

## Global Poverty Impact Leader's Notes

### Session One Introduction

Luke 16:19 Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.<sup>20</sup> And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,<sup>21</sup> and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.<sup>22</sup> Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.<sup>23</sup> In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.<sup>24</sup> And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.<sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.'<sup>27</sup> And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house –<sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers – in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'<sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'<sup>30</sup> But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'<sup>31</sup> But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

### Session One Leader's Notes

*Luke 16:19 – 31*

Note: Be mindful that people may experience discomfort thinking about this passage, and Jesus' heart for the poor. This discomfort can be appropriate and constructive. As the leader, let people sit with these emotions without moving too quickly to action. Let them know that we'll pray and act on these things shortly, but don't move too quickly through the Scriptures.

1. We won't exhaustively handle questions about the afterlife right now. In fact, this passage is not an exhaustive treatment of how we get there and what it's like. Suffice to say that somehow, generosity towards the poor has some bearing on where we go eternally.
2. What clues do we have about the disparity between the rich man and Lazarus?
3. Does it matter whether the rich person caused the poor person's poverty? No: The rich man was sent to hell for doing nothing; he didn't *cause* Lazarus' poverty, but merely *ignored* it. It was in his power to help and he didn't (back to Singer). Globalization has created a tremendous responsibility for giving to the poor.
4. How much do you think the rich man should have given Lazarus?
5. Ask questions to encourage people to challenge their own giving. *Can we give any less than what we said the rich man should have given to Lazarus?*
6. Consider: As some regions of the world have experienced significant economic growth (remember that in previous centuries, nearly everyone was poor), the gap between wealthy and poor has increased. In 1820, the biggest gap between the world's richest economy (UK) and the poorest region (Africa), was a ratio of 4:1. In 1998, the gap between the richest economy (the US) and the poorest region (Africa) was 20:1.<sup>1</sup> POVERTY in the world hasn't changed much from when Lazarus laid there, hungry, homeless, and diseased. We're going to consider what else the Bible and Jesus in particular say about money and giving to the poor.

### Homework: Organizational Profile Next Week; Someone Research...

- Opportunity International – [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, 28.

## Session Two

### The Central Old Testament Theme: Wealth is God's Blessing for All

Comparison: Which comes first – the value of wealth or the value of a person?

<i>Wealth, then person</i>	<i>Person, then wealth</i>
Code of Hammurabi: <sup>197</sup> If a man has broken another man's limb, his own shall be broken. <sup>198</sup> If a man has destroyed an eye or a limb of a <i>poor man</i> , he shall pay one maneh of silver. <sup>199</sup> If a man has destroyed an eye or a limb of <i>the servant</i> of another man, he shall pay one-half of a mina. <sup>200</sup> If a man has made the tooth of another to fall out, one of his own teeth shall be knocked out. <sup>201</sup> If the tooth be that of a <i>poor man</i> , he shall pay one-third of a maneh of silver.	Leviticus 24 <sup>17</sup> If a man takes the life of <i>any human being</i> , he shall surely be put to death. <sup>18</sup> The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. <sup>19</sup> If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: <sup>20</sup> fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him. <sup>21</sup> Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. <sup>22</sup> There shall be <i>one standard</i> for you; it shall be <i>for the stranger as well as the native</i> , for I am the LORD your God.

Discuss: If wealth is God's blessing for all, then what did that look like in the Old Testament?

Leviticus 25:1 The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, <sup>2</sup> 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, <sup>4</sup> but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. <sup>5</sup> Your harvest's aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. <sup>6</sup> All of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. <sup>7</sup> Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat. <sup>8</sup> You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. <sup>10</sup> You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. <sup>11</sup> You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in from its untrimmed vines. <sup>12</sup> For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field...<sup>23</sup> The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me. <sup>24</sup> Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. <sup>25</sup> If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. <sup>26</sup> Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, <sup>27</sup> then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. <sup>28</sup> But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property...<sup>35</sup> Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. <sup>36</sup> Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you. <sup>37</sup> You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain. <sup>38</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God. <sup>39</sup> If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. <sup>40</sup> He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. <sup>41</sup> He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. <sup>42</sup> For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale...<sup>54</sup> He shall still go out in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him. <sup>55</sup> For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 24:10 When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not enter his house to take his pledge. <sup>11</sup> You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. <sup>12</sup> If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge. <sup>13</sup> When the sun goes down you shall surely return the pledge to him, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it will be righteousness for you before the LORD your God. <sup>14</sup> You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns. <sup>15</sup> You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he will not cry against you to the LORD and it become sin in you...<sup>17</sup> You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge. <sup>18</sup> But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing. <sup>19</sup> When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you

in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup> When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. <sup>21</sup> When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. <sup>22</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

