

Theology & Development

what has theology got to do with development?

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Aims of this presentation:

- * Explore the reason for the primacy of evangelism/social action
- * Investigate the relationship of social action/development to the *Missio Dei*
- * Identify confessions or ecumenical statements with reference to social action/development
- * Explore an understanding of transformational development
- * Identify the theological 'keys' to development
- * Explore how theology influences praxis
- * Identify reading materials for your college/seminary/university

Why?

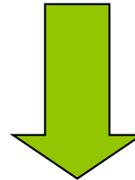
- * Why should a seminary or college include it in their curriculum?
- * Why is theology an important part of the piece?



Dichotomies between evangelism & social action

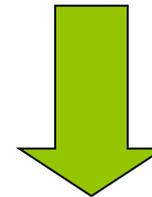
- * The church has **struggled to balance or integrate social change and inner change**
- * **At times they over emphasised the one and at other times the other**
- * These concerns were grounded in the debate about whether evangelism or social action takes priority in Christian mission:
- * Where evangelism was emphasised relationship with God and therefore inner change was the most NB
- * Where social action emphasised outreach to fellow humans was emphasised therefore social change most NB

Dualism – separation of body / mind / spirit (flows out of modernism)



sep. the **physical**

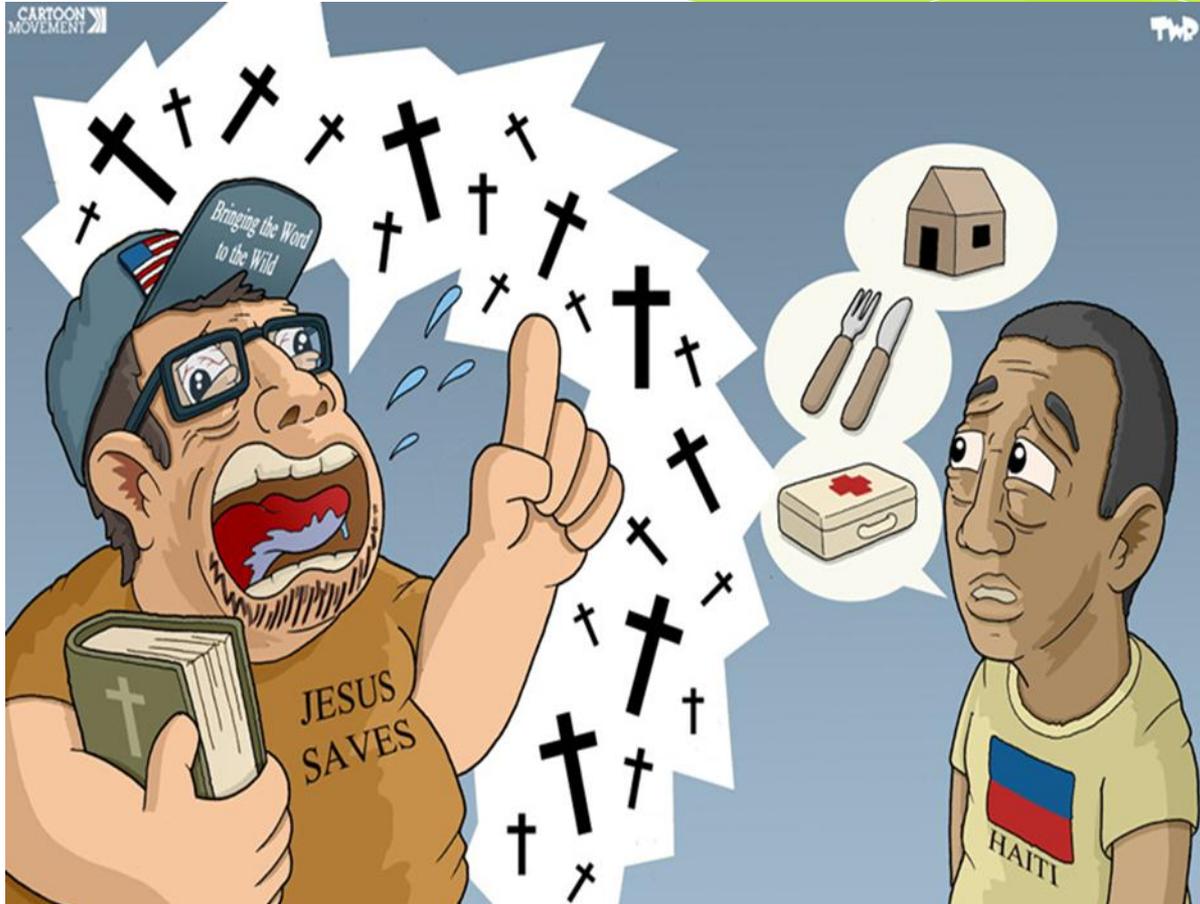
from the **spiritual**



* **Social action** = Not NB

Evangelism = NB
restoring
relationship with God
therefore it's more NB...

* **or vice versa...**



the results are...

- * personal transformation seen as separate from social transformation (some churches may have well developed social ministries, but there is no relationship between evangelism & social action)
- * personal transformation valuable, but social not/vice versa (some churches understand mission only in terms of evangelism)
- * social transformation seen as calling of few 'philanthropists'
- * social probs. just need to be "prayed about"/social problems just need to be worked at
- * Sin is individual, not structural/sin is structural not individual

Revisiting the Missio Dei

- * A lack of awareness of the problems or missiological challenges that churches need to respond to often result from a dichotomous understanding of mission.
- * If mission is God's Mission (Missio Dei) and has its origin in the heart of God – there is mission only because God loves people – God's love of people has been shown to be holistic.
- * Our missionary activity (missions) cannot be likened as identical to the Missio Dei (mission) as “our missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God. The Church stands in the service of God's turning to the world” (Bosch 1991:31)

Willingen conference, 1952

