

**Top 30 Things to Ponder About Helping
from the Principles of *When Helping Hurts***

CHAPTER 1: WHY DID JESUS COME TO EARTH?

- 1) Does your work declare the gospel in both word and deed?
- 2) The evangelical church in North American church retreated from helping the poor before the welfare state even began. (See p. 45)
- 3) Jesus identified his mission on earth as proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 4:17-21, 43), and the local church has been given the task of declaring and demonstrating this Kingdom. Do you partner with and respect the local church? Or do you bypass the local church(es) in your area?
- 4) Are you concerned with bringing healing and reconciliation to every aspect of individuals and communities, or are you only concerned with material poverty?

CHAPTER 2: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- 5) Do your poverty alleviation efforts affirm the gifts and abilities of people who are poor, as bearers of the image of God with inherent dignity and worth?
- 6) Do you approach poor communities with the notion that they are part of the good world God created and is sustaining? "They are not *just* filth and rubble." (p. 60)
- 7) Having a material view of poverty can negatively impact how we help/ approach the poor. Do you find yourself stuck in the following equation?

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Material} & & \text{God-complexes} & & \text{Feelings of} & & \text{Harm to Both} \\ \text{Definition} & + & \text{of Materially} & + & \text{Inferiority of} & = & \text{Materially Poor} \\ \text{of Poverty} & & \text{Non-Poor} & & \text{Materially Poor} & & \text{and Non-Poor} \end{array}$$

- 8) At the heart of poverty is the brokenness of the four relationships: with God, self, others, and the rest of creation. (p. 61)
- 9) What is your motivation in helping the poor? Are you motivated by a god-complex or by guilt?
- 10) Poverty is multifaceted, so the solutions to poverty must be multifaceted as well. Do you treat people holistically (i.e. caring for how poverty affects

every aspect of a person's life – physical, spiritual, social, economic)? (See p. 60, first full paragraph)

- 11) Have you been influenced by the “health and wealth gospel,” which says that the more spiritual we are the more God will give us material wealth in this life, suggesting that the wealthy are more spiritual than the poor?
- 12) Are you prepared to walk with the materially poor because you realize you're suffering from the same fundamental problems? We all need development, not just the materially poor. (p. 62-64)
- 13) When thinking about the situation of the world's poor, do you quickly find yourself wondering how you can *fix* their problems?

CHAPTER 3: ARE WE THERE YET?

- 14) In your work and in your partnerships, is the good news of the Kingdom and a clear verbal proclamation of the gospel being communicated? (p. 80-81)
- 15) Reconciliation of relationships is the guiding compass for our poverty alleviation efforts. The goal is not making poor people all over the world like middle-to-upper-class North Americans. (p. 78)
- 16) Do you work in a way that empowers the poor to earn sufficient material things through their own labor? (p. 78-79)

CHAPTER 4: NOT ALL POVERTY IS CREATED EQUAL

- 17) Do you seek to avoid Paternalism at all costs? (p. 115-119)
- 18) Relief, rehab, and development are three different contexts that call for three different solutions. Do the organizations you apply the appropriate intervention at the correct time? (p. 103-105)
- 19) In relief and rehabilitation work, do you build on local assets (people and goods) whenever possible? (p. 110-113)

CHAPTER 5: GIVE ME YOUR POOR, YOUR TIRED, AND THEIR ASSETS

- 20) Do you focus on a community's needs first? Starting with a focus on needs belittles community members and reinforces an inappropriate hierarchical relationship between outsiders and insiders. (p. 125)
- 21) The typical North American need for speed undermines the slow process needed for lasting and effective long-run development. How might your

desire to see outcomes and progress be undermining true and lasting development? (p. 130-133)

CHAPTER 6: MCDEVELOPMENT – 2.5 BILLION PEOPLE NOT SERVED

- 22) How is the voice of the poor heard in the development initiatives you engage in?
- 23) Participation is not just a means to an end, but rather a legitimate end in its own right. Do you seek the highest level of participation in each situation? (p. 145-150, especially see Table 6.1 on p. 148)
- 24) Organizations and resource persons alike must accept a slower process and decision-making by the poor themselves. Effectiveness does not equal quickness. (p. 150-152)

CHAPTER 7: DOING STMs WITHOUT DOING LONG-TERM HARM

- 25) Short Term Missions often provide “relief” in contexts that call for “development” and operate from a faulty understanding of poverty (as deficit). (p. 166-167)
- 26) Does the short-term work you support and do lead to much lasting change for the poor themselves? Consider initiatives that have greater long-term impact than Short Term Missions. (p. 172-174)

CHAPTER 8: YES, IN YOUR BACKYARD

- 27) It makes no logical sense to care deeply about the poor in Africa or India while completely neglecting those who are poor in your own city. Do you overlook the poor in your own community?
- 28) Engage in and partner with poverty alleviation initiatives in North America that address the ability to earn a living wage, the capacity to manage money, and the opportunity to accumulate wealth. Good examples of these types of initiatives include jobs preparedness training, financial education, and Individual Development Accounts. (p. 189-198)

CHAPTER 9: AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

- 29) Promote the formation of Savings and Credit Associations in the Majority World. (p. 210-212)
- 30) The North American church should encourage, not squash, local, indigenous Church leaders already at work amongst the poor. (p. 217)