"International Social Work in Faith-Based Settings"

Thank you for taking part in this home study text-based course. The purpose of this course is to help practitioners gain a better understanding of adopting social work practices on an international level. Through the following articles, participants will be able to better identify ways to incorporate Christian faith and ethical practice into international social work, as well as domestic practice. The following text-based course contains eight articles, all based upon course content regarding the role of international Christian social workers. The articles will be as follows: *The Christian context of international social work practice: Introduction to the special issue* by Mark E. Rogers, *Offering hope in Romania: Efforts to empower through cross-cultural social work* by Elizabeth Patterson, *Can reverse mission internationalize social work without the hegemony of religious, social, or intellectual conversion?* by Faye Abram, Gregory Shufeldt, and Kelle Rose, *Literacy and the developing world* by Nick Cross, *Context of spirituality in social work practice with families* by Vita Roga, *Experiencing South Africa as an African American woman: Moving from the strengths perspective to racial and gender "victorization?"* by Kimberly Battle Walters, *Sustained involvement produces results: Oklahoma team partners to help Russian orphans* by Lanny Endicott, and *Soylent green is people: Cannabilism of the world's women and children through sexual trafficking and prostitution* by Lisa Thompson. Contact information for each author can be provided upon request.

At the conclusion of each article, you can find a complete reference section to suppor the readings.

After the completion of this course, the practitioner will be able to:

1. List the importance of empowerment efforts among Romania's people and how Veritas Sighisoara's faith-based social work has impacted its community.

2. Understand the concept of reverse mission and be able to identify its utility as an approach to international social work education and practice.

3. Consider the importance of literacy based on worldwide and African statistics.

4. Articulate a new model for integrating spirituality into education of families as a means of addressing social problems in Latvian society.

5. Apply the theoretical concept of racial and gender victorization within the context of South African post-apartheid reconciliation.

6. List two ways the Salvation Army is helping victims of the sex trade in Dhaka.

Upon completing the reading section of this course, please take the 20 question post-test on the website provided to you when you purchased this course. After achieving as core of at least 80% and completing the training evaluation, you will receive your CE certificate verifying that you have earned _____ continuing education contact hours approved by the Association of Social Work Boards.

It is our hope that this course will help you in your international practice within a Christian social work context. Thank you again for your interest in this course. If you experience any difficulties with the technology supporting this course, please contact _____. If you have any questions or concerns about this course or its content, please contact NACSW at info@nacsw.org or 203.270.8780.

THE CHRISTIAN CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Mark E. Rodgers

This special issue of Social Work and Christianity focuses on the involvement of Christians in international social work practice. This introduction to the special issue will briefly describe the history of social work's international involvement and the context of global social work practice. Additionally the introduction will include some of the current realities of international problems. Finally, the guest editorial will delineate some proposed solutions including community development practice and the United Nation's Millennium Goals. In the concluding section the details of the published articles and practice examples will be described.

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF SOCIAL WORK & CHRISTIANITY focuses on the involvement of Christians in international practice. I was both honored and pleased when invited by the editor of the journal, Dr. David A. Sherwood, to be the guest editor of this special issue of the journal focusing on the efforts of Christians in the widely expanding field of international, or what is called today global, social work practice.

This past year, as I worked on my tasks as guest editor, I was once again reminded of the significant work that David and others do as they prepare each issue of the journal for publication. In addition, through my role as guest editor, I became aware of the significant amount of work that Christians in social work are doing

and have been doing in international settings. As news of the special issue was circulated, and as I

distributed copies of the call for papers, I became aware of our involvements around the globe.

Clearly, Christian social workers have taken the direction and vision of the Gospel of Mathew in

Chapter 28 and have gone forth to all nations. As I informed individuals of the focus of the special

issue and attempted to seek appropriate manuscript submissions, I was amazed and pleased to

hear of the

projects and efforts that Christian social workers have been involved

in throughout the world.

The History and Context of Global Social Work

Historically, as social work education and practice was developing in the United States, it

was also emerging in Europe. By the 1920s and 1930s, social work had begun in Latin America as

well as in Africa, India, and China. Some of the first work of international social workers was in the

area of the Peace Movement of the early 20th Century and the resulting formation of the League

of Nations and later in the post World War II era with the United Nations (Healy, 2001).

