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Fletcher, Abigail. "Using a Discipleship/Reconciliation Approach as a Strategy for Development." BA Honours (International Development), Tyndale University, 2020.

Using a Discipleship/Reconciliation Approach as a Strategy for Development

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April 23rd, 2020

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Chapter 1: Definitions and Literature Review.....	5
Chapter 2: Reconciling Relationships.....	20
Chapter 3: External Reconciliation.....	30
Chapter 4: Research and Findings.....	35
Chapter 5: Recommendations and Suggestions.....	56
Conclusion.....	63
References.....	65

Introduction

A teacher came up to me while I was visiting his school in Ethiopia and we began talking about the church's involvement with the school and his involvement with both. As he talked I heard him get most passionate about a discipleship group that he ran for students and parents who had graduated from his school. It was that his work to create disciples in a community living in extreme poverty proved the reconciled relationships he had with God and the people around. The way his students and their parents talked about this man was as a friend, not a staff member or someone disassociated with them as people. We prayed together that day, for his ministry in Ethiopia and the sibling churches and schools at ICCM.

Poverty has been described many ways including material, psychological, and a struggle between power relations. In 2000, the World Bank conducted a study titled, "Voices of the Poor", researchers asked people around the world what it means to be poor, and what is poverty. Individuals from both Global North and South countries were asked and researchers began to notice a trend between the answers of the two groups. People from the Global North mostly defined poverty as the lack of material things such as food, clothing, clean water, and shelter. Meanwhile, people from the Global South responded differently saying that poverty is about the lack of power to make changes in livelihoods, choices, and broken self-esteem and confidence due to the endless cycle of culture and physical conditions.

In "*When Helping Hurts*", Corbett and Fikkert explain how the way a problem is perceived shapes the way a solution is designed (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009). For years Westerners have treated the problem as the lack of material properties and have used physical resources as the solution. It has only been in recent years that development actors have been devising solutions that address issues the poor deem the most relevant to becoming sustainable.

This thesis argues that poverty is the result of broken relationships, chapter one will redefine the problem and reshape the solution for the future while examining other key terms including: identity, disciples, the 'other', and reconciliation. Chapter two will explore how obedience is a step to discipleship, sacrifice as a form of reconciliation, and equality to reconciliation. These dynamics will provide further insight into how reconciling relationships leads to development. Chapter three will recount how the Biblical narrative relates to discipleship and reconciliation in the development world. Chapter four leverage field experience working for two Christian development agencies to show how working towards horizontal identity between people is restored because relationships are reconciled. Finally, chapter five will give recommendations for how a discipleship/reconciliation approach to development can be implemented by churches, organizations, and individuals.

Chapter 1: Definitions and Literature Review

Chapter one will provide detailed definitions of key terms for this paper to ensure continuity of meanings throughout the rest of the paper and to help explain the full extent of why this approach to development is the most effective. This will be done through a literature review of the topics being discussed later on to provide coherent definitions to work with throughout. The five terms being explored are: poverty, identity, disciples, the ‘other’, and reconciliation. I start by exploring multiple perspectives on poverty to provide insight regarding the varying ideas the terms encompass and to narrow down the definition being used for the purpose of this thesis. Based on this definition the other four terms are vital to a full understanding of the importance of why this is the best definition. Understanding the reasons these terms are defined in such a way will lay the groundwork for an expanded understanding of the relationship between discipleship and reconciliation and why they are the best options for doing development work.

Poverty

In development, the nature of poverty is possibly the most widely debated subject by researchers and development workers alike. Three of the most coherent understandings of poverty are: material, psychological, and power-based understandings of poverty. The first set of definitions do a good job of categorizing poverty that help establish more accurate strategies for development workers. The second poverty framework gives depth to what poverty feels like. The third understanding works to give reason as to why poverty exists and why it is so difficult to eliminate. Although all of these definitions have their place, this thesis defines poverty as a system of broken relationships because it is biblically aligned and true to the understandings of those experiencing poverty.

For a long time, development actors understood poverty as either relative, moderate, or absolute. Absolute poverty is the most obvious form, “being below the minimum level of income required for physical survival” (Haslam, Shafer, & Beaudet, 2012, p.12). The income line for absolute poverty changes due to inflation and economies around the world, as of 2015 the absolute poverty line is anyone living on less than \$1.90 U.S. dollars in a day (World Bank, 2015); this number is altered to adjust for those living in urban poverty where living situations are higher, and is called “real live poor” (Chen & Ravallion, 2007). However, this does not change the fact that three-quarters of the world’s poor live in rural areas, making the \$1.90 USD number the main indicator of absolute poverty (Chen & Ravallion, 2007).

Moderate poverty is when people are making the minimum or just slightly above the minimum of the poverty line, and finally relative poverty compares people within a certain area to determine a poverty line (Haslam, Shafer, & Beaudet, 2012). Relative poverty, “does not threaten daily survival” but it usually disallows the individual to have the necessary income level to “fully participate” in the society in which they reside (Haslam, Shafer & Beaudet, 2012, p.12). Relative poverty can be difficult to understand because in many cases, people from Global North countries living in relative poverty are still better off than the majority of people in Global South countries.

Material definitions of poverty are good for people who are unfamiliar with the field of development to help better categorize the different ways poverty can look, and design basic strategies tailored to more than one group. However, the definition still remains an outsider’s perspective. Psychological definitions provide a deeper insight into what it feels like to be poor from the poor themselves. In 2000, the World Bank conducted a study on how people defined

poverty, specifically what it is like to be poor. It was found that the non-poor in both Global North and Global South countries usually defined poverty as a lack of material things. In comparison, the poor tended to define what it is like to be poor with far more psychological impacts such as poor self-esteem, voicelessness, and no power or choice to remove themselves from their situations (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher & Koch-Schulte, 2000). These definitions of what it is like to be poor changed the way development work was being done by agencies and actors all over the world. Programs began to incorporate self-esteem building under the name ‘empowerment’, so as to try to help alleviate poverty in a more holistic manner. Before the World Bank released the results of their study Amartya Sen came out with a book titled, “Development as Freedom”, which defines poverty as “the lack of freedom to be able to make meaningful choices to have an ability to affect one’s situation” (Sen, 1999). When an individual does not have the choice to go to school, get a job, or do other simple things, it can be debilitating to not just their physical and social position but it can also affect their psyche. If you are not poor and you do not live in poverty than it is nearly impossible to truly comprehend the psychological effects that can occur. Jensen (1990) explores the effects of poverty on children attending school, he says that poverty is a “chronic and debilitating condition” resulting from “adverse synergistic risk factors...affect[ing] the mind, body, and soul” (Jensen, 6). He quotes Saudino who reports that, “behavioural geneticists commonly claim that DNA accounts for 30-50 percent of our behaviours, an[d] estimate that leaves 50-70 percent explained by environment” (Saudino, 2005). If a child’s environment is dirty, without positive adult role models, unstable, and a list of other adversities, then their brains will actually change from what their potential is in an ideal environment. Jensen says that, “brains are designed to reflect the

environments they're in, not rise above them. If we want our students [or whoever] to change, we must change ourselves and the environments students spend time in every day" (Jensen, 46).

Recognition of the fact that poverty is equally, if not more psychological than physical, is a big step for development scholars but still leaves the question of what causes poverty. Many scholars have used the interplay between the powerful and the powerless as an explanation of how poverty is enforced every day. Most famously, Marxist critiques of a capitalist system that uses a cycle to keep the powerful in power and the poor powerless have been influential in development (Prebisch). Marxist theories of power relations place blame on those in power as continuing to use various strategies such as the barriers to education, and providing minimal food for energy, as ways to enforce power structures (Prebisch). Though the Marxist perspective is radical, many Global North countries enforce their power to continue making themselves wealthier and the powerless poor. Viewing poverty as an unequal balance between the powerful and the powerless is not always a popular opinion for those in Global North countries as it places a greater onus on the rich to change their lifestyle rather than merely continuing to give top-down, capitalist enforcing hand-outs.

In development theory, Marxist critiques have taken the form of dependency theory that poverty is created through dependency. Dependency theory assumes that one country's internal structures are connected to the success and failure of others. Santos (1970) describes dependency as, "a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected" (Santos, 1970). Because of this, dependency theory necessitates the global cooperation of both Global North and South countries in order to thrive. Like Marxist theory, wealthy Global North countries would need to change their lifestyles in order to create equality between all nations.

All of these concepts help to understand the causes, psychology, and perpetuation of point of view. The Bible talks a lot about poverty and what Christ-followers should be doing to help those in destitute situations. Throughout the New Testament God commands the church to, “look after orphans and widows in their distress” or else “their religion is worthless” and to not be “accept[ed] as pure and faultless” (James 1:26-27). The Bible links all three dynamics as important to being a follower of Jesus. Myers, neatly sums up the Bible’s explanation for poverty,

Understanding poverty as relationships that don’t work for the well-being of all is consistent with the biblical story as well. The scope of sin affects every one of the five relationships that make up our lives; our relationship with ourselves, with our community, with those we call ‘other’, with our environment, and with God. Each of these broken relationships find expression in the poverty systems. (Myers, 2011, p.144)

Broken relationships “don’t work...isolate...abandon, [and] devalue” (Myers, 2011, p.75) people, thus creating the psychological factors that drive the mobility of people in poverty.