“The missionary obligation of the Church comes from the love of God in his active relationship with humanity. For God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to seek out, and gather together, and transform all persons who are alienated by sin from God and their fellows. This is and always has been the will of God. It was embodied in Christ and will be completed in Christ. For God also sends forth the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Sprit, the Church experiencing God’s active love is assured that God will complete what He has set His hand to in the sending of His Son. This is the hope with which the Church looks forward to the goal of its existence, which in fact sets the Church marching onwards. In this sense ‘mission’ belongs to the life of the Church”

Lausanne Statement, 1974

- * THEN..
- * 6. "The Church and Evangelism," the Covenant reads: "**In the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary**" (373). Evangelism is still "primary," but the church's mission is construed as "sacrificial service," which, following Stott's interpretation of the mission of Jesus as one of "**service**" to the whole man, embraces social action and caring for the poor (302).
- * NOW..

Lausanne, Cape Town 2010

- * 5. **“Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.”**

Accra confession (WARC)

24. We believe that God is a God of justice. In a world of corruption, exploitation and greed, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, the exploited, the wronged and the abused (Ps 146.7-9). God calls for just relationships with all creation.

25. Therefore we reject any ideology or economic regime that puts profits before people, does not care for all creation and privatizes those gifts of God meant for all. We reject any teaching which justifies those who support, or fail to resist, such an ideology in the name of the gospel. We believe that God calls us to stand with those who are victims of injustice. We know what the Lord requires of us: to do justice, love kindness, and walk in God's way (Mic 6.8). We are called to stand against any form of injustice in the economy and the destruction of the environment, "so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Am 5.24).

27. Therefore we reject any theology that claims that God is only with the rich and that poverty is the fault of the poor. We reject any form of injustice which destroys right relations – gender, race, class, disability, or caste. We reject any theology which affirms that human interests dominate nature.

28. We believe that God calls us to hear the cries of the poor and the groaning of creation and to follow the public mission of Jesus Christ who came so that all may have life and have it in fullness (Jn 10.10). Jesus brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; he frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind (Lk 4.18); he supports and protects the downtrodden, the stranger, the orphans and the widows.

29. Therefore we reject any church practice or teaching which excludes the poor and care for creation, in its mission; giving comfort to those who come to "steal, kill and destroy" (Jn 10.10) rather than following the "Good Shepherd" who has come for life for all (Jn 10.11).