One of the first international conferences of social work was held in 1928 in Paris. Besides

introducing the social work profession onto the international stage, early global meetings became

forerunners of the formation of some of the best known international social work organizations

including the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), the International Federation of

Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

(Healy, 2001). These three organizations have continued to exert a strong influence on the

development and practice of social work throughout the world. They have also taken strong

positions supporting the rights of women and children globally. IFSW and IASSW, in particular,

have taken part in the development of policy position papers and consultative sessions with the United Nations (Healy, 2001).

Today, simply turning on the television or shopping in department stores or surfing via the internet helps us realize we live in a global village. International issues impact everyone's life every day. Improvements in the ease of travel and in communications have led to a global networking effect, linking us all together closely and quickly. Furthermore, the growth of multinational corporations and co-operations means we are experiencing today the global economy (Hokenstad, Khinduka & Midgley, 1996). With the realities of global interdependence, significant changes are taking place at an increasingly rapid pace around the globe (Hokenstad & Midgley, 1997). Furthermore, changes taking place half way around the world can easily impact us. Social work must face the reality that global challenges require global thinking and responses. Hokenstad, Khinduka, and Midgley said, "Both an international perspective and an international response are required for effective problem solving" (1996, p.1).

Current Realities

The call for Christians in social work to play a critical role in social development and problem resolution is ever increasing. International data and social indicator statistics clearly demonstrate significant world wide problems. The fall of the former Soviet Union has produced an end to the Cold War, but the need for nation rebuilding in the newly independent members of the former Soviet State remains. The failed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's) of many of the most impoverished nations of the world have led to sharp criticism to the monetary policies and economic development of the World Bank as well as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The newest term in the international "tool box" is "sustainable development": and all efforts toward change in the global arena must be from the standpoint of sustainable development.

The World Development Report of 2003 issued by the World Bank indicated that poverty in developing countries needed to be eliminated in a way that was both environmentally and socially sustainable (World Bank, 2003). The World Bank report (2003) verified that the core development challenge was to ensure work and better life quality for approximately 3 billion poor people who are currently earning less then 2 U.S. dollars per day (World Bank, 2003).

Besides the continued poverty of the world there is growing concern over the state of the world's children. Malnutrition, disease, poor sanitation, children soldiers, hunger, abandonment, inadequate health services and immunization have produced a world that is toxic to children and their survival (UNICEF, 1998; Zouev, 1998). In addition to the problems described above is the continued worldwide pandemic of HIV/AIDS, as well as the recent outbreak of illnesses like SARS in Asia.

Finally, I would be remiss to not mention in this list of worldwide social problems the growing problem of human trafficking. Some of the human trafficking is for sexual slavery purposes but economic or labor slavery must also be considered under the definition of human trafficking. Internationally minded social workers need to realize that as Sorajjakool (2003) indicated, "sex trade is a multibillion-dollar global industry—an industry of organized crime with complex systems involving influential individuals from gang members to government officials" (p.1). Sexual trafficking is an act of violence that results in economic profit for the perpetrators. Women, girls, and young boys are trafficked to wherever there is a demand for prostitution, such as tourist attractions, conventions, sporting events, military bases, or transient communities. Trafficking is therefore a direct result of economic, social, environmental, and cultural factors which combine to manipulate an individual through deception, coercion, desperation, and even in some cases family pressure to be placed in sexual bondage (Farley, 2003).

A review of global concerns would be shortsighted without some mention of the growing influence of international terrorism. Clearly, the events of September 11th, 2001 propelled the United States into an arena all too familiar to other people of the world. The end of the Cold War has led to a shift in armed conflicts, moving them away from wars between differing political ideologies and back toward the historical conflict points of differing religions and differing ethnic/cultural backgrounds. This growing global concern regarding terrorism and war has many nations focusing on the importance of security and some nations have made this a top priority. Even developing nations and redeveloping nations are focusing on security concerns. In fact, the most recent Human Development Report from Latvia (a redeveloping nation of the former USSR) has taken the theme of human security. Much of their annual report stresses ways of increasing the securitability of the Latvian people (Simane, 2003).

Need and Solutions

The need for social workers to be aware of and involved in international issues is paramount. Clearly, the profession must be more concerned with professional training of social workers in global matters. In addition, professional social work organizations must continue to expand and enhance their role in international issues, social development projects, global training, and as a focus for annual meetings. NASCW has taken such a bold step with the focus of this special issue on international social work as well as declaring the theme for the 2004 Annual Convention and Training Conference to be "Social Work on a Global Scale."

