

## BEYOND DEVELOPMENT TO TRANSFORMATION

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Since the advent of humankind on earth, civilization has been characterized by gradual change through technological advances by discovery and innovation, allowing societies to increase their control over the environment (and often over other societies). Following the industrial revolution and with the advent of the scientific era, however, there has been unprecedented, rapid economic and social change that has created a divided world—a world of extreme material wealth and one of extreme poverty. These are the *developed* and *developing* (or *less developed*) countries, often referred to as the one-third world and the two-thirds world.

This situation of inequity, in turn, has created the phenomenon of planned social change, the development programmes at local, national and international levels. Local communities have projects; nations have five year development plans; international aid for development finds many avenues of expression. Hundreds of millions of dollars are committed yearly.

The Christian churches are increasingly involved in these programmes, in one way or another. Traditionally the Christian response to human need has been one of compassion; missionaries have taken the benefits of modernity to their fields of service in the form of schools, medicine, hospitals, agricultural techniques and the like. Since World War II, these spontaneous acts of mercy have become institutionalized in church and para-church agencies for relief and development. The evangelical churches of the west alone commit millions of dollars yearly to these programmes, and third world church groups are also responding increasingly to human need in their midst.

Until very recently, these agencies have done little evaluation of their programmes to see how effective they are and, indeed, if they are doing what they think they are. The churches have not paused long enough to examine the assumptions underlying the concept of development in general or of the current approaches to development in particular.

Since each developmental approach arises from within a specific socio-cultural context, and since God reveals truth within all cultures, through common grace, all societies and systems, including all developmental approaches, contain elements of value, as well as distortions and evil. A brief review<sup>1</sup> of

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<sup>1</sup> For a more thorough discussion of these four approaches, see the article referred to in the author footnote.

four current approaches to development can remind us of the strengths and weaknesses of each. This, then, could help guide us, as Christians, towards a more adequate approach beyond current conceptualizations and practices of development.

#### **Four current approaches to development (and underdevelopment)**

**Modernization:** The **modernization theory** of human progress and social change gained impetus after World War II as a response to the needs of new nations and to the Cold War. It holds that the way to development is to diffuse the western, industrial system to these “lesser developed” countries, for which it is also called diffusionism. The ultimate goal is to increase production and economic growth, which will raise the standard of living and provide a “good life” for as many as possible. The modernization theory assumes that: (1) traditional societies are underdeveloped; (2) modernization is inevitable; (3) production equals development; (4) benefits will trickle down to the most needy; (5) nation-to-nation aid fosters development.

The very existence of tribes, hunters and gatherers is being threatened by modernization. Traditional culture is being displaced and the global ecological systems have been placed in serious jeopardy by modernization. Yet modernization has provided, for select populations, the potential for a better life by providing for basic human needs in an unparalleled way in history—food, health, shelter, transportation, communication, education, leisure, *inter alia*. Increased wealth has provided the leisure and the means for great cultural, intellectual, and even “spiritual” progress of civilization, whereas in poverty, a person’s energy and creativity have to be dedicated to survival. But likewise a materially wealthy society has also produced tedium, exhaustion, and desperation.<sup>2</sup> The irony of the industrial, wealthy state is that materialism often creates one-dimensional people. Wealth alone is not enough for true development, and the social cost is high. “The human cost of accumulation in the industrialized countries, whether market-oriented or centrally planned, has been terribly heavy even if this fact has sometimes disappeared from the memories of the descendants of the sacrificed generations.”<sup>3</sup> Modernization overlooks one of the real reasons why underdevelopment exists in the first place, inherent in the market economy that is not truly free, but skewed in favour of the rich nations.

**Dependency and underdevelopment:** The **dependency theory of underdevelopment**, which has arisen in reaction to the continuing and increasing disparities between the rich nations and the poor, is a critical analysis of the structural causes of global inequity. André Gunder Frank’s thesis of “The Development of Underdevelopment” (1969) encapsulated the thinking that

<sup>2</sup> See Kenneth Clark in *Civilizacao: Um Visao Pessoal*, ed. Martins Fontex (Brasilia: Universidade de Brasilia) 1980, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *What Now? Another Development*, The Dag Hammarskjold Report on Development and International Cooperation, Special issue of *Development Dialogue*, No. 1/2 (1975), pp. 34-35.

arose in Latin America in the 1960s that perceived Latin America's underdevelopment as being a product of the colonial and neocolonial activities of the "centres." The centres (or metropoli) are the developed countries and the "peripheries" are the underdeveloped satellites. The dependency theory assumes that: (1) neo-colonialism prevents indigenous capital development; (2) centres grow at the expense of peripheries; (3) dependency is perpetuated by the domination of the centre; (4) economic development is the most important; (5) capitalism causes the ills of dependency; (6) dependency is a one-way street.