30. We believe that God calls men, women and children from every place together, rich and poor, to uphold the unity of the church and its mission so that the reconciliation to which Christ calls can become visible.

31. Therefore we reject any attempt in the life of the church to separate justice and unity.

32. We believe that we are called in the Spirit to account for the hope that is within us through Jesus Christ and believe that justice shall prevail and peace shall reign.

Development as transformation

- * Other terms... Diaconia (WCC, LWF, European churches, DRC, WARC?), Integral Mission (evangelicals Latin America & Micah Network)
- * Bryant Myers' books popularised the term transformational development (TD) (World Vision, Tearfund, WEA)
- * The term transformation assured those concerned for evangelism that their vision for changing or transforming people would not be lost in the concern to transform the social relationship in which people were set.
- * Myers (1999/2011) identifies that transformation must occur on 2 levels:
 1. Changed people (inner)
 2. Just and peaceful relationships in structures (social)
- * The roots of poverty and injustice are key in TD conceptualisation

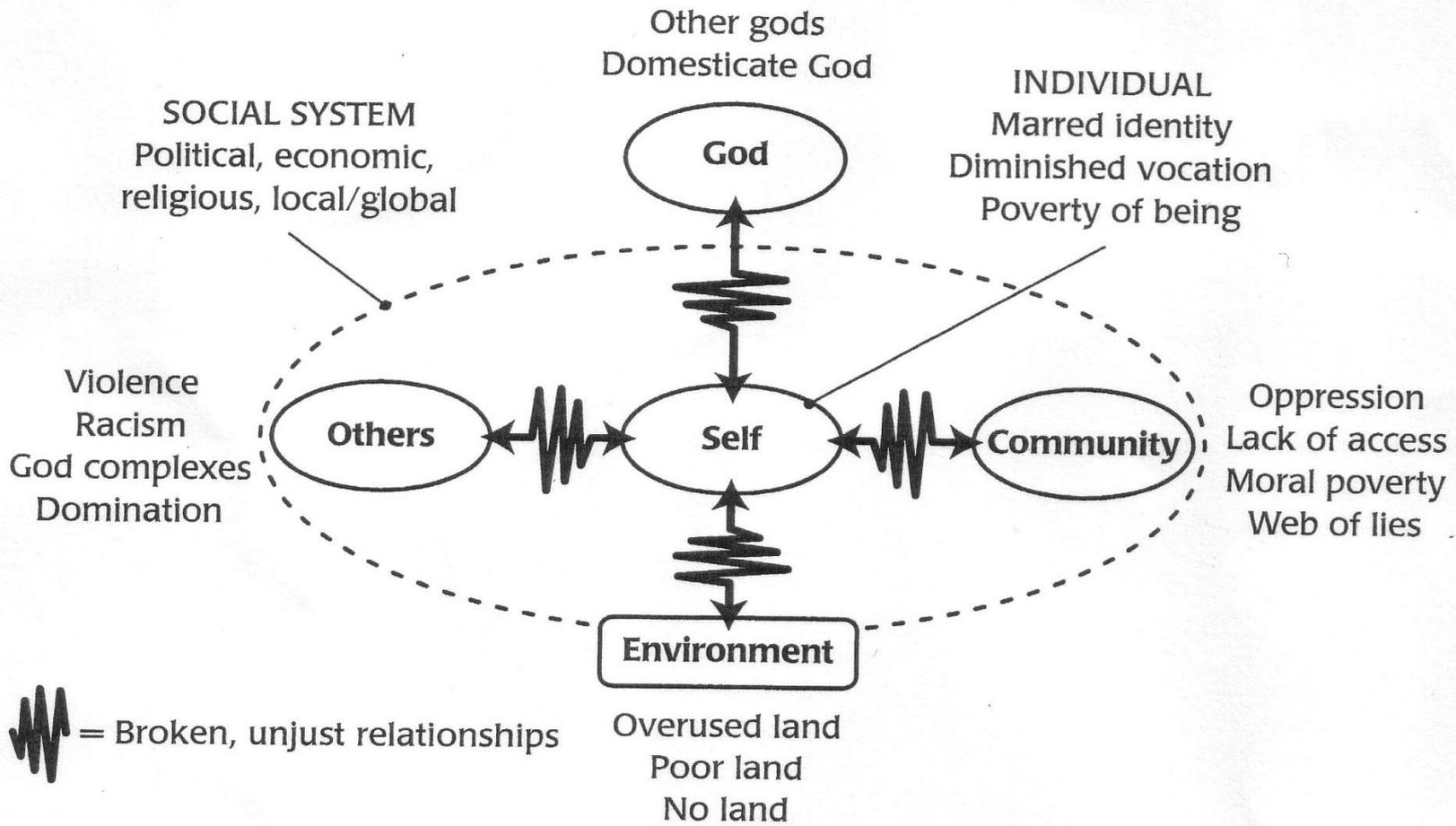


Figure 3-13: A relational understanding of poverty.

Goal of TD as Shalom

- * While the term Shalom has commonly been translated as “peace” (as the absence of strife), it is a relational concept which is aligned to the concept of holistic wellbeing
- * According to this view the goal of Christian transformation is unique. It is that of shalom or the New Testament concept of the Kingdom where harmony, peace and justice reign under the Lordship of Christ.
- * The appropriation by Christian development practitioners of the term, therefore focuses on its broader meaning. shalom has been translated as: health, wholeness, prosperity, justice, harmony and general well-being. In essence it is peace within all our relationships: with God, with self, with others and nature.
- * Salvation as a holistic concept

What is Shalom?

- * This implies a full restoration of all fallen relationships within all the spheres of life and living – whether they be physical, social or psychological
- * Salvation as a holistic notion, not just individual
- * Therefore, shalom is living in right or just relationships, the absence of which leads to a lack of harmony/brokenness/illness in all these spheres. This is expressed in social disorder (economic inequality, political oppression and exclusivity), environmental degradation and in physical and emotional “ill-being” (Brueggemann 1982:18; Bowers Du Toit 2010:267).