Certainly, Christian social workers are not new actors on the international stage. Some of the first international work in the areas of human rights, equitable resource distribution, and personal empowerment came from the work of Christian missionaries around the globe. Much of their original work, and that of today, focuses on community development. The challenge today,

however, is for Christian social workers to proactively and reactively respond to the rapid changes impacting the entire world. Clearly, in order to solve some of the global problems one must first have an awareness of them. This special issue makes a significant contribution in this area. Since no single model of social work practice exists that can be implemented throughout the world, then we must at least become aware of what Christian social workers are currently doing in international settings. We must realize that in most cases a macro perspective toward solving international problems is the best initial approach. The macro perspective allows an empowerment approach while stressing a community development model (Campfens, 1999; Midgley, 1995; Midgley, 1997; Rodgers, 1996: Rodgers, 2000: Stoesz, Guzzetta, & Lusk, 1999; United Nations, 1995; Van Wormer, 2003).

In addition, James Midgley (1995) stressed that for community development to be effective it must include both economic and social development. Otherwise, economic development alone without social development tends to produce a phenomena he called "distorted development" (p.4). Within the focus on community development practice, the United Nations has introduced their Millennium Development Goals that were adapted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. These goals fit well with the efforts described in the papers and practice examples in this special issue and include the targets of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women empowerment, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, insuring environmental sustainability, and developing a Global Partnership for Development (Drakulich, 2003).

As a social worker on the cutting edge of international social work practice for over 10 years, I have seen and experienced the importance of social workers understanding and using the

concepts of cultural sensitivity and global awareness in their international work. We must be aware and knowledgeable of the heritage, history, background, beliefs, language, customs, values, ethics, and spirituality of the nations and people we intend to serve.

Conclusions

Both the profession of social work and Christians within social work have long been involved in international efforts. The interest in global matters among professionionals increases daily. As evidence of this increased interest, more manuscripts were submitted than could be published in this first special issue on international social work. The selected papers for this issue included both theoretical and current practice examples. The nations discussed include Ghana, Latvia, Mexico, Romania, Russia and South Africa. The topics include cross-cultural practice, impact of reverse mission, orphans and sustainability, racial and gender empowerment, sexual trafficking, and spirituality in social work practice with families. It is my desire that *Social Work & Christianity* will continue to publish articles detailing and focusing on Christians in international social work practice. Further, it is my hope that NACSW will continue increasing its organizational involvement in global matters. I look forward to the day when the association's growth and reach would justify changing its name to the International Association of Christians in Social Work (IACSW). In conclusion, I hope the readers of this journal will be enlightened and benefit from considering the articles and practice examples included within.

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OFFERING HOPE IN ROMANIA: EFFORTS TO EMPOWER THROUGH CROSSCULTURAL SOCIAL WORK

Elizabeth Patterson

Throughout the world there are people suffering with little hope for their

future. Christian social workers have an opportunity to utilize their skills

internationally in order to bring about hope through faith-based initiatives.

This paper will present a model of empowerment offering spiritual, economic

and social hope by creating faith-based social assistance programs in Sighisoara,

Romania. These programs are empowering local people as leaders of

social, educational, and economic projects. The personal experiences of three

Romanian staff members working with Veritas Sighisoara will be shared as a

basis for discussion of opportunities, benefits and challenges of involvement in

international and cross-cultural social work practice.

IN JESUS' LAST WORDS ON EARTH HE COMMANDED CHRISTIANS to "Go

into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:20). This good news is not

only of eternal salvation but is a message of freedom and justice to those in need; "to preach good

news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted"and "to release the oppressed" (Luke 4:16-19).

There are many people groups throughout the world who have lived in a culture of oppression

with few opportunities to learn how they can find freedom for themselves and their nations.

Through cross-cultural and international social work endeavors Christian social workers have the

opportunity to combine Christian calling and social work skills in empowerment efforts that can

help to transform communities. An example of a multi-cultural Christian organization that is going

about this process of helping through empowerment efforts is Veritas Sighisoara. This organization

is working to make a difference in Romania, a country that is rebuilding itself after years of

oppression under communist rule. This article will explore the importance of empowerment

efforts among Romania's people and describe how Veritas' faith-based social work has impacted its

community, with applications relevant to other cross-cultural settings.