Identity

The field of development started studying identity to help understand reasons behind why people stay poor, even if they may have access to resources to assist the upward mobility of their socio-economic position. In the most basic sense, identity is the way a person describes and understands themselves and that drives motivation. Religion, culture, tradition, and internal factors are all things that can affect identity. Kanninen (2002) states that religion, at its best, can be a “great source of inspiration, authority, [and] motivation...within any community” (Kanninen, 97), and at its worst, it can cause division, violence, and hatred between people

groups. Prilleltensky (2003) adds that “unjust and oppressive power relationships” can also mar the poor’s “potential for agency...and individual sense of potency” (Prilleltensky, 2003). The result of a lack of or marred identity is a “degraded understanding of...vocation” (Myers, 2011, p.178) which leads to poor self-esteem and confidence. In the context of education, Jensen (2009), argues, “low-income parents are often overwhelmed by diminished self-esteem, depression, and a sense of powerlessness and inability to cope” (Jensen, 2009, p.17). Feelings which become inherited to their children creating a further cycle of poverty.

However, identity is not always negative, in ideal situations, identity contributes to a person’s connectedness in their community, themselves, and to God. Understanding self-worth means knowing what you deserve including at the most basic level, food, clothing, shelter, respect. The reconciliation of identity is vital to letting the poor know they are worth more than their conditions. Some may argue that external factors such as colonialism, racism, inequality, etc...facing the poor are more impactful to their well-being than simply identity. Although these things are major contributors to the situations and conditions of the poor, marred identity is a substantial factor as well because it is often internal factors that drive people to make steps towards meaningful change in their lives.

However, it is not just the poor who have a marred identity, part of the reason there is still poverty is because the non-poor have a blemished identity of who they are. Without God there is less reason for the non-poor to care for the poor because there is less rationale to nurture equality between groups if they (the non-poor) will suffer.

Disciples

The concept of disciples and discipleship is prevalent throughout the New Testament. For the purposes of this thesis, the approach being suggested is based on that of a Free Methodist organization, ICCM, therefore it is important to give context to the theology of the Methodist tradition. Jesus calls twelve men to follow him, creating the first biblical “disciples”. Biblical discipleship has been studied for centuries, with theologians such as John Wesley and Dietrich Bonhoeffer writing many works on the topic. A Christian approach to development must include discipleship to assist sustainability of aid through loving and caring relationships, provide accountability to both sides of the relationship to constantly strive for the best, and most importantly, to spread the gospel message in the same way Jesus did, through living life together.

This thesis will be using Methodist based theological definitions to understand what discipleship means, specifically to the Free Methodist Church in Canada and around the world. The notion of accountable discipleship is also important to this understanding.

Discipleship plays a vital role in Methodist theology. Fletcher defines discipleship as “an intentional and organic process of formation through loving relationships marked by accountability, commitment, education, and encouragement to serve”, he goes on to say that the primary reason for discipleship is to “help nurture vital Christian community, to foster proper worship of God and to help believers participate in His mission” (Fletcher, 2011, p.iv). This is in line with the way Jesus worked to build his disciples in the Bible. The literal translation for the Biblical word “disciple” is “follower” and “learner” (Gundry, 2012, p.90). In the New Testament, Jesus calls individuals to follow him, live with him, and learn from them through his every day life. Fletcher’s definition broadens “discipleship” by taking Jesus’ actions and methods into account and by recognizing Jesus’ intentionality in choosing a few people to be disciples in a mentoring fashion. Fletcher places onus on members of the Church who are already

followers of Christ to call others into a life of discipleship. Manskar also examines the role of people who are already disciples of Christ and expands their role through the idea of “covenant” or “accountable” discipleship (Manskar, 2000). Manskar explains covenant discipleship as a means of “simply help[ing] people love God and love their neighbour...as people grow in their love for God...Christian community is built (Manskar, 2000, p.10). Like Fletcher, Manskar places high importance on discipleship as a means of building and nurturing Christian community, both in and out of Christian circles. By Jesus’ example, part of discipleship is living in community and holding each other accountable to difficult things in life. Bonhoeffer (1959) explains a danger of living without accountability in a discipleship relationship, by stating how “if the disciples make judgements of their own, they set up their own standards of good and evil” (p.184), and thus live outside of God’s plan for their lives. He also makes the statement that “discipleship means adherence to Christ” (Bonhoeffer, 1959, p.59), which in itself is a covenant relationship and that “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ” (Bonhoeffer, 1959, p.59). In Jennings’s writings on Wesley he notes that, “Wesley did not imagine that Christianity was something that could be practiced by isolated individuals. It required community.” (Jennings, 124). Therefore, since Christianity requires both discipleship and community to properly function and fulfill its calling, then there must be a more intentional and accountable process than the Church presently uses. Engel (1975) explains how in the Greek used in the Gospels and the book of Acts, the word used to describe Jesus’ relationship with the twelve is, “Mathetes”, which, “denotes a pupil and continuing adherent of his master” (p. 66). This works with Bonhoeffer’s ideas that discipleship is something that requires “continued obedience over time” (Engel, 1975, p.66), not just a month long course like many churches offer today.

For the purpose of this thesis, discipleship will be understood using a compound of these definitions and ideas. Discipleship is an intentional process built through a community that is accountable to each other and adherent to God, for the purpose of furthering his Kingdom. This definition is shaped by Methodist practices which uses small groups to build relationships with others and with God (Jennings, 1990).

The 'Other'

The importance of defining the 'other' is because without conflicting groups there is no need for reconciliation. However, as history demonstrates time and time again, there are many conflicting people groups, often in conflict because they are viewed as the 'other' and not in relationship with one another. The 'other' changes from people group to people group as it describes anyone coming from a vastly different culture, ethnicity, religious, or social background than oneself. To a white Caucasian female from small-town Canada, the 'other' could be a Syrian refugee family. This thesis will explore broken relationships as the creation of fear of the 'other' and its relationship to identity.

In his most full sense, the triune God is a relational being, "the Trinity [is] a community, a fellowship. The persons of the Trinity related to each other and always have done." (Miller, 2001, p.201). If humans are made in the image of God, then it can only be assumed that we too are made to be living in a community, a fellowship, a kingdom. Myers (2001) explains how if God's "essence" is relational, then how Christians understand sin's impact also has to be relational (Myers, 60), thus pertaining back to the definition of poverty above as a set of broken relationships.

To understand how being part of the ‘other’ ascribes someone to poverty, the topics of injustice and prejudice must be considered. At the root of both injustice and prejudice is fear of the unknown person or thing to the one holding the perspective. Gira (2013) states how, “fear of others...dominates and leads to aggression, to protect ourselves from those whom we perceive as enemies” (p.124), even if that person or group has never done anything to be considered an enemy. Canada is a unique country in terms of feelings of fear towards the ‘other’. In many cases, people do not see individuals as the enemy/’other’, but rather as a “collective entity, a social, ethnic, or national group” (Houtart, 2003, p.117). This is because fear becomes diluted when a relationship is built, making “other” individuals less frightening and more welcome to be a part of the “normal” group.

Many scholars discuss the concept of the ‘other’, especially in contexts about broken relationships. As discussed above, if poverty is at its core the effect of broken relationships, understanding the concept of ‘other’ is extremely valuable in developing a way to eliminate it. Although there are obvious differences between groups of ‘others’, such as physical features, verbal accents, and sometimes even mannerisms, Gira (2013) points out that, “thanks to dialogue we begin to realize that ‘others’ are not ‘others’ because they are different from us, but simply because of who they are.” (p.125). Cultural diversity is a major factor when discussing the ‘other’ as it is the influencer and motivator to its people’s actions. Skin colour and language are obvious classifiers of the ‘other’ but cultural ideas can create a more internal affect on people who are trying to fit in with the ‘normal’ people. Cultural ideas can lead to a person feeling isolated and less valued than the ‘normal’, in turn possibly leading to feelings of psychological poverty. By viewing people as ‘other’ from oneself, there is a division of equality that

unintentionally leads to poverty through the relationship tension created by stereotypes and fear of each other.

Reconciliation

If (as I established above) poverty is psychological/relational, we need to reconcile. There are two main ways to view reconciliation, through a secular or faith-based lens. Both agree that reconciliation is a process of restoration, rehabilitation, and rebuilding between at least two parties. However, the split comes in regarding the actors and means of reconciliation. The most influential agencies who deal with reconciliation are Truth and Reconciliation Commissions around the world. The specific name changes slightly in each country, however, each one works to bring closure to mass conflict and human rights violations. In Canada, the commission works explicitly with First Nations people groups to meet seven goals, and has a very specific definition on how reconciliation is, “an ongoing individual and collective process, and will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (irs) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. Reconciliation may occur between any of the above groups.” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). This definition is decent because it suggests who must be included in a plan of action, however, it fails to actually say what the end goal is. With a vague definition like this it leaves the reader to make assumptions on the end goal rather than being giving a clear understanding. Vague definitions also make success difficult or impossible to measure as it can never actually be stated that said goal has been achieved.