Know the God of the Bible
Be in Christ
Be indwelt by the Holy Spirit

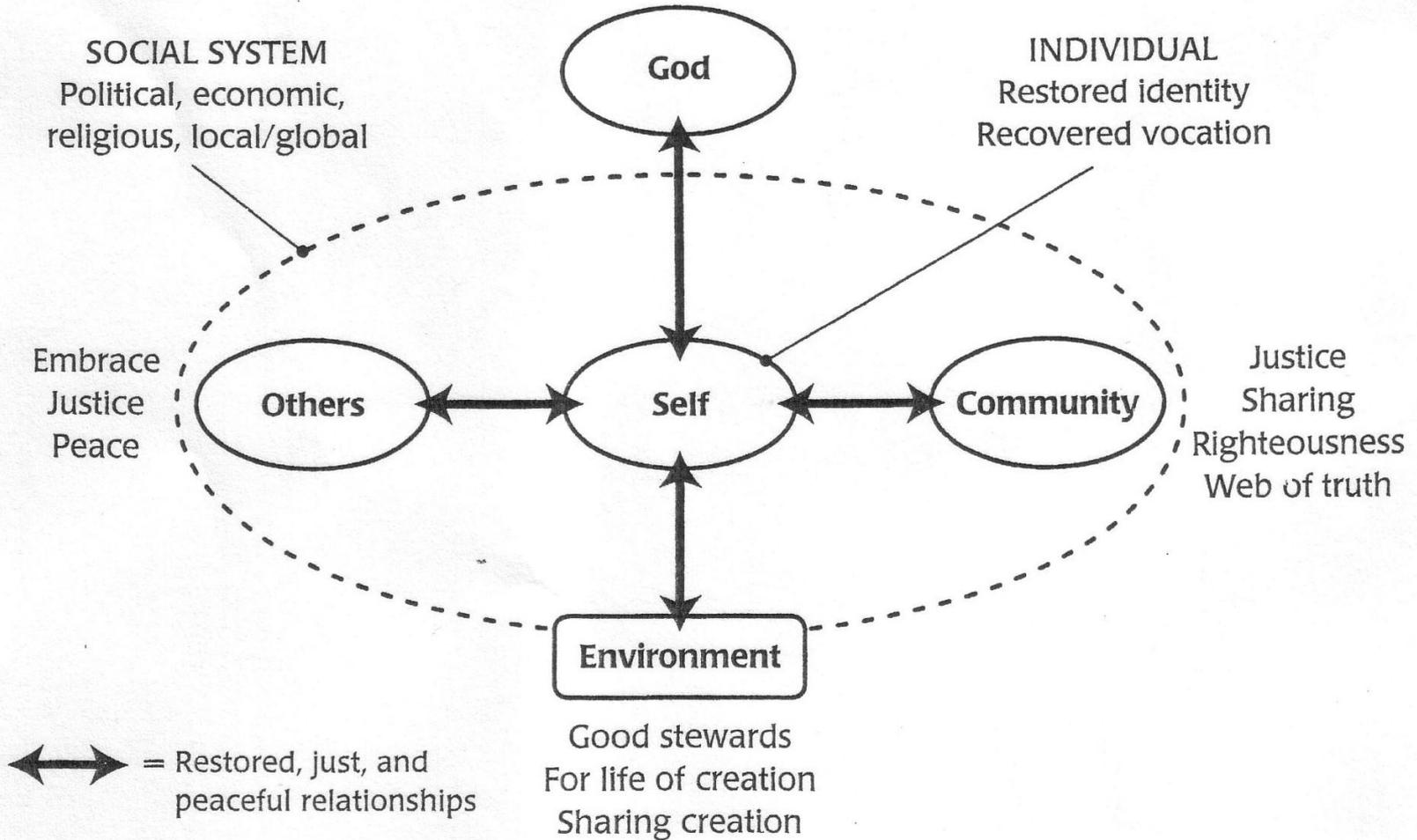


Figure 5-3: Transformed relationships.

Quote..

“Transformational development is every biblically based activity of the body of Christ , his church, that assists in bringing human beings toward the place of complete reconciliation with God and complete reconciliation with their fellows and their environment”

(Robert Moffit)

My findings in terms of TD, theology & churches

Barriers/Opportunities

- * theology is key in helping churches engage – eschatology/end times (theology of the kingdom) and holism (rather than dualism) are the most important
- * Future ministers need to understand that the roots of our action are biblical, not just contextual...
- * Clarifying roots of poverty and injustice in sin – esp. with regards to extremes of Prosperity Gospel or Social Gospel
- * ... and therefore understanding salvation as cosmic/holistic (not just evangelism – clarifying the relationship)
- * In an African context we have to take work of Spirit seriously (“God of the Empty Handed”, excellent book)

THEOLOGY MATTERS



Theological keys to development...

- * **1. Soteriology:** dealing with dualism and the holistic nature of salvation (see Willigen & Lausanne 2010)
- * **2. Theological anthropology:** Imago Dei – restoration of personhood (both poor and non poor)
- * **3. Ecclesiology:**