History of the Effects of Communism in Romania

The final communist dictator of Romania, Nicolae Ceaucescu, attempted to lead his

nation's people to believe that their social problems were under control with no need for formal

social services or for the profession of social work (Zamfir, 1998). Yet the 1989 people's revolution

that overthrew communism revealed a country that had once been full of rich culture and

resources with desperate social needs. It has been estimated that only 5% of the population was

able to meet their basic needs at the end of his rule (Nicholas, 2001). Under Ceaucescu's

leadership the government had sold much of the nation's food to pay off the national debt, while forcing families to have more children. When families discovered they were not given enough food to provide for their growing families, they were told that their children could be better cared for in institutions, which later were revealed to have horrible inhumane conditions (Simpkins, 1998).

Still Struggling to Survive

Although the situation in Romania is improving, the Romanian people are still finding it difficult to rebuild their nation since the fall of communism in 1989. The middle class still struggles to have enough money from their salaries to pay for utilities and buy food in the cold winter months. Many unemployed parents find it almost impossible to find work and provide for their families. Poorer families suffer with inadequate housing conditions and lack of resources to feed their children with proper nourishment. Because of this, there are still children abandoned to government institutions, often when their families feel they do not have the resources to support them. Some children have found means of survival on the streets through begging, stealing, and prostitution. Local and national governmental policies and practices are trying to prevent these social problems. For example, some of the children who are abandoned are sent from the institutions back to their biological families and street children are often taken off the streets. Yet after this is done it seems there are few support structures in place in order to help deal with the root of the problem; therefore the cycle continues.

The elderly constitute another population that is struggling in Romania. Elderly people who worked hard all their lives and were promised livable pensions under the communist government are now finding it difficult to live on small pensions. Some are abandoned by their children, who have moved to larger cities or western countries in hopes of a more positive future for themselves. As a result of these and other social problems, many Romanian people see very

little hope for a positive future for themselves and their country. As Romania's social problems were revealed in the early 1990's through world media coverage, foreign government organizations, non-profit agencies, churches and individuals came to provide assistance to the Romanian people. Much of this initial help was only crisis oriented, and while it helped many people to survive, fourteen years later, many Romanians are still in a state of crisis (Nicholas, 2000). As social service programs did not formally exist during communism, Romania developed a social work profession, with the first graduates graduating in 1994, just 10 years ago. (Zamfir, 1998).

Throughout Romania, there are strategic efforts being made at local and national levels to strengthen the nation and empower Romanian people to rise above their oppression. Yet due to the many social needs in Romania and the lack of in country resources and experienced skilled social service professionals in the country, Romanians have welcomed assistance and expertise available from Western nations. The type of assistance that is having a positive affect in Romania is helping to empower Romanian leaders who have a hope for their country and skills to make long lasting changes in a culturally relevant manner (Zamfir, 1998). Veritas is one example of a faith-based organization that is attempting to do this at the local level in Sighisoara, Romania.

Veritas' History in Romania: A model of Empowerment

Eastern Nazarene College began a study abroad program in Romania in 1993 after some students had expressed an interest in going to Romania to help meet some of the needs they had heard about in the country. As Romania is a country rich in culture, including Romanian, Saxon German, Hungarian and Roma (Gypsy) people groups, it was an excellent location for students to study cultures and serve through helping with social needs. Dorothy Tarrant, MSW, was sent as a tentmaker missionary and college professor to lead groups of students spending a term in Romania. Although the program started in Bucharest, the capital city, Dorothy Tarrant and the

Romanian Studies Program soon moved to Sighisoara, a town of approximately 38,000 people that had very few social service programs and many needs. Students came to Sighisoara, to study the culture of the country through taking classes, including Cross-Cultural Service Learning, where they learned through service projects helping to meet needs in the community (Crutcher, 1996).

Still today, many receive credit for social work practica from their colleges and universities. In the early years of this program, service opportunities began with helping to meet the needs of the children, one of the most needy populations in the country (Zamfir, 1998). Students held and played with abandoned babies and children in institutions and also befriended many children on the streets. These children became the first members of a Kids Club program that serves 180 kids today. As students and volunteers from the U.S. came to spend time serving in Romania they continued to develop programs to meet both spiritual and physical needs. These programs were led by the foreigners with Romanians as translators. These translators gained much more than English skills through their work; they started to develop a heart for the needs of those they were serving and the skills to lead and develop their own programs. As this process took place and more Romanian employees were hired, Dorothy Tarrant started a formal Romanian Foundation (NGO), called Veritas Sighisoara.

American students and volunteers still come to work with Veritas, but 27 Romanian employees direct and work within social service, educational, cultural and small business programs. The activities include Kids Club programs for at-risk children, work with families, crisis assistance, elderly home visits, two elderly clubs, support for disabled people, parents' support groups, a community domestic violence project, English classes, Romanian classes, computer classes, art classes, an internet café, and a coffee shop. The majority of these are directed and managed by Romanian staff.