Isaiah 58:1 'Cry loudly, do not hold back;

Raise your voice like a trumpet,

And declare to My people their transgression

And to the house of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> Yet they seek Me day by day and delight to know My ways,

As [if they were] a nation that has done righteousness

And has not forsaken the ordinance of their God.

They ask Me for just decisions,

They delight in the nearness of God.

<sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted and You do not see?

Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?'

Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, and drive hard all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist.

You do not fast like you do today to make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself?

Is it for bowing one's head like a reed

And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed?

Will you call this a fast,

Even an acceptable day to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke,

And to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry

And bring the homeless poor into the house;

When you see the naked, to cover him;

And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break out like the dawn,

And your recovery will speedily spring forth;

And your righteousness will go before you;

The glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;

You will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'

If you remove the yoke from your midst,

The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness,

<sup>10</sup> And if you give yourself to the hungry

And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,

Then your light will rise in darkness

And your gloom will become like midday.

<sup>11</sup> And the LORD will continually guide you,

And satisfy your desire in scorched places,

And give strength to your bones;

And you will be like a watered garden,

And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

<sup>12</sup> Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;

You will raise up the age-old foundations;

And you will be called the repairer of the breach,

The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

### **Homework: Organizational Profile Next Week; Someone Research...**

- EFICOR (Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief) –Review “Hardship in the Malto Development Project,” published by Tearfund and [www.eficor.org](http://www.eficor.org) for additional information.

## Session Two Leader's Notes

*Leviticus 25, Deuteronomy 24:10 – 22, Isaiah 58*

1. Agree or Disagree: The fact that the Code of Hammurabi gives rich people legal privileges testifies to its human origin, whereas the Law of Moses' view that people are equal regardless of their wealth suggests its divine origin. Who would invent or preserve this? Especially if the literate are the powerful and the law-makers?
2. Agree or Disagree: Eastern religions like Hinduism and Buddhism have an emphasis on looking beyond or escaping the material world, while the biblical tradition emphasizes meeting physical needs now because of this theme that wealth is God's blessing for all, giving a rationale for social justice and compassion.
3. What does this tell us about God's heart for people?
  - a. Because God values everyone, no one should be destitute and in poverty. God takes steps to arrange Israel's society that way. (Leviticus)
  - b. God also sees wealth as something that is tied to community and family. (Leviticus) For example, family comes to restore property to a family member. People are restored to their ancestral lands. Slaves go free and go back home. Debts are forgiven.
  - c. If someone is poor, their dignity must be maintained. (Deuteronomy)
  - d. Social justice is a form of piety and devotion to God, and is more important than ceremonial activities, like going to church regularly, fasting, and calling for revival, though those things are also important and have a place. (Isaiah)
4. Would we have a basis for valuing each person's worth without a God who values each person that way? I don't think so. The atheist story of an impersonal universe and 'survival of the fittest' makes it irrational to do so.
5. Compare our theme with the following attitude: 'I am entitled to wealth because I've worked hard.' How does this theme help us give thanks to God (not ourselves) for what we do have?

**Session Three**

**New Testament Theme #1: Jesus Transforms Us & Our Use of Wealth**

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; <sup>2</sup> and walk in love, just as **Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us**, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. <sup>3</sup> But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; <sup>4</sup> and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. <sup>5</sup> For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

2 Corinthians 8:1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup> that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, <sup>4</sup> begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, <sup>5</sup> and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. <sup>6</sup> So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. <sup>7</sup> But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. <sup>8</sup> I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. <sup>9</sup> **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.** <sup>10</sup> I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. <sup>11</sup> But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. <sup>12</sup> For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup> For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality-- <sup>14</sup> at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; <sup>15</sup> as it is written, 'He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack.'