In general, secular development agencies and scholars seem to associate reconciliation with forgiveness and restoring friendship, or at the very least, respect between the two groups. For example, the Dalai Lama (2003) explained reconciliation as needing to, “appreciate that genuine peace comes about through mutual understanding, respect and trust” (p.51), this is a nice sounding definition however, it lacks the explanation as to who this “mutual understanding” must come between and the means in which “respect and trust” can be mended. Gonella (2003) provides an even more vague definition for the word simply stating that reconciliation is, “to re-establish friendship between, or to settle or resolve” (p.39). In the three views above, there is not a lot of depth to the truth of the word reconciliation. This is not to say that secular or non-Christian scholars do not recognize the effects reconciliation can have on a society, Zartman (2003) writes how reconciliation must take place in order for “rebuilding [of] society-communal, national, or international” and although it is an “instrumental value”, it is not a goal itself (p.107). For Zartman, and these other secular development scholars, reconciliation merely is a step in the process of development.

In a Christian perspective, reconciliation is much more than simply respecting each other and rebuilding friendships. For Christians, reconciliation involves the transformation of a person to be joined with God, and out of that transformation, seeking to restore broken relationships with people. Because our understanding of poverty is that of broken relationships between God and us, people and people, people and their environment, and people and themselves, transformational reconciliation is the most important part to eliminate poverty. In order to understand reconciliation as transformational, the first phase is to restore relationship with God. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent (2010) explain reconciliation as “directional” (p.96). The vertical reconciliation process has specific intent for God to “reconcile all things to himself” in order to

build his church, which is a sign of his kingdom (Ott et al., p. 86). Ott et al. then argue that it is only, “on the basis of vertical reconciliation, [that] horizontal reconciliation becomes possible”, that vertical reconciliation is “foundational to horizontal reconciliation” as it is the “overarching purpose” of why churches should even do development work (p.97). Once vertical reconciliation is established, horizontal reconciliation is able to take place and is extremely important because development work often helps to satisfy people’s basic needs, which allows them to be more open to restoring interpersonal relationships (Pilario, 2013, p. 69).

Reconciliation with God is the first and most important action before effective reconciliation can happen between others and the environment. Interpersonal reconciliation is different than reconciliation with God because unlike God who loves his people unconditionally and forgives upon true repentance, people do not love unconditionally. Gruchy (2002) explains that, “forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation are deeply personal processes, and each person’s needs and reactions to peacemaking... may be different” (p.27), meaning that reconciliation processes need to be tailored to specific situations, this includes expecting different time frames for areas with more damage. Reconciliation is different than forgiveness because it expects the overcome of “past alienation, enmity and hurt”, it also demands that those participating in the process learn to “relate to the ‘other’ in the present” (p.27). The Greek word for ‘reconcile’/’reconciliation’ in the New Testament demonstrates this relation to the ‘other’ as it is a “compound of the words ‘to exchange’, along with another word meaning ‘the other’ (Gruchy, 51). Gruchy describes this translation well,

The words thus carry with them the sense of exchanging places with the other...reconciliation literally has to do with the way in which God relates to us, the human ‘other’, and in turn with our relationship to ‘the other’, whether understood as an

individual person or a group of people...process of overcoming alienation through identification and in solidarity with 'the other', thus making peace and restoring relationships. Reconciliation has to do...with God making us friends." (51)

The idea of "God making us friends" is important because it highlights the need for reconciliation between God and humans as the first step. This idea also makes room for groups of people who have never been in peace with each other to reconcile with the other, unlike the secular definitions above that account only for a rebuilding of peace between people.

Finally, once there is reconciliation between God, there can be reconciliation with the environment. This stage can happen simultaneously with interpersonal reconciliation because in some cases, exhibiting a restored relationship with the land may help people be more open to a relationship with those making an attempt. A good example of this is in Canada where many First Nations people relate to creation in a deeply spiritual way, and so watching 'others' destroy trees, lakes, land, that is so valuable to their culture, can be extremely damaging. Through the reconciliation of people and nature, especially in larger environmental efforts, standing with First Nations people could create a vital bond and respect. Lopez (2009) states that, "reconciliation looks for mutuality in protection and care" (p.61), this includes between shared common areas. Fikkert and Mask (2015) make a case that the destruction of the environment leads to the eventual increase in material poverty (p.99), meaning that through reconciliation with the environment, poverty can be greatly lessened.

These three areas must be restored in order for reconciliation to take place. Reconciliation is restoration between God and humans, humans and humans, and humans and their environment.

Moving forward

These definitions lay the groundwork for further evaluation between Christian development programs as they help to determine the needs of individuals and communities around the world, the next step is to answer the question how Christian disciples can enact reconciliation in the world. Chapters two and three will outline what this entails, followed by chapter four which will present a comparative analysis on practical examples of this implementation.

Chapter 2: Reconciling Relationships

It is because of Jesus' example of making disciples to reconcile them to him that reconciliation through discipleship is possibly the most effective mode of development. Reconciliation is so vital within every community the church resides. This includes both peaceful and violent situations. In order to enact reconciliation, the church must create a discipleship culture. This in turn requires an understanding of discipleship as an act of obedience to Christ, that involves sacrifice, and ends in equality through the reconciliation between God, people, and each other. This chapter explores these three dynamics of reconciling discipleship in the context of development. This builds toward a comparative analysis of two Christian organizations in chapter four and finally, ends with practical suggestions for the future in chapter five.

As explained in chapter one, within faith-based development agencies, there are a variety of different approaches, some more discipleship focused and others more focused on material relief. The most important difference is that the Christian faith understands reconciliation first starting between God and people; and without God in the picture, truly transformative reconciliation between others cannot occur. It is for this reason that discipleship is such a vital process within the church, disciples and disciple makers are living and learning to live like Jesus, which at its core is learning to be reconciled with Christ.

Obedience as a step of discipleship

Bonhoeffer (1959) gives a simple answer to those questioning their ability to be or to make disciples, for him reconciliation with God is obedience. When you are “disobedient, you are trying to keep some part of your life under your own control”, he goes on to explain that “is what is preventing you from listening to Christ and believing in his grace. You cannot hear

Christ because you are wilfully disobedient” (p.69), and if you cannot hear Christ you cannot learn from him, thus separating yourself from him and being his disciple. Throughout the New Testament there is talk about how Christ “reconciled us to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:18, ESV) and “reconcile[d] to Himself all things” (Colossians 1:20, ESV). To do development work without being reconciled to Christ is to limit the transformation that could occur through discipleship and reconciliation with him.

Once there is reconciliation between God and people, reconciliation can begin between people, the ‘other’, and the environment. “Poverty is the world telling the poor that they are god-forsaken” (Christian in Myers, 2011, p.129). Development work can be the vessel for forging broken relationships between people and the ‘other’. However, cultural shifts to create sustainable change cannot occur without transformative power that only comes from following Jesus.

Sacrifice as a form of reconciliation

Faith-based organizations have a model of perfect love thanks to Jesus and part of that love is true sacrifice. Secular development organizations make goals with the intention to make everyone as equal as possible in terms of living standard. Although this is an admirable goal it is impossible without some form of sacrifice on both sides. An example of this mentality is the materialistic consumption followed by dumping of the clothing industry in North America. The way fashion trends change so quickly results in enormous waste from the previous season’s fads. The waste from the previous season is often sent to poor countries for further consumption, once again widening the gap of inequality between people. Not only does this consumption and dumping cause harm in the Global North, but it also destroys culture and industry in the Global South. I have a friend who recently launched a fashion line in Malawi called Mfumakazi, with

clothing made from local materials and employed by local people, her goal is to one day be able to grow the company enough to create more jobs, contribute to the economy, and share Malawian designs even outside of Malawi. However, if you were to walk through the markets in Malawi, the majority of the clothing being sold is donated from North America. When locals are able to purchase ‘newer’ styles for the same price or less than traditional styles there is a decrease of interest for local clothing, no matter how beautiful. In cases such as this, the secular Western world wants their cake and eat it too. There is no sense of understanding the need to sacrifice nor a desire to give up pleasure, it is a classic case of the tragedy of the commons. The word ‘sacrifice’ assumes a relationship or a desire for a relationship with someone or something. Using the example of ever-changing fashion trends in the Global North, if consumers chose to stop purchasing a new wardrobe each season there would be a decrease in demand and eventually waste by designers. Designers would need to find new ways to reuse and recycle old materials to create a more sustainable future, as well as allowing local designers in Global South countries to be able to promote their ideas to assist the economy and overall development of the country. If poverty is about broken relationships, then that means a broken sacrifice, at least one side of the relationship is not sacrificing in favour of the relationship. Many Christian development organizations understand this because of Jesus’ actions on the cross and the most effective ones do discipleship and promote reconciliation between people.

Secular development agencies rarely expect sacrifice from Global North countries when trying to eliminate poverty, they see everyone as “locked into a system” compelling them to increase that which benefits them without restraint- “in a world that is limited”; a world in which “the individual benefits as an individual from his ability to deny the truth even though society as a whole, of which he is part, suffers.” (Hardin, 1968). An example of this is with the 17

Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations. There are 17 ambitious goals that do not have much of a plan for completion besides giving responsibility to individual countries to focus on and make changes specific to their countries. There is no consequence to countries if they do not participate or do not meet their targets. Because of this, a few of the major power countries do not follow through with their commitments at the world summits. For countries like the United States, taking a meaningful stance against numbers 12 or 13, responsible consumption and production, or climate action (Sustainable Development Goals, 2015), would require a significant amount of time, money, and effort that they do not deem as a priority to their people.