Personal Stories

Six and a half years ago I came to Romania to do my BSW practicum and take some missions classes. I was blessed to have the opportunity to work with some of the new Romanian staff who served as translators. Romania caught my heart as I was able to combine social work and missions, both of which I felt called to do. I continued to come back to volunteer whenever I could after my undergraduate studies and during my graduate studies. Now I have the privilege of volunteering full-time in Romania as the director of the Veritas social programs and have been blessed to see many staff members grow and develop as professional social service workers. Veritas could not exist and make a sustainable impact on the community without these dedicated Romanian staff. Their stories best explain this process of empowerment and the impact they feel it has had on their lives and the lives of those they serve. Below are three personal testimonies of staff members who have worked for Veritas since its beginning. They all started as translators, unskilled in social services, but have become directors of social programs.

Mihaela

A 24 year old Roma (Gypsy) woman, Mihaela Kovacs, began her work with Veritas six and a half years ago. She described her first experience with Veritas as she began as a translator for students leading programs for poor Roma children. When asked what her first impressions were she said, "I was impressed. It helped me to see gypsy kids in a new way. Americans working with smelly children, holding and playing (with them) I was amazed." When interviewing her I mentioned that visitors are always amazed at her incredible heart for the poor. She said: But it didn't start like that, working alongside others helped me to see that I am able and I can take some leadership and do something. I learned I can do more than I thought. Things I could do that I never thought I could do, to show that Romanians care for their own people. I thought Romanians

were selfish and didn't consider them able to help their own people. Through her work Mihaela saw that:

People were helping each other, to resolve social problems, drinking, violence, child abuse, I had never heard of that before. We had never heard of helping like this. I didn't realize before we (Romanians) had these problems, they were hidden problems so we didn't realize they needed to be resolved...They [foreign students and volunteers] showed us that you can't ignore this.

After six and a half years of practical experience in social work and teaching, Mihaela is the director of Big Kids Club, an advocate for needy families, and is in her second year of social work studies. She hopes to combine her practical knowledge with formal university training so that she can continually have the skills and professionalism she needs to advocate for the poor and oppressed in the community. She has dedicated her life to helping some of the poorest Roma families and youth in town who are from her own cultural background. As Mihaela continues to work full-time with Veritas, she also has helped to start and is directing another Romanian NGO, which has started the first shelter for victims of abuse in Sighisoara.

Ramona

Another young Romanian women, Ramona Costea, described her first experience of working with Veritas like this:

I was working at Distrofici with Amber [American volunteer]. I was Amber's translator. I went in the morning to Distrofici [an institution for abandoned children] and I remember we had older children, 6 and 7 years old, and they couldn't speak and walk. Amber let me in one room with 11 or 12 kids. It was so hard...this is how I started to learn. The way that Amber supervised me helped me to learn how to supervise, how to keep files, notebooks, records and interacting with the nurses and doctors. After a short while Amber left and

Melissa [American volunteer] came for one year and I was working with her as her assistant. We went together everywhere and made decisions together.

Ramona described how she became a director of the Kids Club kindergarten:

Annamaria [Romanian staff member] came and made groups and realized some of the kids were too young so she asked me to take care of those younger children separately. I talked with Dorothy [director of Veritas] and her and decided I wanted to start a kindergarten program. I was in charge of starting this program. We had kindergarten in the staff room; it was the only empty room. And then Andrew [British business manager] decided we had an empty room we could arrange as a kindergarten. I started to do more than just playing but started to plan lessons, games, songs, Bible stories, and then we said because I see the families every day I should work with those families.

Angie [American social worker] who was the coordinator of the kids programs, gave us advice of how to work with the children and helped to establish rules. The first lessons on how to work with a family was from Angie. She helped us to know how to work with a family. Elizabeth [American social worker] also helped me as I worked as her translator on visits. There was a girl in Big Kids Club who had a disability; she couldn't speak. Elizabeth kind of helped me know what to look for....I learned that if you have the desire to help and start to understand the system that they are in, you can. I also think that God really helped me to do it because I don't think I could have done it by myself, I didn't have any idea (how to work with children). I didn't know that the job I was doing was social work. I didn't know what social work was even if I was actually doing it.