	<b>CLASSICAL GREEK (&amp; EASTERN?) RELIGIONS</b>	<b>CHRISTIANITY</b>	<b>ATHEISM</b>
<b>US:</b> What are we?	<b>SOUL</b> We are good, immortal souls trapped in a bad, mortal body	<b>BODY AND SOUL</b> We are both; God created and redeems the whole person	<b>BODY</b> We are physical, chemical beings
<b>HOPE:</b> What is there to hope for? And in?	<b>DISEMBODIMENT</b> The separation of soul from body. We hope to break through physical limitations.	<b>RESURRECTION</b> God's renewal of the world, begun by Jesus' bodily resurrection, and raising us from spiritual death now	<b>NO CONSCIOUSNESS</b> We hope in what humanity can accomplish for ourselves.
<b>GIVE UP WEALTH</b> for the poor, the weak...?	<b>NO</b> (since other people's bodies are not important) to <b>SOMEWHAT</b> (compassion although it's questionable whether this fits rationally in the worldview)	<b>ABSOLUTELY YES</b> since we are made to be like Jesus and honor the whole person.	From <b>NO</b> (Social Darwinism) to <b>SOMEWHAT</b> (compassionate humanism, although it's questionable whether this fits rationally in the worldview)

**Session Three Leader's Notes**

Quickly review the table. It's important to understand the context: the Gentile Christians would have to resist the Greek worldview they grew up with, and also engage with people still in it. I added the Atheist column to make the point that we have another worldview to engage, and that atheist ethics follow the atheist story.

*Ephesians 5:1 – 5*

1. How does the Christian view of greed compare with our culture's view?

2. Why is greed a form of worshiping something else (idolatry)?
3. Why is giving God thanks (v.4) a good antidote to greed?
4. What has Jesus done for us out of his love?
5. How does Jesus serve as our example in self-giving?

*2 Corinthians 8:1 – 15*

1. Context: Paul is exhorting the Corinthian believers to give what they said they would for famine relief. The money will go to Jerusalem to help their faraway Jewish Christian brothers and sisters, who are threatened with lean times by a famine.
2. Context: Look at the comparison between Greek views of the person and the Christian view of the person. The atheist view of the person is also listed as a comparison point that's relevant for us today. Notice how directly the Christian view of the person cuts across the Greek view of the person.
3. What are some of the reasons for the Corinthian Christians NOT to give to the Jewish Christians?
  - a. Greek cultural and philosophical background says that giving isn't important. All their non-Christian neighbors would have said, 'You did what?!'
  - b. The Jewish Christians were far away. The Corinthians had never met them.
4. Note: Paul's view of giving to the church is that we give money to the global church, specifically in places where the global church is suffering and in poverty. Today, we just give 10% to local churches.
5. What are some of the reasons for them TO give?
6. How does Jesus serve as our example in generosity?
7. Besides Jesus, who serves as a role model of generosity like the Macedonians did to the Corinthians? i.e. Who are our Macedonians? For me, it is someone like Tom Hsieh.

## Session Four

### New Testament Theme #2: Jesus Cares for the Poor through Us

#### People in My Group Will Simplify Their Lives By:

#### Scripture Reflection:

<sup>Acts 4:32</sup> And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. <sup>33</sup> And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales <sup>35</sup> and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

<sup>1 John 3:17</sup> But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

<sup>1 Timothy 6:7</sup> For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. <sup>8</sup> If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. <sup>9</sup> But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs... <sup>17</sup> Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. <sup>18</sup> Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup> storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

<sup>Luke 18:18</sup> A ruler questioned him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' <sup>19</sup> And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>20</sup> You know the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother.' <sup>21</sup> And he said, 'All these things I have kept from my youth.' <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' <sup>23</sup> But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. <sup>24</sup> And Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' <sup>26</sup> They who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' <sup>27</sup> But he said, 'The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.' <sup>28</sup> Peter said, 'Behold, we have left our own homes and followed you.' <sup>29</sup> And he said to them, 'Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup> who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.'

#### Homework: Research...

- EFICOR (Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief) –Review “Hardship in the Malto Development Project,” published by Tearfund and [www.eficor.org](http://www.eficor.org) for additional information.