The dependency theory attempts to explain the causes of underdevelopment. In its negative reaction to modernization, dependency still seeks progress and modernization, but on the basis of a socialist revolution. Structural changes are proposed to lessen or eliminate the growth of the capitalistic centres at the expense of the peripheries, but socialist exploitation is no less exploitative. Development is still top-down with stronger state controls. The development proposed is just as unidimensional and materialistic as modernization; human beings are seen as producers and consumers with the state or collectivity as the supreme value. Human needs include also the psychological and political spheres: "Just as men have a right to food, they also have a social right to speak, to know, to understand the meaning of their work, to take part in public affairs and to defend their beliefs, the right to education, to expression, to information and to the management of production."<sup>4</sup> Dependency did, however, conscientize and prepare the ground for the proposed global reform and self-reliant theories.

**Global reformism** (*The New International Economic Order*): **Global reformism is a political call for equity.** As a reaction to a growing dissatisfaction with centre-periphery dependency, the New International Economic Order (NIEO) was, and continues to be, a cry for economic interdependence rather than dependence, based on a more equitable international distribution of wealth. Interdependence was interpreted by the NIEO proponents, a group of 77 non-aligned nations, in terms of equitable and fair trade agreements arrived at by equal and autonomous nations rather than an interdependence characterized by poorer countries exchanging more raw goods for more manufactured wares. This theory assumes that: (1) the assumptions of modernization are valid, and reform would help the poorer countries catch up; (2) world resources are infinite; (3) poorer nations can remain united in their call for reform; (4) the western model of development is the ideal model; (5) trickle down economics really works; (6) international economic reform will enable dependent countries to control their own destiny with honour. Global reformism, as represented in the NIEO and more recently in the Brandt Report (1980), accepts and propagates the basic tenets of modernization, while seeking a structural realignment to provide a more equitable access to the fruits of western industrial and technological development. It is both a political and an economic proposal that ignores the ecological implications of

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

the quick technological “fix” and the potential perpetuation of selective (elite) development at the expense of the poor. It is still a proposal, although some nations are implementing some aspects of the agenda.

*Self-reliance, an alternative development:* The self-reliant approach to development is a strategy for more appropriate development, based not on external constraints and potential dependency, but rather on internal needs and criteria. It seeks to redress the inequitable distribution of economic and political power and to promote participation from the lowest levels up. Self-reliance attempts to create a harmonious cooperative world in which each part is a centre, living at the expense of nobody else, in partnership with nature and in solidarity with future generations. Self-reliance assumes that: (1) self-reliant development can be ideologically neutral; (2) a strong political state is a precondition; (3) local people have enough consciousness to work for their own self-reliance; (4) people are conformable, rational and non-egoistic; (5) a community has a degree of self-sufficiency in terms of capital and production. Self-reliant development positively proposes an endogenous and appropriate style of development. It rejects the imported technological growth model in favour of a lower-level progress within the reach of all. It is still “progress” but an enlightened sort, determined by the context, and responsive to the local power structures and to ecological constraints. Self-reliance does not “buy into the system” but rather creates many styles of development. It has potential for a more just and satisfying level of existence for all peoples, but it suffers from idealism and from lack of enthusiasm by the current power blocks.

### **Beyond development to transformation**

Each of these four approaches to development contributes something to the ideal of human progress, yet contains inherent assumptions and flaws. Development is a diffuse concept that inadequately describes the goals and the processes of human and social change. It comes to mean whatever anyone wants it to mean, given whichever set of culturally-defined assumptions. For some, development connotes all the benefits of scientific and humanistic progress. For others, development is perceived as a pejorative term and is called “developmentalism.” Some liberation theologians, such as Gutierrez, call for a radically different system, rather than an extension of developmentalism that only places band-aids on human misery and injustice.