Equality through reconciliation

This section will draw on examples of the trinity and the early church to demonstrate how reconciliation leads to equality between people groups. Historically, the ‘other’ has been imagined through fear rather than embracing the possibility of positive diversity. Fear leads to injustice and often aggression, “to protect ourselves from those whom we perceive as enemies (whether real enemies or not)” and sometimes in this defensive stance to “avenge what we experience as unjust (whether it is so or not)” (Gira, 2013, p.124). In a perfectly reconciled community there would be no inequality or ‘other’ because the first Christian example of reconciliation is the trinity. In the trinity God is not alone, it is because of his relationship with the Holy Spirit and Jesus that he knows love. Being a community, the trinity relate to each other as a perfectly reconciled identity (Miller, 2001, p.201). There are no levels of importance in this perfect example, which means that as followers and learners of the Trinity, disciples should also be living a life with no levels of importance between people.

The relationship example of the Trinity is vital for Christian development workers to follow, if followed wholeheartedly by development workers then paternalism of charity-based

development could be eliminated. One of the best examples of an equal community is that of the early church as described in Acts. The disciples and the early church promoted a culture of equality through the community that they built. Acts 2 paints a picture of this community,

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47, ESV)

Verse 44 explains this reconciled community well, “all who believed were together and had all things in common” (ESV), no social structures dividing the church, both rich and poor sat as equal in the house of God. The early church community nurtured a culture of learning and teaching (discipleship and reconciliation with God), taking care of its members (reconciliation with each other), and caring for the poor (development work leading to reconciliation with others). Although this is still true of some modern churches, many tend to forget and are less active in certain categories. The reason for this relates directly back to the definition of poverty, broken relationships between people. Gruchy (2002) sums up the thinking of the modern church well by saying that,

There is a temptation to think of the politics of reconciliation as largely confined to countries and contexts where violent conflict seems endemic. When we do so we fail to recognize the extent to which the need for reconciliation is something that is pertinent in every

human community where alienated and estranged people cry out for healing and a reason for hope (p.12).

We should consider reconciliation as a way of doing development because at the core of poverty are broken relationships. The restoration of broken relationships from European settlers such as the harm caused by residential schools in Canada, and the creation of relationships between the global community need to be made as the starting point for development. In cases of historical harms there is a more obvious need for reconciliation as there is discernable physical and/or emotional pain for all parties involved. However, applying reconciliation to groups of people who have not been connected through some sort of historical tragedy, there appears to be no need for reconciliation. This is where our definition of poverty becomes crucial, because if poverty is the result of broken relationships between people and God, people and people, and people and their environment, and we were created to reflect the triune God, then even people who are seemingly disconnected are inherently connected through the Kingdom of God. The better question is not about whether reconciliation should be applied to development but rather how can you reconcile people who are not aware they are in a broken relationship.

When in a healthy relationship with someone there is a regular channel of communication and deliberate support between each group. In healthy relationships, there is a sense of equality between all parties involved and no feelings of subservience to one person or group. This is demonstrated by the Trinity relationship and reflected by the early church as described in Acts. These are the examples churches should be celebrating and being intentional about building.

Reconciling relationships through a discipleship culture and the Free Methodist Church in Canada

This chapter has discussed the role of discipleship culture as a mode of reconciliation to do development work. The question still remains how this affects the Free Methodist Church and how the beliefs of the Methodist movement as a whole exemplify this discipleship culture in order to do development.

There is a wide debate in the evangelical sphere around the role of social concern in Christian mission. The Methodist movement was formed out of a great concern for the poor and using practical tactics to show the love of Jesus rather than social hierarchies and rules with which the Catholic church was so entrenched (Free Methodist Church in Canada). John Wesley held a high regard for the poor and spent the majority of his time reconciling himself with them (Jennings, 1990). What became the Methodist movement was known for its outreach and care for those in poverty. Eventually the Free Methodists rose with pillars of equality within their doctrine. They differentiated themselves from the Methodists by making statements of “frees”. There are five original “frees” the Free Methodist denomination used to distinguish themselves from the Methodist movement, they are:

- 1) Free for all to attend
- 2) Free seats regardless of socio-economic status
- 3) Free from the domination of sin
- 4) Freedom of the Spirit
- 5) Free from binding involvements outside the fellowship of Christian believers. (Free Methodist Church in Canada)

These five “frees” are a reflection on the importance of social concern (development) for the Free Methodist church. Wesley understood the need for physical concerns aligned with the spiritual well-being of people. In 2019, the FMCiC added six more “frees” that are more contextual to the world today, they are:

- 1) Free to follow God
- 2) Free to experience community
- 3) Free to hope
- 4) Free to collaborate
- 5) Free to be courageous
- 6) Free to pursue justice (Free Methodist Church in Canada)

This was done to improve accountability for Christians, and renew the mission of the church in a more contextualized manner. Part of the way to fuse these “frees” together was through accountable discipleship (Manskar, 2000), which holds Christians accountable to committing acts of mercy and piety as part of their Christian life. More traditional and legalistic sides of the debate of social concern in Christian mission often argue that it is not through works that a person gains salvation, rather through faith in God. This concept can become an excuse for the church and Christians not to do development work. Although an individual’s personal salvation may not rely on works of compassion, by not participating in acts of compassion they are not truly following the example Jesus led. This is because Jesus took care of the poor, and he taught his disciples to be like him. You cannot be a disciple of Christ without following his actions

(refer back to literal definition of “disciple”). The six “frees” are in a sense calls to action to be like Jesus and to expand mere belief into a discipleship relationship.

In my experience working at a Free Methodist Church this past year, I have noticed that one of the biggest challenges for the congregation is the establishment and development of intentional relationships with both each other and global partners. During discussions with the chair of the mission’s team I noticed that our relationships with so called ‘partners’ resembled a sponsorship relationship rather than a discipleship one. Reconciling development work could not be done because very few people in the church were aware of the partnerships and even fewer were even slightly involved with them.

One-way development agencies could have a greater impact on people is to focus on the process of reconciliation as the leader for strategy. Charity models inherently assume division in social structures with one group being better off than another, thus needing to look-down and help the lower groups (Fikkert & Mask, 2015). This enforces a victim mentality rather than empowering people to help others as beloved, equal people. In chapter four, I will contrast World Vision’s development model with International Child Care Ministries model run through the Free Methodist Church. I argue that relational models are more effective in long-term development than charity models due to the bottom-up, empowering approach in giving, the amount of long-term support through Christ-like relationships, and the support for local solutions with international churches coming alongside to enhance solutions based on local suggestions.

This comparison will demonstrate an evolution in what reconciliation meant in the past and what it means today for the development world. In short, reconciliation used to be limited to people and groups who were in conflict at some point. I argue that reconciliation needs to occur between all types of broken relationships for effective development to occur.

In the next chapter I will further the discussion on how reconciled relationships within the church can be used as a vehicle for doing development work to those external to the Christian faith.

Chapter 3: External Reconciliation

Chapter two established reconciling relationships as the primary task of the Christian disciple as well as the theological position of the Free Methodist Church. Chapter three is about reconciling relationships externally from the church to the “other”. There will be a brief history of marginalized groups, followed by discussion on the importance of holistic development, and ending with equalization between disciples.

People who fall into the category of people on the margin of society are often most affected by injustice and poverty. The most vulnerable ‘others’ are often found in marginalized communities, isolated from opportunities to move out of poverty due to their broken relationships with people in power. Many people in power manipulate fear of others as a reason for injustice and inequality; for example, political leaders often choose a group or a person to blame for certain problems going on in order to create a commonality between themselves and the people they are trying to win power over. This causes a cycle of ‘other’ groups enforced through relations of inferiority/superiority complexes. Discipleship culture in churches provide opportunities to encourage identity in Christ, confidence in His work, and can uniquely equalize people.

Reconciliation throughout the Biblical Narrative

Abuse of power over history has created division based on implied importance of groups and individuals over others, resulting in broken relationships and leading to conditions of poverty, injustice, and inequality. This started at the beginning of the Biblical narrative when Adam and Eve ate the fruit causing separation between man and God. In the Old Testament there are several instances of power levels both within Jewish culture and in the ancient world.

Unequal levels of power are shown throughout the Old Testament within Jewish traditions that are seemingly accepted, and even enforced by God. Unequal levels of power are not the cause of broken relationships, rather, it is the abuse of power by people not listening to God that is the issue. God placed people like Deborah and Moses in leadership positions over the Jewish people, today they are remembered as valiant individuals who served God without allowing power to overtake them. It is also important to remember the cultural influences the people of Israel faced, the nations surrounding them all had Kings while they had a Judge, they were the ones who begged God to be like the cultures around them (1 Samuel 8:4-6). This demonstrates the human desire for domination and control versus stewardship and reconciliation. God respected their desire and gave them Saul, who ended up succumbing to ways of the world. It wasn't until Jesus came as a baby in the New Testament that he fulfilled Jewish law and levels of inequality to be replaced with a newly created institution called the "church" which grew with disciples of Jesus himself. The church was the first place where equality between those outside of Jewish tradition, Gentiles, were welcomed and encouraged to become equal through their participation in the church.

Reconciliation began with Jesus demonstrating life among others through his choice of original disciples, dinner partners, receivers of miracles, and friends. By doing life beside Jesus, the twelve disciples learned what it meant to become equalizers between those in religious traditions and the most unlikely others. After Jesus returned to Heaven, the disciples under guidance of the Holy Spirit, cared for people like Jesus had and the church grew (Acts 2:45-47). The mindset of Jesus and the disciples was not merely to save souls, like many modern churches now seem to focus on, but also to care for the physical needs of the people (more on this in chapter five). This approach deemed "integral mission" by the modern church is similar to what

people in the field of international development call “holistic development” (Padilla, 1985). In saying this, Jesus’ method of caring for people thousands of years ago has become one of the most popular methods of development today. At this point we can begin to see a trend, Jesus starts by reconciling people to himself through discipleship, said people work to encourage a greater discipleship culture within their church community whilst also expanding outwards.

