love people.

and attitude are more important than the physical aid we give. People can survive without many things. But they wither without love. I believe that faith-motivated development helps the downtrodden gain a sense of self-worth. There's so much more to helping the needy than filling hungry stomachs or clothing naked bodies. A person is much more than just a biological being. That's where faith comes in. We seek to develop the whole person, body, mind and spirit, not just tackle the adverse circumstances surrounding them.

No doubt you've heard the saying:

'Change comes from within.' Well, I believe faith can bring about dramatic changes in a person's life. Despair is turned to hope. There's purpose in living. When people are changed in this way, their lives take on new meaning.

Not a 'soft touch'

When people understand they have unlimited value in God's eyes, they gain the confidence and motivation to improve their lives. I don't believe in handouts. I believe in helping people help themselves by getting to the root of their problems. I believe in giving impoverished parents the opportunity to earn a decent wage, and equipping farmers to grow crops to feed their children. That way, the church isn't perceived as a 'soft touch'. Rather, the church is seen in its true role: transforming lives.

Of course, when I look at the overwhelming needs and massive problems in our world today, I can get discouraged. I despair sometimes because of the millions of people whom we are not able to help. We could do so much more to save lives and show suffering people unconditional love.

Christian belief in a better future is one of the most powerful forces on earth. The church is in this for the long haul. We will not pull out when the going gets tough. The church is firmly rooted in communities. It's a permanent fixture that people depend on in crises. ■

Clive Calver is president of the Christian development organisation World Relief.

WORLD VISION is a Christian relief and development partnership that serves more than 70 million people in nearly 100 countries. World Vision seeks to follow Christ's example by working with the poor and oppressed in the pursuit of justice and human transformation.

Children are often most vulnerable to the effects of poverty. World

Vision works with each partner community to ensure that children are able to enjoy improved nutrition, health and education. Where children live in especially difficult circumstances, surviving on the streets, suffering in exploitative labour, or exposed to the abuse and trauma of conflict, World Vision works to restore hope and to bring justice.

World Vision recognises that poverty is not inevitable. Our Mission Statement calls us to challenge those unjust structures that constrain the poor in a world of false priorities, gross inequalities and distorted values. World Vision desires that all people are able to reach their God-given potential, and thus works for a world that no longer tolerates poverty. ■



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