**What is a Christian perspective?** Many theologians and Christian development workers have struggled with the limitations—the cultural baggage—of the term development, but have continued to use it for lack of a better one. Others have tried<sup>5</sup> to redefine and “Christianize” the term. Yet the negative and limited images remain. I propose, therefore, a term, a concept, that is less loaded and that is more adequate to a Christian perspective. I suggest *transformation*.

<sup>5</sup> See Edgar Stoesz, *Thoughts on Development*, Akron, Pa: Mennonite Central Committee) 1975, and Merrill Ewert, *Humanization and Development* (Akron, Pa: Mennonite Central Committee) 1975.

**Why transformation?**

Transformation is a particularly Christian concept—to take the existing reality and give it a higher dimension or purpose: a rag-tag slave group transformed into the Hebrew nation, five loaves and fishes into a banquet for 5000, bread and wine into the symbol of spiritual unity with Christ, Jesus' human form into the glorified body. It takes what is and turns it into what could be.

It is the change from a level of human existence that is less than that envisioned by our creator, to one in which a person is fully human and free to move to a state of wholeness in harmony with God and with every aspect of his/her environment. The Papal encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (1976), envisioned such a “world where every man can live a fully human life.” Transformation implies the restoration of the *imago dei* and the bringing into subjection of the principalities and powers<sup>6</sup> within the new order of things (I Cor. 5:17). The human being as predator is transformed into the human being as co-creator, as steward. Social and economic relationships are changed to conform with the kingdom principles of peace, justice, and love, manifested in the people of God as community.

Transformation involves both material and spiritual changes, wholistically. Material progress without transformation of the person is difficult to achieve and maintain. Case histories abound of “development” programmes that have failed due to human greed, power play, graft, politicking, or plain lethargy. Cooperatives depend on people with a sharing ethic; they have usually failed. There is no true “development” without true transformation. Even the US Agency for International Development (AID) recognizes that the churches and the mission agencies are more honest and efficient at implementing programmes than government or secular agencies.<sup>7</sup> Conversion to God is the primary transformation; this is explored further below.

Transformation is a joint enterprise between God and humankind, not just a mechanistic or naturalistic process. It involves, then, a transformation of the human condition as we observe it within each of the theories; the “developed” modernized world needs transformation to free itself from a secular, materialistic condition marked by broken relationships, violence, economic subjugation, and devastation of nature, and the “under-developed” world needs transformation from the subhuman condition of poverty, premature death, oppressions, disease, fears. Whereas development is a process applied to the third world, transformation is equally applicable to the western and underdeveloped worlds.

This transforming process is toward a world more in line with God's original purposes through not only a present amelioration of the human condition, but also a process that moves actively and creatively toward the future, through

<sup>6</sup> Or “institutions and orders”, in Stephen Mott, “Biblical Faith and the Reality of Social Evil”, *Christian Scholar Review*, IX, No. 3 (1980), pp. 225-240.

<sup>7</sup> John G. Sommer, *U.S. Voluntary Aid to the Third World: What is its Future?* (Washington, D. C.: Overseas Development Council) 1975, p. 72.

the mission of the church. "This struggle of humanity towards its full dignity reveals that man and the world are created with a specific purpose, with a goal to be obtained through a continuous process of change and renewal."<sup>8</sup>

It is a process of God's continuing action in history through his people—through the manifestation of the present-and-coming kingdom. Transformation is central to the kingdom of God in which the individual transformation of people is linked with the transformation of social structures that oppress people and keep them in poverty.

### Characteristics of transformation

How do the four current approaches to development discussed above contribute to a theory of transformation? What are their positive values and how do they contribute to the basic criteria against which we can measure human and social transformation and against which each theory is itself measured?

**Life-sustenance.** Any plan for transforming human existence must provide adequate life-sustaining goods and services to the members of the society.<sup>9</sup>

Basic human needs must be met. Without food, water, shelter, clothing, life is impossible. With only minimal life-support, existence is sub-human, afflicted by disease, malnutrition, brain damage (protein deficiency), high infant mortality, unemployment, ignorance, economic bondage. The physical requirements are basic needs, the "inner limits," for calories, protein, and water, without which 500,000 children in the third world die each year. Another billion people go to bed malnourished each night.