Holistic Development

Holistic development is a term used within both Christian and secular circles to describe development that helps people reach their full “physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional potential...regardless of race, sex, wealth, or ability” (UN, 2017). In 2017 the United Nations Commission for Social Development began publicly “urging [a] holistic approach to end poverty” (UN, 2017). Holistic development can be difficult because of the focus on relationships, people and material resources when there are so many immediate needs that must be met. These concerns are valid as crises occur regularly that cause a great amount of damage to all aspects of holistic development. A discipleship/reconciliation approach focuses more on transformational/sustainability. The more people are invested in discipleship relationships, the more willing they will be to help those they are in relationship with when they are in crisis.

Holistic development works to reconcile disciples to ‘others’ by creating caring communities for all people to grow in and eventually take over. Holistic development creates a culture similar to the internal focused discipleship culture of the church, only rather than focusing on current members, it reaches out to care for all types of needs of everyone.

The discipleship community learns to reconcile with those external to their membership through the establishment of holistic relationships, including caring for physical needs. As long

as people continue to pursue relationships with Jesus there will be support in the discipleship culture.

Through the meeting of immediate needs of others, disciples equalize themselves by exhibiting that they have the same needs in life and understand the necessity to providing for all types of needs a person requires. Equalization means to think of yourself and treat yourself in the same ways you would treat others. Equalization between people is counter cultural in every society worldwide. Every society has some form of hierarchy between people, some being more obvious than others such as a monarchy, while others have village elders. Having a church that does not fall prey to a corrupted hierarchy is so vastly different than what people understand that sometimes even members of the church place people on pedestals thanks to certain gifts such as preaching or teaching. When Jesus came to earth he equalized himself with everyone in the way he was born and raised. In Philippians 2, Paul talks about how Jesus “humbled himself by becoming obedient to death” as an example to humans on how to equalize to each other. Early in the chapter Paul writes about how Jesus first reconciled himself to the Father before he came to earth to reconcile himself to us,

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (Philippians 2:4-7)

Equalization of disciples is something the church as a whole needs to work on, but the end result is a community all sorts of people want to be a part of. Equalization should not be someone bragging but rather taking a humble stance to be like Jesus.

This chapter has argued that being reconciled with Christ leads to reconciliation with others, eventually leading to personal connections between people that result in a deeper care for people when they are in crisis. In chapter four I will present research comparing International Child Care Ministries and World Vision Malawi in terms of their ability to reconcile with Christ, each other, and others, be a disciple and actively disciple others, and finally their overall effectiveness in their development efforts.

Chapter 4: Research and Findings

Methodology

This thesis has been working to prove that the most effective development approaches stem from the reconciliation of relationships between God, people, and the ‘other’, followed by intentional discipleship relationships between both sides. In the upcoming chapter I will present a comparative analysis study between the development models of two different organizations. A comparative analysis study is a good approach for this thesis because there are currently no statistics on the topic of using discipleship and reconciliation as a means of development. Also, participant observation of the various aspects of holistic development can be observed and understood through field work and meetings with staff officials. The first organization will be World Vision Malawi, an individual branch off of one of the most well-known faith-based development agencies in the world, the second is International Child Care Ministries (ICCM), which is a smaller faith-based development agency based out of the Free Methodist Church in Canada. This is an appropriate comparison because both organizations have similar goals, work with the same target groups (children), and use their Christian faith as a reason to do the work they do. The biggest difference between the two organizations is the size and reach of their donor base. World Vision Malawi has a significantly greater reach to donors because they are associated with World Vision International. Whereas ICCM is much smaller with their main donor base within the Free Methodist Church. I have completed internships with both of these organizations (World Vision Malawi three consecutive months and ICCM one month in office as well as three different country visits each one week long) and kept journals during my time at each. During my time at both organizations I was also able to have many conversations with main office staff, field staff, and participants of all countries. Due to the fact that I had limited

time with each organization, I have supplemented by research with analyses of key documents and statements from each organization. The research for this chapter will be based on the mission, vision, and values statements, conversations with employees, and my personal experience working with and visiting communities of both organizations. The research will demonstrate the differences between a mainly material approach to development used by World Vision Malawi versus the reconciliation/discipleship model of development used by ICCM. This will be exhibited by the examination of four tactics used by development organizations, they are: the approach used to give to communities, the length of support by the organization to the community, the relationships between the community and the organization, and the formation of the solutions chosen.

What is a charity model?

A charity model of development depicts people as victims of their circumstances who should be pitied. Critiques of charity models originate from academic research on people with disabilities but can easily be applied to the field of development as both are presented with challenging circumstances they must work to overcome. Retief and Letsosa explain that many people in the disabled community (or developing world in this case) see the charity model negatively since it often depicts them as “helpless, depressed and dependent on other people for care and protection” (Retief and Letsosa, 2018). Although the effects of the charity model on the people being “helped” are not the most effective in the long-term, the donors giving to the charity model often do it out of compassion and desire to do something good. The intentions behind charity models are often positive. However, this model also tells something about the givers in this model. The desire to help is often mixed with a level of discomfort or uncertainty to fully engage with those receiving the charity.

What does a charity model look like? In the broad sense it could look like most development programs in the past 50 years. The main indicators that a project or program utilizes a charity model are that there is one group or person that sees what they recognize as an issue, and only offer free resources of supplies, money, and people to help solve the issue. When I was working with ICCM in Haiti, one of the pastors told me that after the earthquake in 2010 the world sent so many clothes to the country that the demand for Haitian made clothing was eliminated. North American charity ended up destroying an industry that could have helped the country's overall economy in the long-run. Not only was an industry gone but a major cultural artefact, traditional clothing, was replaced with North American trends. According to the pastor North American "help" ended up creating a great loss of economic potential and culture. As Corbett and Fikkert argue, in order to be truly helpful you have to step back and view the situation through the eyes of the receiver (2009). A more positive example of the charity model are disaster relief projects that enter to fulfill a specific need such as shelter for a refugee camp, food after a natural disaster, or vaccinations and medical treatment after a health pandemic. Relief works to relieve immediate suffering and provide the first step towards recovery. Charity, like relief, is a temporary solution. This in itself is not a negative act to participate in, charity becomes harmful when the givers begin to pity the receivers after a period of time has passed and continue to provide temporary solutions.

Although neither organization being analyzed follows a strict charity model, one does follow a more material development approach. Thinking of this approach to development as a continuum between purely relational and purely charitable, World Vision Malawi would be more towards the charitable side, while ICCM would fall closer to the relational end. The difference between a relational approach and a charitable approach is the end effects. With a charity model

like discussed above the giving is not usually well thought through and results in harm to the “helped” community. With a material development model the giving is thought through and planned and the helped community is not harmed by the efforts in the process. The downside of a material development model is that it does not establish ownership of the development projects once the organization has left. In the following section I will compare and contrast between World Vision Malawi’s material development model and ICCM’s reconciliation/discipleship model.

Comparison of missions, vision and values statements

An organization’s mission, vision, and values statements are its core motivators and goals. Some organizations write broad, vague descriptions, while others are more specific. These statements shape the mentality of the way the work is designed, planned, executed, and evaluated. That is why this section will specifically examine the chosen words and wording of both ICCM and World Vision’s mission, vision, and values statements. The table below contains the three statements for each organization that will be referred to throughout the analysis.

Table 2: Mission, Vision, and Values Statements

	World Vision	ICCM
Mission	“The sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable.”	“A world where every child is loved, safe, and developing his or her God-given potential”

Vision	“Life in all its fullness for every child”	“A program whereby churches and Christians could together be involved in a greater compassionate ministry, reaching hundreds of suffering children around the world”
Values	“Christian, committed to the poor, value people, stewards, partners, responsive”	“Community, humility, integrity, the image of God, family, watchfulness, giving voice, the transforming gospel, creation, generosity, stewardship, flexibility”

Mission statements

The first thing to make note of are the similarities between the two mission statements. The most obvious one is the focus on children, the second one is less conspicuous and is related to area. The two organizations are similar however, they use different strategies to approach the issues.

There were three major differences between the two mission statements. The first is the assumed timeline, the second is the definition of care for the child, and the third is the end goal. In World Vision’s statement they use the word “sustained”, which derives from the longer development buzz word, “sustainability”. When development agencies use the term “sustainability” they are referring to a community that can meet its current and future needs with

little or no help, without barriers, and for the rest of time. World Vision's mission statement uses this word to explain the 15-year program model they use in their area programs. The goal is to eventually leave the community with enough physical resources and knowledge on how to maintain the lifestyle World Vision helped implement. ICCM follows a church model for caring about people and instead used the word "developing" to explain their timeline. In this case adding the 'ing' to the word "develop" is important because it assumes a continuing process as the goal rather than one that comes to a stop. ICCM presumes that there will always be children around that need "to grow their God-given potential".