I asked Ramona how she felt Veritas and her personal work with Veritas was influencing the community of Sighisoara:

We and people outside this building in town were helped very much. Before this program was here I saw many more people begging on the street, many more poor people. I see that many people have been blessed through this foundation. I think this is a wonderful thing. I think it is the long-term needs of people that are being helped. I think that God brings people to us, that God brings the right people to the right place...Even when we help people short term, probably God brings someone else to help them and send to them. Even if the contact was short, maybe later in his life they will think about the impact it has on their life. Probably all the families were helped by us, even if they aren't helped now it is because now they do not need our help any more. I had a child in my kindergarten whose mother was a traditional gypsy and his father was Romanian. When he was born his mother left him with his grandmother and the grandmother was the mother of his father. When she left the boy was five years old and he never saw his mom. I helped the family for two years and now he is in a normal kindergarten, doing well, the father got a job, the family does not need my help any more. I still visit and we meet on the street and talk but they do not need me anymore.

I hope that my children will see this too, because I am thinking that when I was a child I was not very poor but we would have needed help like this. Probably my family would have been different if my family had help like this. These families are really blessed, not the material help, but our program, it is something different than we had in Romania before.

One of Ramona's dreams was to go to university:

When Dorothy talked to me about getting a job here I told her in the future I want to study. She was happy about that because she encouraged her employees to study more. I think a year later I heard about this university in Tirgu Mures and this program on

weekends and thought maybe I could apply to this. I then talked to Dorothy and she said she would help with the money to do this school. I went for the exam and I passed and she paid my school...I hope that this will help me in my future career working at the hospital (with abandoned children) especially and working with my families and any other families that want to come to me. I want to get specialized in counseling; actually I want to get specialized in special needs, counseling, and psychological diagnosis.

Ramona graduated from university during the summer of 2003. Ramona's main role on staff at Veritas is to coordinate the work with abandoned children who have been left at the hospital. She coordinates the work that American students, foreign volunteers and local Romanian young people do with abandoned and institutionalized children in the hospital. As the government is developing policies against abandonment and fewer children are staying in institutions, Ramona is spending more time providing support for families who want to take back their children from the hospital in order to help them have the resources they need to care for their children. During this past year Ramona has also started foster care initiatives, collaborating with local foster care agencies and the county child protection services to provide homes for children who are not able to go to their biological families or be adopted yet.

Vladimir

When Vladimir Sargu started working with Veritas he had just finished vocational training and could not find a job in his field. He had no family of his own and wanted to do something more with his life. He started as a volunteer and was soon hired as a translator. He gained practical knowledge and was empowered to make a difference among some of the most forgotten people in the community:

During my job as a translator I worked for a very long time as the personal translator of the director of the social work programs, going with her on field work, meetings, appointments, being a part of helping her with translation in the structuring of the program (Kids Club), so I learned in a practical way social work skills. Out of experience of having this American social worker as a mentor, I gained social work knowledge. After two years of this "unofficial training" I had the courage to start my own program. I was able to transfer what I learned with children and families, to a people group that I really had a heart for, that I felt more attached to and more comfortable with, the elderly...In May 1999, I started an elderly program and still it is the only elderly program in town. Their situation had decreased constantly after the revolution. Especially in our town, the number of elderly has grown a lot and we had a number that lived by themselves or had been abandoned. One of the causes was the migration of the youth from town to bigger cities or leaving other countries immigrating to Western Europe. Another cause was that 90% of the Saxon German minority moved back to Germany. Because of all this they left behind a large number of lonely isolated elderly and extremely confused elderly people who all of a sudden saw all they knew and believed in turned to dust; most of them having pensions that are not higher than $30 a month, or even as low as $5 a month, if they had worked on a collective farm. Their life conditions continued to decrease in the twelve years since the revolution so I felt this was the time for immediate intervention. I decided to go to the city hall social work office. They were extremely glad to start collaboration...They allowed us to use their archives of files and paper work but they were not able to help us materially. In the same time we announced the beginning of this program to several priests and pastors since the church leaders knew the best about the situation of the elderly in their parish.

That is how we received quite a large folder of cases. Pretty soon after receiving this we felt that the cases were extremely diverse, from being bed tired to being able to move but just having socializing needs. From this came the idea to have a place some could come to for socializing activities to see they are not alone and there are other people with the same situation as them. In October 1999 this is how we started the elderly club from 10-12 every morning during the week.