Obviously modernization, with its technology and scientific approach, has met these basic needs for the majority of the population in the industrialized west (there are pockets of poverty). It is no wonder that the third world looks longingly toward industrialization, even though the social costs are high.

Meeting basic needs is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for social transformation. Wealth increases the range of human choices. With improved material conditions, persons are enabled to deal with the other needs in Maslow's hierarchy. The quantitative becomes the basis for the qualitative ascent of human society.<sup>10</sup>

James indicates this when he admonishes:

Suppose a brother or a sister is in rags with not enough for the day and one of you says, "Good luck to you, keep warm and have plenty to eat," but does nothing to supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? (James 2: 15,16)

Even the spiritual transformation depends on the physical. Our daily bread is essential.

<sup>8</sup> Nikos A. Nissiotis, "Introduction to a Christological Phenomenology of Development", *A Reader in Political Theology*, ed. Alistar Kee (Philadelphia: Westminster Press) 1975, p. 82.

<sup>9</sup> Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development* (New York: Atheneum) 1975, p. 94.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

The self-reliant approach also seeks to meet basic human needs, but by lowering the standards and stressing the basics, in contrast to the growth model and luxuries of the west.

**Equity.** A second characteristic of social transformation is an equitable distribution of material goods and opportunities for progress among the peoples of the world. The glaring disparities between the *haves* and the *have-nots* are well documented. Whatever the causes, the fact remains that two-thirds of humanity is suffering deprivation while a minority lives extremely well. On the one hand, the overconsumption by the United States contrasts sharply with the poorer regions: the US wastes more energy than Japan uses, spreads more fertilizer on lawns, golf courses, and cemeteries than China uses. The problem, in part, is distribution. On the other hand, within the third world countries, the terribly skewed income distribution needs to be redressed. If the wealth of the upper five per cent of the population were more evenly distributed, equity would be served. Land tenure is perhaps the biggest problem in Latin America, the dominant upper class holding often as much as eighty per cent of the arable land and water, as in El Salvador.

The Dag Hammarskjold Report states:

There are sufficient resources to satisfy the basic human needs without transgressing the "external limits" [of the biosphere]. The question is primarily one of a more equitable distribution.<sup>11</sup>

Lappé and Collins argue that the world can produce food enough for ten billion inhabitants if the people were given access to the land, among other changes.<sup>12</sup> If social progress is to be valid, the advantages must reach the most needy. Modernization has failed to distribute its fruits to the poor. Over thirty million Americans are below the poverty line in the USA. The poor nations are getting poorer and further in debt.

"The Christian favours a kind of development that is within the reach of the majority."<sup>13</sup> An essential element of transformation is equity. All are God's children, with needs and potential. God has a special concern for the have-nots—the poor, defenseless, weak, marginalized, sick, and hungry. The early church shared with the needy (Acts 2:42-47). Paul, commenting on the sharing by the Macedonian church, stresses equality:

. . . it is a question of equality. At the moment your surplus meets their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus. The aim is equality: as Scripture has it 'the man who got much had no more than enough, and the man who got little did not go short.'  
(II Cor. 8: 14-15)

<sup>11</sup> *What Now?* op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Frances Moore Lappé, Joseph Collins and David Kinley, *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity* (New York: Ballantine) 1977, pp. 13ff.

<sup>13</sup> John V. Taylor, *Enough is Enough: A Biblical Call for Moderation in a Consumer-oriented Society* (Mpls, Minn: Augsburg) 1975, pp. 13-17.



The dependency theory has pointed out the inequitable distribution, and self-reliance theoretically offers the greatest possibilities to redress the problem by stressing the needs of the poorest of poor, and a “fairer redistribution of resources satisfying the basic needs” in a harmonized cooperative world . . . living at the expense of no one else.”<sup>14</sup>

Global reformism, on the other hand, falls short of a relatively equal distribution among all levels of the population, while attempting a more even distribution among nations.

**Justice.** Justice is correlated with equity, yet goes beyond mere redistribution. One can have a fair share of material goods and services without enjoying justice; slaves were often treated very well but within unjust relationships. Relationships and power structures need to be transformed into just ones, eliminating privileges for the few when they are at the cost of the many. The class and caste systems, institutionalized racism, the status of women, the controlling elites, and the international trade rules need transforming. “A just vision of the transformed world is: where every man, no matter what his race, religion, or nationality can live a fully human life, freed from servitude imposed on him by other men or national forces over which he has no control.”<sup>15</sup>

God is just and seeks justice above everything else.