The second difference between the two is the description of how the organization will care for the child. World Vision makes their goal the "well-being" of children. This is a nice goal but it is like saying a house is "livable", something positive but can also have vast standards from different people. At the minimum level well-being means meeting the basic needs of the children. Maslow's theory of needs contends that the needs at the bottom of the pyramid must be met before the needs at the top could be met. World Vision does not include what level of "well-being" they work to achieve, however it can be assumed by the work that they do that their main focus is on the physiological needs of the child, followed by safety, and in some special cases eventually making it up to the other levels on the pyramid if the 15-year timeline allows.

Area programs have five basic areas that they work to develop, maternal and infant health, education, water and sanitation hygiene (WASH), food security and livelihoods, and child protection and advocacy. Some communities focus more on a few topics rather than all five, it depends on the needs of the community as a whole. World Vision's area programs are where potential sponsor children are chosen from and are able to be sponsored until World Vision leaves the area. Because the subjects of change are so large it is usually difficult to accomplish

all five in the 15 years. WASH programs are typically easier to implement because people recognize the need for clean water to survive, whereas a child protection and advocacy program is about transforming a mindset. For example, when I visited the Chamba area program they had a group of chiefs do a presentation on exterminating child marriages as part of a greater initiative. Although the idea was excellent, teach the village chiefs to reject child marriages because they have so much power, the execution of the chiefs presentation was nothing short of horrific. In a review of the day later I wrote,

As an organization entrusted to advocate for children, especially the most vulnerable children, WVM needs to ensure that any partner organizations do the same. The partner organization, does very important work and wanted to show off their success to the visitors. However, this was done in a way that exploited vulnerable girls by putting them on display under a sign reading, “Rescued from Child Marriage...Back to school”, in front of hundreds of their peers, and nearby village members. Part of this campaign is to de-stigmatize the girls going back to school and humanizing them instead of making them part of a statistic. By exhibiting the girls like a museum display, they are being objectified as something the Chiefs rescued, rather than someone who still needs protection. (Journal February 2019)

Although the experience was terrifying for the girls being displayed, the story is a good example of how difficult a change in a cultural mindset can be.

ICCM does something uncommon for development agencies, they make it their mission to achieve the top levels of the needs pyramid rather than the bottom. Rather than make the physiological needs the main goal, they use the physiological needs to help enforce the other points on their mission list. This is done by coming alongside the churches who do a lot of self-

esteem, spirituality building and using those leaders as key figures in working to meet the physiological needs such as education. Because churches and ICCM work together, it creates a holistic system. In Ethiopia, the children attended the same church as their teachers, so there is consistency within each sphere of the holistic development process for the child.

The third difference between the two statements is the spiritual integration. Both are Christian organizations and claim that their work is done out of Jesus' commands and a love for God and his children. In World Vision's mission statement, they make no mention of God as an inspiration for their work or as part of their goal in the future. This may be because World Vision wants a larger scope of people to appeal to for donorship. World Vision's appeal to non faith based donors is significantly greater than that of ICCM, so keeping more vague of a profile allows them to continue with their current portfolio of donors and expand more rapidly. Whereas, ICCM has a main donor base of members of the Free Methodist Church so they have less consequences of using God clearly in their mission statement. For ICCM, having a child recognizing his or her God-given potential and stepping into that is the end goal, the top of the pyramid.

Vision Statement

World Vision uses one sentence to epitomize their vision and leaves it very open to interpretation by the potential donor. The phrase, "life in all its fullness" makes sense for both nonbelievers and for Christians because everyone has their own idea of what a full life could be. ICCM has a very specific vision with a high focus on kingdom building and church. The vision does a lot to explain the discipleship model they follow for their programming by explaining how the intersection between churches and Christians together will be supporting each other.

There is an obvious vision of not only discipleship but also reconciliation between the church and others.

ICCM's "reaching hundreds of suffering children around the world" does not mention God and could also be open to interpretation. However, the difference is that ICCM's mission statement, which is usually read first, is more outward about its Christian basis than World Vision's.

Values

There are a couple things to notice about the two sets of values statements, first the number of values in each, second the way the wording of similar values reflects each organization's perspective, and finally how these values are actually utilized in their greater development programming.

The second point is examining similar values and how the wording reflects perspective. The set of words I found most interesting were "Christian" with "value people" (World Vision) and "community" with "Image of God" (ICCM). Both organizations make a claim to faith but the two values are distinct in the words they chose. This enforces my thesis about how building relationships and encouraging discipleship are the best way to do development because of the words chosen. The word "Christian" has many connotations with it due to the number of denominations it attracts, some with highly different values in themselves. One example of this is the controversy World Vision U.S received after establishing a policy around the hiring of Christians in gay marriages in 2014. The organization had changed its requirements allowing people who considered themselves Christians yet were in a gay marriage to work for the organization. Immediately after, they received extreme backlash from many churches across the

country as well as influential academic Christians like Darrel Bock at Dallas Theological Seminary who called this action, “an act of betrayal of the nature of the Christian community” (Peralta, 2014). Although some churches accept people living in homosexual relationships to be members of their denomination, there are many who do not, yet both claim to be Christian. By World Vision using the word “Christian” with no denomination attached allows for a wider potential donor base without compromising their faith. ICCM expresses their faith affiliation in several values but the most pointedly being “image of God”. This is a Biblical statement said from God to human beings during creation and reinforced throughout the rest of scripture. The value “image of God” demonstrates an appreciation for faith whilst also placing an equality between donors and receivers. There is a reconciliation method with this term because it is reminding everyone that they are created in the image of God.

There is a similar contrast between “value people” (World Vision), and “community” (ICCM). Both are related to people, however there is a difference between being valued and being a part of a community. Being valued can mean a multiple of things, from being accepted as you are, to being valued for something you do. You can be a value to a company without being valued as an individual. World Vision also uses the word, “partners”, which brings slightly greater depth to their relationship with those they work with. ICCM uses the word “community” which delves further into what it means to value people by inferencing an embrace of people. Prioritizing community reflects a reconciliation orientation because an inclusive community is one of the best indicators of a reconciled group, or at the very least, a community that is making an attempt to reconcile. Placing “community” alongside “the image of God” you get the definition of what church should be, people doing life together, pursuing each other because they are all in the image of God. Using World Vision’s words, “Christian”, “value people”, “partners”

and a fourth, “committed to the poor” demonstrate a division of otherness by separating Christians from the poor.

There was one word that both organizations used in their values, stewards/stewardship. It is fascinating that this is the only overlapping word and for both organizations it is near the end of the list. This word is a common value for Christian NGOs especially because many donors, especially non-Christian donors want to know that their money is not wasted with the organization. So by stating “steward” as a value, the organization is advertising this as a priority and skill.

World Vision’s values have a positive intent but follows a material model by dividing between workers, donors, and receivers. Others are created through the language being used and are then pitied upon by wealthier donors. ICCM’s discipleship/kingdom building model encourages equality between every level in order to achieve the overall end goal to help people realize their God-given potential.

Comparison of Tactics

Table 1: Tactics

Tactics	World Vision	ICCM Canada
Approach to giving to communities	The end goal is independent sustainability, because of this the first few years in an area there is a lot of handing out of supplies followed by teaching	The end goal is global church community, because of this the first few years are spent coming alongside local FMC churches and seeing where

	<p>how to use them. At the end of the program people get to keep what was given but continued updating of supplies is cut off.</p>	<p>support is most needed (projects, schools, centres), followed by implementation of these programs.</p>
Length of support	<p>Area programs (APs) are stationed for 15 years, after that they are reevaluated to determine whether or not they are sustainable on their own. If deemed ready then World Vision steps out and does not return to the community. If they are not ready then time is added to the program.</p>	<p>No time commitment at the start, will be in community as long as the church is still there. Partnership is with local church and goal is to build the church.</p>
Relationships with community	<p>Area program leaders have regular (few times a month) connections with the community. National director visits communities but does not have ongoing relationships with the people</p>	<p>Teachers have daily connection with kids, national directors regularly visit communities and know both the teachers and the kids. Regional coordinators know all staff and often visit</p>

		<p>communities. Pastors are involved with schools.</p> <p>Canadian national director visits or communicates with each country national director regularly.</p>
<p>Formation of solutions chosen</p>	<p>World Vision members adopt a community for a season and do the same program for development with each one.</p> <p>There are a range of programs however, it is always assumed that they will be chosen from the list rather than asking locals for ideas</p>	<p>Canadian national director works with other national directors before partnership begins to agree on what needs to be supported and what does not. In some countries the churches ask for support through schools, others ask for assistance with youth community programs. Many of the ideas are already developed and ICCM comes in to support the good work already being done and build relationships to strengthen and brainstorm new ideas.</p>

Explaining the tactics

For many development agencies the goal of development work is sustainability for every community. Whereas with a discipleship model of development there is a genuine and desired connection through a shared love of God and building His kingdom that there are supportive relationships rather than partnerships with a set end date. At World Vision Malawi area programs are set in place for 15 years. The average age in Malawi is 15 (WVM annual report 2018), meaning that there is a high chance that the majority of the village was under the age of five when World Vision Malawi first came to their village. This means that by the time World Vision is scheduled to leave the area, the majority of the community will not remember a time or what it is like for World Vision not to be involved with their everyday lives. With a majority community who does not have memories before World Vision arrived, it would be terrifying to hear that they will be transitioning out of the community and no longer providing sponsorship for education, food, or medical care. During my second last week working at World Vision I attended a week long sensitization training workshop on transitioning communities out of the program. Part of the training was to enter a community and spend time with the members evaluating the results of the work from the past 15 years. There were hundreds of people who attended the meeting so we divided into groups, my group was asked to evaluate how they felt World Vision had done with education specific programs before they revealed the statistics they had taken to compare various indicators. The community members responded extremely negatively, always voting in the bottom 50% of the expected results when in reality World Vision's statistics were very high. There was a disconnect between what the community felt and what the organization told them was happening. After talking with my supervisor who was the Director of Quality Assurance, she told me that this is a common occurrence with transitioning

communities because they want their program to be extended to continue receiving aid and support for people, if they vote highly then they know that World Vision will remove themselves from the community permanently.