Another target group we didn't intend from the beginning was the people from the nursing home in town, which offers a roof and food but no other activities, so they were extremely glad to have these activities. These people are stigmatized because they are living in a nursing home. However, as we started this club we kept the initial part which was home visits. We still have around 20 addresses that we try to see once in two weeks with people who are bed tired [bed ridden] and suffer various conditions, or strokes, where the family wanted to put them in institutions but we encouraged them to stay in the family. We are helping them with food, diapers, and other things to make it easier life for these people and the people that live in their houses. During the past year another club has been started in a different part of town.

Vladimir continues to direct these two clubs, do home visits and advocate on behalf of the elderly in Sighisoara. During the next year he hopes to increase the quality of Veritas's elderly home visit program by including another volunteer or staff member in doing visits. Vladimir is also in his third year of law school to increase his advocacy skills. He said:

Another fact in the last year that helped my knowledge was that I went back to get my second degree in law and hope to get a master's degree in international human rights, and I

know this will help me in my work and in ways of helping people. This will also diverse [diversify] my activities to be able to protect the rights of these people in a much better more proper way than I am doing right now. It would also help me to help these people in a more official or formal way of advocating for their rights.

Impact of International Social Work: Opportunities and Limitations

The stories of these Veritas staff members reveal that their lives have been impacted through their work with Veritas as they have been empowered to influence their community in remark able ways. Yet international social work can have both positive and negative impacts on communities as foreign professionals bring cultural values and ideologies that are often different from those of the host country. Here is Vladimir's opinion on this, based on his experiences:

In 1989, we can say we jumped into a world that we knew mostly nothing about. We knew nothing about capitalism, we knew nothing about market economy, we knew nothing about social security in a society like this. But after 50 years of communism we realized this was not a right way but we didn't know what we do with the freedom. That is why it was so welcomed to receive the help from Western charities. The help I got from them mostly was sharing their ideology, beliefs, way of living, and way of thinking of the one next to them. The value that I have appreciated more and have learned was Westerners showing us that they are interested and care for people on the other side of the earth. It was not one of their obligations, but they shared out of the goodness of their heart. And in a more practical way all the knowledge that they had in their social work and other professional fields, such as market economy.

As professionals come into a foreign country to share their expertise, it is very important for them to remember that they are not experts in all areas any more, as they are entering

into an unknown culture and must rely on the expertise of the local people to learn how to apply their professional skills to the situation they are helping. This can be quite challenging for Americans and Western Europeans who tend naturally take over in leadership in multicultural groups, influencing their values in a way that can potentially make others feel their opinions are not valued (Law, 1996).

Vladimir's comments continued:

Not all of the foreigners understand that this is a different country. It has its own culture and beliefs and there is a certain limit on where we want to change. We do want to change but we want to keep our own traditions. What we do want to keep may not be the same that as what they think we should keep. This is especially those that this is their first trip out of the country....Not all the points that foreigners want to change we want to change and sometimes what we want to change the foreigners want to keep. The goals in change are not always the same. It is really difficult when foreigners try to expect change in two or three years what has been known for a hundred years, for example that gypsies are a certain way. It is very difficult to change in a year everything you believe on a certain subject. Sometimes the expectancies from the foreigners are much higher than we can give.

Although many Romanians are grateful for the help they have received from other nations, many have expressed similar opinions to those above about negative aspects of foreigners coming to work in their country. As one considers international social work and missions it is very important to begin to understand one's own culture and learn about the culture one is going to, to be able to enter the culture in a way that can empower the local people to make culturally relevant long term impact on their community (Lingenfelter, 1998).

The Veritas staff is a multicultural staff, consisting of Romanian, Hungarian, Roma, Saxon, American and British cultural groups. This can create many challenges in communication and understanding that can inhibit progress and empowerment, but this intercultural exchange also provides very positive opportunities for new growth and understanding of how to gain the most from one another's cultural understandings of how to help those we are serving. Through sharing, teaching, trusting, and collaborating, combined with humility in our work, we all discover values of the other cultures that influence our lives and our practice in positive ways, creating a more dynamic helping environment (Rothman, Erlich , &Tropman, 1995).