For the Lord your God is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphans and widows and shows his love for the alien . . . .  
(Deuteronomy 10:17-18)

*Isaiah* 58 describes in detail the justice that God would have done. Justice is one of the major themes of the Bible.

Modernization is blind to justice; the maximization of profit motive and the un-free capital market system tend to create injustices. The anchovies of Peru go into cattle feed to make marbled beef for rich palates, while the Quechuan diet is protein deficient. Both dependency and reformism fail to address the justice issue because exploitative structures remain intact: the state on the one hand and the elite on the other.

Self-reliance does seek to redress the unjust relationships. It would allow every level of society to exercise local, democratic power, promote equal rights, and throw off any repression. Likewise, the tribes who resist the oppression of modernizers seek justice in their own way—a right to live as they always have on their lands.

**Dignity and self-worth.** A fourth characteristic is dignity. It is necessary for people to have a sense of self-worth and dignity in the process of change. Many development projects have been vitiated by donor-recipient relation-

<sup>14</sup> Cocoyoc Declaration: A declaration by UNCTAD/UNEP Expert Seminar in Cocoyoc, Mexico, published in *Development Dialogue*, No. 2 (1972) pp. 88-96.

<sup>15</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (Vatican City) 1967.



ships that rob recipients of dignity. The very fact that people are seen as “target groups” or “recipients” of programmes creates paternalism. They sometimes internalize a feeling of inferiority or rebel against the strong/weak relationship. It is difficult to receive with dignity; people need self-esteem to be fully human. According to Stoesz, “Development is people with an increasing control over their environment and destiny, people with dignity and self-worth.”<sup>16</sup> Self-identity requires a good dose of self-esteem. Demeaning and condescending attitudes by the rich nations and agencies need transforming into partnership attitudes. Christ knew how to serve without condescension and how to give with dignity. His attitude even with his persecutors was one of ascribing worth to them, “They know not what they do.”

Relationships within the modernization approach have been extremely paternalistic and demeaning, and dependency and reformism have sought to rearrange these on behalf of the periphery. Global reformism calls for better terms of trade and equal-to-equal arrangements between autonomous nations. The self-reliance approach carries this further, calling for temporary withdrawal and for a readjustment of “needs” that would remove weaker economies from the control of the stronger. By relying on self, it “excludes dependence . . . that can be converted into political pressure.”<sup>17</sup> It also means trust in people and nations based on an equal footing, thus creating better self-esteem and dignity.

**Freedom.** One of humankind’s most cherished birthrights—freedom—is a vital component of our concept. History is replete with the struggles of peoples to resist servitude, subservience and slavery. Goulet<sup>18</sup> sees one of the objectives of development to be persons freed from servitude—servitude to nature, to ignorance, to other persons, to institutions, to beliefs considered oppressive.

Christian transformation involves liberation of people from these bondages and from bondage to themselves. Christ told his followers, “If the Son makes you free, you will truly be free.” Freedom from oppressive systems, tyrants, customs, and freedom to be all that one wants to be—to be self-actualized, however that is conceived; freedom to achieve all the dimensions of human potential; to realize the genetic potential endowed by God.

Concretely, social transformation for most Africans is freedom from the vestiges of colonialism and racism and from economic neo-colonialism. Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, underscores this in the Arusha Declaration:

Freedom from colonialism and the preservation of some of our local traditions are at least as important as the accumulation of western-style wealth. It is more important to us to be human than to be merely rich.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Edgar Stoesz, *op. cit.* p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Cocoyoc Declaration, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Denis Goulet, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism/UHURU NA UJAMAA* (New York: Oxford University Press) 1967.

For Latin American peasants, the desire for freedom—from oppressive national policies, from structures that marginalize them from their land and from police states—was the birthing of liberation theology.

The dependency theory struck a blow for economic freedom from neo-colonialism, but failed to assure continued freedom under the revolutionary regimes. Self-reliance does attempt liberation from unjust international and national powers by stressing local control and participation, to ensure the people's freedom.