At ICCM there is a connection more focused on relationships between the organization and the communities, which results in a sustained partnership. There is an assurance to the students and families that there will be support, not just financial but also from their church community. The fact that ICCM does not set an end on their support brings a great deal of hope to those it supports. Some may question the level of sustainability this leads to in the long-term, but that is possibly the most significant difference between the charity model and the discipleship model. Discipleship is a continuous process to become like Jesus, churches supporting and encouraging churches is a Biblical concept that should be continued. The early church rested in comfort knowing the assurance they had that there was a community surrounding them to support them holistically whenever they needed. Rather than acting as a simply an agency, ICCM is being the church. During a conversation with the National Director of ICCM Canada she told me about specific examples of strong church communities in the Brazilian branch. In São Paulo there are very high rates of drug trafficking in the favelas, many people are addicted to various drugs and will use their children to traffic drugs to different places. The ICCM church recognized the danger it was for children to be both in the streets and at home so they started a youth centre for children to hang out at during times they are not in school. The youth centre provides a safe place for youth to play, study, hear about Jesus, and to receive something to eat. The church began the centre to care for the youth in their congregation and extended the invitation to the rest of the youth in the community. The church ran the program by itself for two years before ICCM came alongside to support the program and be a part of the church initiative.

Results

Thus far I have distinguished the difference between the charity model and the discipleship model of development, followed by information from each organization to determine who follows what. The big question is if the discipleship model of development truly is the most effective and overall best for the church to follow. The discipleship model alone may not be the most effective and overall best model to follow in certain circumstances, such as those without a Christian faith-based background. This is because although relationship, reconciliation and equalization between others is important, without reconciliation between people and God there are significantly fewer reasons as to why people should be equal and not strive to get more. Without God people are left to their own will to do good work, which can work for a period but is not sustainable over long periods of time.

The results for which model is the best for development work is complicated. For the purpose of the results section I am going to divide development into two categories, short-term development projects such as disaster and emergency relief, and long-term development like community programs. The majority of the discussion will centre around long-term development, mainly because only World Vision participates in relief aid and ICCM does not have a main focus on short-term development projects. However, just because ICCM does not support short-term development projects does not mean that the discipleship/reconciliation mode of development cannot at all.

According to the United Nations, long-term development includes “sustained economic growth, a foundation for poverty reduction, and social development” (United Nations Economic

Commission for Africa). The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 categories for achieving long-term development. At the main office for World Vision Malawi in Lilongwe they have a poster of the SDGs in the main room as a reminder of the goals they are striving to reach. Both World Vision Malawi and ICCM are working on numbers 1, 2, 4, 10, and 17, due to the larger amount of resources and generalized vision, World Vision does touch a few more of the topics as well but because ICCM does not it does not make sense to compare them.

“To end poverty in all its forms everywhere” (SDG1) is a broader goal that will not be achieved by one organization. It is for this reason that organizations working and focusing on different aspects of development are so vital. ICCM’s main focus is holistic development with its main channel being education, World Vision Malawi is more spread out with five focuses. Although more children and people are reached with World Vision’s program, the quality of education for example is significantly lower than ICCM’s highly rated schools. Perhaps if World Vision focused on fewer goals they would have more resources available to meaningfully tackle an aspect of poverty. “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG 2), both organizations offer a daily lunch to sponsored children as a part of the donor fee. World Vision also does other hunger elimination programs through agriculture training and provision of resources, ICCM does not provide other training programs specific to hunger because their overall focus is more on education. However, they do recognize that malnourished children will not be able to achieve their full potential so they chose to add one meal into the sponsorship daily.

The fourth SDG is the prominent focus for ICCM and World Vision, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. In discussions with my supervisor at World Vision Malawi about education, the things she

highlighted most in terms of their program were the quantity of schools they had. Malawi is an interesting case because there are a lot of schools available, however they are often extremely understaffed and have outrageous numbers of children in one class, making it impossible to have quality education (Antoninos, M., 2014). I had the opportunity to visit one World Vision school in Malawi called Wanje Primary School in Nkhoma, which is just outside of the capital, Lilongwe. The school had four classrooms and 300+ kids, the youngest who actually did their lessons in the courtyard between the classes. The school was able to teach very basic material but the teachers could not go into great depth because of the size of their classes. When I was in Ethiopia I visited three different ICCM schools, each of them the same quality. Canada's National Director, informed me that the schools were actually ranked some of the top in the country. Ethiopia is not the only country in which ICCM schools are so highly ranked, and it is obvious why, at the schools I visited in Ethiopia all of the classes were under 30 students, when I visited ICCM schools in Haiti and Kenya the class sizes were all small with one to two teachers for each class. The quality of education offered by the program is phenomenal and many students graduate high school and continue on with post-secondary education. The wording of the fourth SDG speaks the language of reconciliation using words like, "inclusive", "equitable", and "for all". Technically the Wanje school was inclusive and for all, but it lay more towards being equal versus equitable. Children with different needs and disabilities were all in the situation, making classrooms a difficult place for teachers to cover all material. Whereas ICCM were equitable to its students and had a higher quality of education, they were not "for all" because the costs of the schools are higher unless covered by a sponsor. The execution of this SDG goal demonstrates the values of each organization. Reconciliation means equality between people, no division in treatment, in some ways World Vision Malawi's method of inviting everyone to school is more

inclusive of this, however, reconciliation between people also requires intentionality in relationship which is more prominent in ICCM programming.

The final overlapping SDG is number 10, “reduced inequality within and among countries”. Both organizations claim to make efforts to reduce inequality through various means. World Vision Malawi uses sensitization workshops to introduce equality between various groups. Although there is a closer level of equality within Lilongwe, in the rural communities that World Vision works in there is still a long way to go. During a field visit to Nthondo there was a time for a presentation by the community members to the World Vision staff, the women were seated about 20 feet away from the presentation area on a hill sloping downwards in the sun while the men were seated right beside the area under a tree in the shade. In my journal entry recording the day’s events I also wrote about the way each gender treated the other,

“When the women did a presentation they made sure to speak loud enough for everyone to hear but when the men did they spoke directly at the men with their backs to the women and so quietly that I could barely hear them despite being 5 feet away”.

The other interesting thing about the situation was that the World Vision staff were given chairs in the best viewing spot, which does not sound overly troubling because in Malawi hospitality is a major value, however, the staff accepted the separation between themselves and the groups. The staff also received separate meals from the rest of the community with greater amounts of food, some staff even helped themselves to two or three servings of the meal after they had eaten the regular food with the community. At ICCM there was a completely different feel when it came to equality, for example in Ethiopia, during the student’s presentation to us at the end the teachers, students, ICCM regional and national staff, and our group all sat together in the same area with the same standards. The kids showed affection to not just their fellow

students but also their teachers, the ICCM staff and our group. Boys and girls were never separated and there was an air of confidence in their approach to us. Although the areas surrounding the ICCM schools treated people less equally, within the school community everyone was the same. This relates directly back to the value of “image of God” being shown in practice.

In these two instances World Vision Malawi’s showed little reconciliation between genders, staff, and age groups. After 15 years of being in the community there was still a need for gender groups to separate and not just to be with those of the same gender but in a way that treated one significantly worse than the other. The men chose the stop under the tree and at the top of the hill while the women were in the sun on a downward slope, that is a division of people. The second reconciliation issue was the staff, the staff were placed on a pedestal in terms of seating location and food quality. The staff had an opportunity to be counter cultural in the way they treated people in the community but chose to accept the seats and enforce that they have a higher level of importance to the direction of the community than anyone else. Finally, the children went last to receive food and were given the worst seats during the presentation, showing them that their place is below everyone else. Even if children being thought of last is a cultural thing, it is not a way to reconcile or love people.

ICCM’s story showed reconciliation between genders, staff, and age groups. Everyone sat in the same area, shared the same food, and there was not prescribed order to who ate first. The staff gave priority to the kids presenting and one even sat on the floor. The humble approach these people had to life and hospitality allowed for historically culture stereotypes to be diminished in replacement of friendship between all.

In chapter five I will provide a framework for the challenges of implementing a discipleship/reconciliation approach to development, followed by recommendations for various Christian and non-faith based groups to put this approach into action.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Chapter four explained how horizontal identity is restored through the reconciliation of relationships. However, this approach is not without risk, and its practical application remains imperfect. In this chapter I outline some challenges that a discipleship/reconciliation approach to development may pose, along with recommendations for both churches, organizations, and individuals to implementing a “reconciling” approach.

Investing in Relationships

The previous chapter compared two different modes of development, a more charity based method and a discipleship/reconciliation focused method. One of the most unique things about the discipleship/reconciliation approach is the equalized relational aspect it promotes. In the long-run this is an extremely effective approach as it gives confidence to those being helped that they always have support, and it gives those on the giving side a greater reason to be involved with development work as they have a personal relationship and reason to help.