## Session Four Leader's Notes

Luke 18:18 – 30

1. Why does the rich ruler find it hard to give up things when Jesus calls him to do so?
  - a. What's the problem with trying to hold onto wealth and the Mosaic Law? It's incompatible with Jesus' agenda because it is from Israel's old life. Mosaic Israel (a stationary community tied to its land) needs to transition to Messianic Israel (a mobile community not tied to financial security) and become new. We know where Jesus is headed with his community, and he wants this man to be a part of it. But wealth gets in his way. Let this point sink in, because it's not how we are used to thinking about the Law and Jesus. 'In Israel, what was appropriate until then was appropriate until then. Now with Jesus, everything changes.' What would this rich ruler be able to give his kids? Not his land anymore! This ruler is so invested in the social system, he can't let go and come to Jesus.
  - b. Fundamentally, because the rich ruler believed that wealth was a reward from God for good moral behavior. For instance, when Israel sinned, they were conquered by Babylon and exiled from the Promised Land. So, conversely, Jews in the time of Jesus believed that if they were obedient to the Law, God would rescue them from captivity to the Roman Empire.
  - c. In what ways do we think wealth is a reward from God for good moral behavior?
  - d. That's probably why "our capacity to feel is limited," according to Paul Slovic of the University of Oregon, in a journal article, "Psychic Numbing and Genocide." Professor Slovic argues, "We cannot depend on the innate morality even of good people." (Nicholas Kristof, *Save the Darfur Puppy*, NY Times May 10, 2007) The innate moralism of 'good people' is precisely what stops them from giving! We expect some kind of wealth as a reward for our morality and 'hard work'! We don't think it's fair to us that Jesus calls us to give to the poor. Or we view the issue as 'charity' and not 'justice.'
2. State: The reward for following Jesus is...Jesus! The reward for being a generous person is...being a generous person! That only makes sense to me at least if Jesus' life and character are what it means to be truly human.
3. Why is Jesus' love shown to the world when Christians give to the poor?
  - a. It shows that God expresses love for all
  - b. Countering objections:
    - i. The rich ruler is unique in how materialistic he was. I don't think that's the case because his problem with materialism is not just his problem. This is evident because Peter and the disciples in v.28 also say that they had given away all they had. Thus, the rich ruler is typical. Jesus asks all his disciples to give up all they have. See Luke 14:33.
    - ii. The rich ruler was being legalistic, and that was his real problem; Jesus was bringing him to the end of himself by asking him to do something that was and is impossible. I don't think that's the case because Jesus does not say that he actually didn't live up to the Law, or that he did it with bad motives. Jesus doesn't debate that the rich ruler had indeed lived by the Law since his youth. The issue, rather, is that the rich ruler believed that he should continue to own his ancestral land. Jesus, on the other hand, is seeking to free Israel from its ancestral land and send his disciples out into the world.
4. What is so surprising about v.29? Why doesn't Jesus just say, 'I tell you the truth, if you've given up all that, you've got me!' We do have him, but we also have 'house and wife and brothers and parents and children.' In other words, we inherit a new family. We become a part of a new community.
5. This challenge is not so much about individualistic struggles with materialism as it is a challenge to join a new community, Jesus' community. And Jesus wants his community to be a radical one. That's why he demands everything of this man. It's just like Luke 14:33, where Jesus says, 'No one can be my disciple who does not give up all his (or her) possessions.' The reason is because Jesus calls us into a new community, where wealth is meant to be shared and be used strategically.
6. What is Jesus' response? That you can't outgive God. You are entering a new community where people will be an extended family to you, and (hopefully) help you. And you will inherit much more in the next age.



## Session Five

### Relief, Development, and Microfinance

Approaches to addressing poverty

- Relief: Give a man a fish.
- Development: Teach a man to fish.
- Microenterprise: Help him start a business.
- Fair trade: Buy fish from the business.
- Political advocacy: Grant fair access to the fishing pond, stop others from dumping in the pond, keep the pond clean, and develop sustainable practices.

*Relief* is, of course, necessary when disasters occur. If relief is not carried out well, it will lead to chronic problems such as disease (in the medium term) and economic collapse (in the longer term). Look no further than New Orleans to see the consequences of poorly planned and executed relief.

Relief is perhaps most familiar form of giving and is often the default method; it's the easiest to raise funds for relief because: 1) The overwhelming immediate needs generated by a famine or natural disaster are easy for anyone to grasp. 2) Disaster receives greater media coverage. 3) The victims are obviously not at fault (whereas sometimes the causes of chronic poverty are more ambiguous). 4) It doesn't seem to require long-term commitment on the part of the giver.