**Participation.** An important ingredient in all of this is the role that people play in social transformation. To the degree that people participate in the process, to that degree it is meaningful, effective and lasting. The best-laid plans of “developers” have been wrecked by a top-down approach rather than participation by those involved. Local initiative and control from the beginning of any project are essential for people to “own” the programme and carry it forward. Nyerere suggested, “All men who are suffering from poverty need to be given confidence in their ability to take control of their own lives.”<sup>20</sup> Without this they remain untransformed.

In God's economy, God defers to human participation in the matter of reconciliation. Persons are allowed, even required, to participate in the shaping of their own history, personal and collective. True human transformation comes about when people are able to act upon their own needs as they perceive them and progress toward a state of wholeness in harmony with their context.

In contrast to the other models, self-reliance fosters a full participation by the people, at every level, “to invent and generate new resources and techniques, to increase their capability to absorb them . . . to generate their own way of life.”<sup>21</sup> The result is endogenous development.

**Reciprocity.** Progress and social change result from both independent discovery within a culture and from intercultural contact and diffusion of innovation. All societies receive benefit from others. The United States has a rich heritage from many cultural influences, as do most nations. In a good sense of the word, we all depend on others. This is certainly biblical. No one is self-sufficient, and certainly no society is. However, when it comes to social change and amelioration, the temptation has been for the industrial, modernized countries to assume that they have the key to success and will use it to help the world “develop.” It is easy to forget that they can learn from the poorer countries, poorer materially but richer perhaps culturally. The Dag Hammarskjöld report reminds us that:

There is a vast area for cultural cooperation which would help the industrial societies to recognize finally that the human experience is rich, and redefine their styles of life.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> In a speech given to Maryknoll missionaries, Maryknoll, New York.

<sup>21</sup> Cocoyoc Declaration, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>22</sup> What Now?, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

The positive values of the traditional societies can instruct the modern societies in many ways, if they will but listen. Cocoyoc affirmed that they should “help the affluent nations, for their own well-being, to find a way of life less exploitative of nature, of others, and of themselves.” This implies reciprocity and, as Goulet says, vulnerability. Are the rich societies willing to open themselves up to learning reciprocally? Is “aid for the over-developed west” possible?<sup>23</sup> Under the approach of self-reliance, it would be. The alienated worker, overextended consumer, ruptured family in the west could learn some things. Invariably young people who volunteer to live and serve in a third world community gain as much or more than they give.

**Cultural fit.** Transformation must be appropriate to the culture that it penetrates: it must fit. Too often modernizers have ignored customs and social patterns in an attempt to bring material benefits to the “backward.” In fact they saw traditions as deterrents to the adoption of change and technology, without understanding the rationality of the accumulated wisdom of a society. They did not stop to listen to the peasant! The result has been cultural imperialism and destruction of indigenous values, even of whole cultures.

The westernized elite who clamour for a new international economic order tend to ignore the cultural heritages of their peoples, even sacrificing them to “progress” via industrialization and exportation. The dependency theorists have no better record when they come to power; witness the Indian problems in Central America or Peru under revolutionary regimes.

Cultures are, by extension, a part of God’s creation and he respects them all. “Thou art worthy because thou didst create all things . . . thou . . . didst purchase for God men of every tribe and language, people and nation . . .” (Revelation 4:11 and 5:9). Christ honoured all culture by becoming part of the Jewish culture with all its traditions (some gone bad). No culture is pure and holy, but all have intrinsic value that can be redeemed and used for social transformation. When a culture is destroyed, a part of creation and a part of all humanity dies. Then we are all impoverished. In self-reliance, the stress on cultural heritage and the creativity of the men and women who constitute it is strongly biblical in tone.

**Ecological soundness.** Just as any good transformation should be culturally sensitive, it should also be environmentally sound. We live in a closed biosphere (with only solar energy coming in) that is delicately balanced for our existence.

The pressures put on the eco-system are increasing with the population and industrialization, particularly the high and harsh technology fostered by modernization. We have seen the ecological costs. Unless the process is transformed into a “gentle” technology that works with nature instead of abusing it, our grandchildren will live (if they can) in a totally inhospitable biosphere depleted

<sup>23</sup> Bob Gouzaard, *Aid for the Overdeveloped West* (Toronto: Wedge Publication Foundation) 1975.

of non-renewable resources and choked by our own wastes, nuclear and otherwise. The Cocoyoc Declaration urged that we have an ethic for our grandchildren, “preserving a base of production compatible with the necessities of future generations.”