However, like every relationship, discipleship requires work. Part of accountable, intentional discipleship is walking with people through everything, learning to trust them with your troubles, and accepting that both sides have things to speak into the others lives. This can be difficult when the parties of the relationship come from completely different worlds and understandings of the other sides.

One of the reasons so many organizations cannot make a transformational difference is because of their short-term mindset. Gladys Wathanga, a worker for Tearfund from Kenya stated,

I know that when I go back to Kenya my church will still be there, but I don’t know

whether my development organisation will be. They are in today and could be out tomorrow, but the local church is there for years. (Chester, 2002, p.12)

Chester (2002) explains how “the local church is not just close to the grassroots, it is the grassroots” due to its outlasting presence in a community both before and after development agencies are present (p.12).

For non-faith based organizations to adopt a discipleship/reconciliation approach would be significantly more difficult as the highlight is Jesus, however, the basic structure of mentorship and partnership could be possible. The reconciliation piece would be more difficult as true reconciliation needs to stem from a relationship with Jesus first. People are too tied to their emotions and feelings to be able to fully and truly forgive and reconcile themselves as equals to other people without Jesus. Without Jesus there is no reason to think about everyone as equals because in the mind of human justice it is survival of the fittest in many places. In chapter two we discussed how Christians understand sacrifice as necessary because of Jesus’ death on the cross, and without sacrifice from all sides of a discipling relationship there will not be sustainability. In the most obvious sense, if everyone in the world were to be equal and consume materials at the same speed and amount as those in North America, both the planet and people would be in irreversible trouble. Equal material resource is not development, yet secular organizations promote a mentality that all people should be equal and those who already have should not have to cease their lifestyle. This makes development impossible without God.

FMCiC

The challenge for the current situation of the FMCiC with a discipleship approach to international development is the lack of active connections with churches in different countries

due to lack of engagement with ICCM. Coming alongside a church and supporting it as a partnership is difficult without connections as there is distrust on both sides, and there may be a misunderstanding of intentions without a clear connection between the two. Although not impossible, the effectiveness of starting completely from ground zero as a single church is questioned versus using resources like ICCM as a starting point.

This leads to the first recommendation, rather than trying to build relationships completely from the start, be more intentional about using the resources already offered to the churches within the FMCiC. This is an incredible opportunity for ICCM as there are over 150 Free Methodist churches in Canada that they can appeal to and try to connect with the 13 countries they work in. The opportunity is there but the mentality of disciple making, reconciliation between people groups, and general relationship building have not been promoted enough within the Canadian churches, resulting in a decline in church attendance and missions work both at home and around the world. Using already existing networks will help alleviate some of the initial trust barriers between international groups and provide other practical solutions such as translators to the participating churches on both sides.

The second recommendation for the FMCiC is to be more intentional about making disciples by teaching people and leaders demonstrating how to be intentional about disciple making both within their local church and outwardly into the international churches. Establishing discipling relationships within local churches is not only good for encouraging deeper relationships with Christ, but also as a practice as forming relationships with international churches. This can be done through small groups where members are asked questions similar to Wesley's 22 questions or something else that challenges the mind, heart, and actions of a person every day. Wesley's 22 questions are questions that are meant to guide people about how to

check in with those they are discipling or being disciplined by. Examples of these questions include: “did the Bible live in me today? Do I give it time to speak to me everyday? Am I enjoying prayer? How do I spend my spare time?” (Welch, 2016) Personalizing and humanizing the people from both sides of the relationship creates a care, love, and desire to encourage and help each other. Discipleship can happen unintentionally through natural means, however, the most effective discipleship relationships come out of intentionality which means that in order to practice discipleship people need to meet and have discussion about personal reconciliation with God and how that is being played out in the world. If both sides are actively forging discipling relationships with both their local churches and with their partner international churches, then the development work will occur naturally as part of being a disciple is taking care of each other’s needs.

Organizations

Up until now the discussion has been focused on how Free Methodist churches in Canada could improve their development strategies through the discipleship/reconciliation process. However, this thesis argues that a discipleship/reconciliation approach is the most effective overall, not just for the FMCiC. The next question is, how would a charity based organization could move towards a discipleship based organization? Christian organizations should partner with local churches and build intentional, discipling relationships with the leaders and other members before deciding to ‘do development work’. With churches especially it is important to show that the relationship is long-term and that it will be a continued support in order to build trust. After a relationship is built over time, work with the church leaders to establish problem areas in the community and from there work together to design a plan to solve the problem.

Making sure both sides are providing equal prayer and resources to the project will allow ownership for both sides.

Using World Vision Malawi as an example, there are already many established programs across the country so there is a relationship and a platform. World Vision is different from ICCM in the sense that it does not work with local churches, but does employ Christians. World Vision Malawi does work in some communities that are primarily Muslim, which poses another challenge to working with the local Christian church.

In order to make a discipleship culture in an organization like World Vision Malawi the focus should start with the staff, there are many ways this can be done and should be evaluated based on context before implementation. Although they do host chapel services and Bible studies a few times a week there are few people who attend them out of desire to be near God, rather the majority attend because it is a break from work and it is mandated within the organization. This is demonstrated by the lack of people who attend the optional Bible study when chapel services are not happening. Investing in mentoring relationships within the organization would be key to changing the heart of why people choose to work at World Vision Malawi instead of next door at Plan International. This could be done in a few different ways, one being that each department set apart specific time for praying for each other, asking challenging questions, and checking in regularly. The departments at World Vision Malawi usually range from 3-10 people which is a good size for a discipleship group.

Besides discipleship groups in the office, doing simple things such as sharing a meal, dancing, and praying together, for Malawi, to do this regularly enough that neither side feels the need to make their dance, meal, or prayer in a performance manner is key. Although it is difficult for main office staff to go into every village, the area program staff live in or nearby each

community and could host a monthly prayer, potluck style dinner, or music worship night. This would bring communities together as well as create deeper relationships between staff and those they are trying to help. Having a monthly meet-up could also be something that visiting donors could attend where they could informally get to know the children and communities that they sponsor.

Christian disciples are equalizers between people because of their understanding of sacrifice, desire to create meaningful relationships, and willingness to take care of their neighbours. The world of development work needs these kinds of people to truly make a difference in the future of the field.

Individuals

Finally, if the church is a collection of members creating one body, then individual parts and members need to be functioning fully as well. To start, development practitioners should join a small group that is actually accountable and intentional about meeting and challenging each other. Another thing that could be done is to approach someone whose faith is something you aspire to and ask them to be a mentor. By spending time with someone solid in their faith and actions it becomes more natural to act like them. Lastly, continue the discipleship process. The church will fizzle out if there is not a continued cycle of disciple making that is intentional on both sides. Begin taking time to invest in other people around you by caring for physical needs, offering emotional support, and asking challenging questions.

Conclusion

There are ways to implement a discipleship/reconciliation approach at the denomination level, within organizations, and as individuals. Reconciliation begins with Christ and ends with

others, by taking intentional steps to make disciples and follow the actions of Jesus while he was on earth Christians will have a unique approach to the field of development as a whole.

Conclusion

As globalisation shrinks the world, the needs of the rich and poor are drawing closer together. With countries in the Global North rapidly advancing, and countries in the Global South struggling to keep up, a relational approach to development as presented in this thesis is more vital than ever. My Ethiopian friend had an excellent grasp on the necessity of using the church as the main vehicle to drive development in his community. He recognized that the church has a unique opportunity to do development differently by reconciling itself with Christ, His vision, and intentionally creating disciples in their congregations. A discipleship/reconciliation approach is important to development because it encourages a reconciliation deeper than merely between people, it reaches first vertically to Christ, then horizontally to those in your inner community, out to your local community, and finally to the global community. The discipleship portion also advocates for mentoring, accountable, and deeper relationships between each category you are in reconciliation with.

This thesis argued that poverty should be viewed as the result of a set of broken relationships. Chapter one defined key terms and laid a framework for how these terms are important for the following chapters, this included in-depth definitions of poverty, identity, disciples, the ‘other’, and reconciliation. Chapter two argued that reconciling relationships between people and God (vertical reconciliation) must come first as Christ is the perfect example of true sacrifice, equality, and humility. Following vertical reconciliation, horizontal reconciliation can begin with people internal to the church such as church members and the surrounding local community. Chapter three continued the idea of horizontal reconciliations with those external to the church community, the ‘others’. Discussion on how reconciled relationships between Christ, people, and ‘others’ lead to kingdom building explained the importance of

external relations and ways that encourages development. Chapter four presented my participant observations and other research between World Vision Malawi and ICCM Canada, showing that development strategies need to be more than a list of programs but rather viewed through a holistic lens with a heavy focus on creating disciples. Finally, chapter five concluded with practical recommendations to improving and implementing a discipleship/reconciliation approach to development for organizations, churches, and individuals. Chapter five presented a number of different topics that could also be the inspiration for the direction of future research under this subject.

By reshaping the way churches see the issues of global poverty will help to shape the way they respond. My teacher friend in Ethiopia was the first person I met in the field who lived in such a radically reconciled way with Christ and lived it out so passionately by taking intentional steps to making disciples every day. When churches are able to align themselves with Christ's heart for all people, they will be able to truly show Jesus to the world.

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