 - * Church as the human community under God's rule is called to be a visible sign of the Kingdom
 - * Church is not the Kingdom, but an instrument of the Kingdom in witnessing to a God of justice, love & peace

Theological keys to development

4. Eschatology:

- * It follows that the church as the human community under God's rule is called to be a visible evidence of His presence and demonstration of His Kingdom in situations of poverty.
- * It is important to note in this regard that the church is not the Kingdom, but an agent of the Kingdom. Therefore, although the Kingdom extends beyond the church and cannot be attained in the present purely by the actions of the church, the church remains an instrument of the Kingdom in witnessing to a God of justice, love and peace

What you could be reading/prescribing...

- * B. Myers: *Walking with the Poor* (new edition 2011!)
- * J. Christian: *God of the Empty Handed*
- * V. Samuel & C. Sugden: *Church in Response to Human Need/Mission as Transformation*
- * H. Lotter: *When I needed a neighbour where you there?*
- * Classic Liberation Theology books (Gueterriz, Boff, Bonino, Cone etc).
- * Swart, I et al. 2010. *Religion and Social Development* (includes contributions by Swart, Hendriks & Bowers Du Toit).
- * Journals: *Diaconia Journal*, *Transformation Journal*, *HTS Theological Studies* (not subject specific, but quite a bit on poverty, theology, urban mission etc.), *Ecumenical Review* (not subject specific, but quite a bit on diaconia).