A clear theme of stewardship and the preservation of land runs through the Bible, e.g., each seventh year the land was to rest (Leviticus 25:4). Men and women are to be stewards of the natural resources.

Self-reliance stresses an ecological balance within the natural environment, and a technology that is appropriate and compatible with the eco-system. It would not raid the world’s non-renewable resources for a quick “technological fix.” Witness the hoe-to-oxen plough transformation called by Nyerere.

*Hope.* If there is one common element present in all transformation, it is the factor of hope. Without an attitude of expectation, even optimism, change rarely occurs. Peasants or landless slum squatters will not take risks unless there is a good chance that the change will result to their benefit. This involves an element of hope. Pessimism, usually born of bitter experiences in the past, is the nemesis of positive social change.

A primordial characteristic of Christianity is hope. God’s intervention through Christ interjected a sense of movement into history. The lordship of Christ gives the rationale and the responsibility to make changes which predict the day when every knee shall bow before him. There is a way out of the human predicament. God is on the throne. Evil will not always prevail. God hears the cries of humankind. We are enabled, through Christ, to realize here and now something of the kingdom’s presence—“the kingdom has come near” (Matthew 10:7).

All the approaches, except perhaps dependency, are optimistic about their solutions; modernization holds out the hope that the “good life” will trickle down, and global reformism, the hope of a restructured world economy. Yet these macro-solutions often give rise more to pessimism than to hope. The one that holds the most hope for the “little” people of the world is self-reliance because it proposes small solutions at a village level and gives the participants control.

*Spiritual transformation.* This characteristic is only implicit in the four approaches. The core of human and social transformation is spiritual. Without the change in attitudes and behaviour implicit in conversion, human beings remain self-centred creatures. Sin, both individual and institutionalized, is a basic deterrent to social transformation. Sin has been defined as the “social and cosmic anti-creation”<sup>24</sup> resulting in injustice and exploitation, racism and oppression, alienation and anomie. We noted from the deleterious effects of modernization that human beings have a rapacious nature and that the ex-

<sup>24</sup>ROSEMARY REUTHER, as cited by Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis) 1973, p. 9.

isting order (cosmos) is distorted by inequalities and injustices. The spiritual transformation of humankind, with its break with the present system through a transformation (renewal) of the mind, is an essential ingredient to social transformation. Structures can be changed by God through common grace, but the biblical model is transformed persons transforming social structures.

Thus the spiritual transformation is not only of the individual but of society, indeed of all creation. Wallis sees redemption as a “world event in which the individual has part.”<sup>25</sup> The individual becomes part of the community of believers, which is the means by which the new order, the kingdom, is made present in the world.

Indeed, Ron Sider muses:

Perhaps the genuinely unique contribution of Christians to development is precisely the people of God—the Church—as a new community where all relationships are being redeemed.<sup>26</sup>

As these relationships are redeemed, structures and institutions are changed, as we have seen in the historical moments when Christianity has changed society—the status of women, child labour laws, the abolition of slavery, or the Christian influence in the revolution in Nicaragua.

The development theories examined do not explicitly incorporate the spiritual change of persons and society, but it is implicit in most of them, in an indirect way. The global reformism and self-reliance approaches call for a more just world order, and their stress on human liberation and fulfillment reflect Christian values. Although none of the models puts spiritual regeneration as a goal or means to progress, their references to becoming “more fully human” and becoming less victimized and alienated can be given soteriological meaning as well as sociological. In fact Nyerere, father of the self-reliant model, is a Christian. The point is that human spiritual change—regeneration and reconciliation—must accompany and condition social transformation.

### **From development to transformation**

No development theory adequately meets all the characteristics presented in this paper, while each reflects to one degree or another some of the essential elements of transformation. Each development approach has strong contributions to an adequate definition, but each falls short of a wholistic and biblical perspective. The one that comes closest to a Christian perspective is, perhaps, self-reliance.

**Development that is Christian is transformation of the person and social structures that frees persons and societies to move toward a state of increasing wholeness in harmony with God, with themselves, with others, and with the environment.**

<sup>25</sup> JIM WALLIS, “The Vehicle for Vision” in *Seed of the Kingdom* (Sojourners) 1977, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> RONALD SIDER in a talk given at High Leigh, England, 1980.