Ultimately, relief is like putting a band-aid on a wound. It will stop the bleeding and help for a time, but it can only alleviate the symptom temporarily. What is needed is a cure, which is what development tries to achieve.

*Development* is investment in people and infrastructure for the long term. "Transformational development is the process that helps people to discover their true identity as children of God and to recover their true vocation as faithful and productive stewards of gifts from God for the well-being of all. Transformational development is seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, and spiritually." (Bryant Meyers of World Vision) Aspects of development include: Health care; agriculture or aquaculture; infrastructure (wells, roads, housing, latrines).

*Microfinance* is the provision or creation of financial services in poor communities. The term microfinance covers a variety of activities: collective saving and lending circles, financing for small businesses. An alternative to predatory lending, it provides the poor with access to credit at a fair rate.

Scripture: Luke 6:31 – 36

<sup>Luke 6:31</sup> Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. <sup>32</sup> If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

## Session Six

### Fair Trade and Political Advocacy

Approaches to addressing poverty

- Relief: Give a man a fish.
- Development: Teach a man to fish.
- Microenterprise: Help him start a business.
- Fair trade: Buy fish from the business.
- Political advocacy: Grant fair access to the fishing pond, stop others from dumping in the pond, keep the pond clean, and develop sustainable practices.

*Definition:* Fair trade is a voluntary initiative for farmers, workers, and craftspeople to participate in direct and equitable trade in the global market. Fair trade guarantees that certain practices and principles have been observed in the creation of a product. Fair trade provides an alternative to the vulnerability that many of the poor face when market prices fall below their own production costs. Fair trade products are also typically produced by worker-owned organizations or in organizations that make a high level of investment in their workers. In that way, workers are protected from the vulnerability of isolation.

Example for discussion about fair trade: the banana industry

- A handful of companies import the majority of bananas to the United States (especially Dole and Chiquita). These companies operate differently in different nations. In some cases, they own the land on which bananas are grown, and in other cases, they buy bananas from contract plantations.
- In 2004, the monthly minimum wage for an agricultural worker in Ecuador was \$143 / month. In 2004, the poverty line in Ecuador was \$279 in monthly income. (Source: FoodFirst Information and Action Network)
- In 2002, Human Rights Watch reported that many children in Ecuador were paid \$3.50/day, less than the minimum wage.
- Banana production has taken different forms in Central America, South America (which export bananas to the U.S), and the Caribbean (which exports bananas primarily to the UK).
- The cultivation of Central and South American land for bananas had mixed impact. On the one hand, the banana industry enabled the building of roads and schools in rural areas. On the other hand, it produced an agricultural mono-culture (overuse of land for one kind of plant) that threatens the environment and bio-diversity.

*Definition:* Political advocacy for the poor is important because being in poverty often means being powerless. Poverty is often maintained unjustly through the unequal treatment of the poor in the creation or the enforcement of laws. The goal of this section is to discuss the biblical concept of inclusion in relationship to political life and the creation of laws.

Scripture: Luke 14:12 – 14

<sup>Luke 14:12</sup> And he also went on to say to the one who had invited him, ‘When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’

## Session Six Leader's Notes

Luke 14:12 – 14

1. Give context: In Jesus' time, eating was culturally a very intimate thing... Once that person entered your home, you shared your life with them. You were saying, "You are my friend and equal, and you have a claim on what's mine. I am including you. I am inviting you."
2. Pose questions regarding the relation of this passage to global poverty:
  - a. What would it mean to be radically inclusive in addressing global poverty?
  - b. How can we include more people at the table and at the fishing pond?

## **Session Eight**

### **Giving Together**

Reflection from St. John Chrysostom:

*Remember how we have been created. All human beings have a common ancestor. Thus all human flesh has the same substance; there is no difference between the flesh of the nobility and that of peasants. When we commit an act of charity, in which we use our excess wealth to help someone with too little, we are acknowledging our unity with others. After all, the rich and the poor have the same flesh, the hunger of the poor should cause pain to the rich; and the pain can only be soothed through assuaging that hunger. Sadly, rich people often speak about charity, expressing their good intentions, but their deeds do not match their words. Good intentions give some cause for hope: they mean that the rich recognize their unity with the poor. Our challenge is to persuade the rich to turn words into actions. Preachers must try to do this; and so also must everyone who has an opportunity to speak to the rich. (St. John Chrysostom, **On Living Simply**, meditation 3)*