Long Term Leadership

In social work practice there is a time that the social worker must terminate the helping process (Sheafor, Horejsi, & Horejsi, 1997). In international work, an important component of this is reaching the goal of long-term local leadership. Since a large part of Veritas' work includes intercultural exchange, hopefully there will be foreign students and volunteers working with Veritas for years to come, but it is still important to think about long term Romanian leadership in the various social, educational and cultural programs. As Vladimir has worked for Veritas the longest of any employee, I asked him what he thought about this related to the work of Veritas:

> The Idealistic thing is for us to take over (Veritas)... but I don't think the Romanians are yet ready. I have not seen among us one or two people who would be able to lead the whole organization and be as fair as the current president of the foundation. I think we are still extremely young to be left by ourselves to run everything. Maybe in five or ten years it will change but right now I don't think it is the right time to have a Romanian run the organization as a whole. I do think we still need a foreign expert that will lead us and teach us. We are pioneers of social work in Romania. We do not have another institution to ask

advice, so we therefore need to ask advice from someone in the Western world. So I strongly believe for the next five or ten years we need foreign leadership in our organization. We have started amazing programs but we are not yet there where we can be independent...dropping out now is worse than not coming at all.

As Vladimir has said, social work in Romania is still in its youth and many people still welcome guidance and direction from others who have had more experience. As students and volunteers work with Veritas today, many still act as leaders with the goal to work alongside the Romanian leaders, learning from each other and encouraging them to develop as independent leaders who can influence their community for years to come. At this point, many of the Romanian staff members at Veritas are very successful directors of programs, but do not feel ready yet to be administrators. However, through informal and formal trainings and guidance, they will continue to develop and have the confidence to expand their leadership abilities for sustainable development into the future.

Hope for a Sustainable Future

As Veritas staff members think about the work in Sighisoara, we think not only about the importance of long term Romanian leadership within our staff, but also the importance of community collaboration and financial sustainability. Over the past two years, Veritas has become more and more involved in community collaboration on its projects, making efforts to work with local and county governments, churches, and other organizations in order to build a stronger commitment and pooling of resources in the assessment and intervention of community needs. This has recently included working with the local and county government in foster care placements, supporting locally initiated grassroots environmental projects and sponsoring a

USAID funded community wide project on domestic violence. These efforts help deepen our roots beyond that of a foreign organization working independently in our community.

In order for Veritas to function, it relies on foreign donations and investments in order to pay staff and administer programs. Veritas is a long way from becoming financially sustainable without foreign support. As we think of long-term sustainability and local ownership, we must think of ways to work toward financial sustainability. As a way of meeting community needs, providing jobs and training for people needing employment and providing sustainability for some of Veritas programs, Veritas is sponsoring several small business initiatives. The first initiative was an internet café that has been running for over six years. The International Café just opened a year ago, as another small business initiative. Other profit making endeavors include language, computer and art classes offered to the community, each in various stages of development. Veritas staff members hope that, in time, these and other small business developments will help to provide sustainability to employees and Veritas social programs so that the work will not be as dependent on foreign donations as the only source of funding.

Application to Christian Professionals

The work of Veritas Sighisoara is one example of many initiatives throughout the world that are combining social work practice and mission efforts to offer hope to the world. Christian professionals should take opportunities to get involved and continue to fulfill the calling to share good news to the world. Christian professionals can participate in international social work and missions initiatives in a number of ways. Support can be offered through connecting with social work and mission organizations to offer prayer and encouragement. One can seek to be connected with particular workers to learn specifically how to help them through prayer or other means. Many foreign agencies and missions have very few resources available and need various supplies,

professional resources such as books, and finances to help them continue in their work. Professors and supervisors can encourage students in cross-cultural and international opportunities for practicing social work. One can also prayerfully seek opportunities to visit these international settings to both learn from and offer expertise in international social work and mission efforts.

Conclusion

Faith-based international social work and mission efforts can be very challenging, yet very rewarding. Veritas' leadership has discovered the importance of combining Christian calling with professional skills in order for their efforts to be embraced by the community in a way that will last beyond the involvement of foreign leaders and become the heart and calling of the local leadership.

These efforts are a process that often includes not only celebrating our victories, but also learning through mistakes as we try to meet these goals. Through the power of the Holy Spirit. combined with professional expertise, social workers can help to unleash potential where it seems there is no hope for a positive future. Through leading, training, working alongside, and then letting go, individuals in oppressed communities can be impacted and develop the heart, desire, and ability to transform their communities to bring about long lasting, positive change. As social workers get involved in such efforts, they will find that they are not only able to offer help through expertise, but are able to gain new understanding and perspective that will impact and transform their lives beyond their expectations.

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CAN REVERSE MISSION INTERNATIONALIZE SOCIAL WORK — WITHOUT THE HEGEMONY OF RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, OR INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION?

Faye Y. Abram, Gregory Shufeldt, & Kelle Rose

This article presents the concept and models of "reverse mission" as they come from the fields of theology and mission studies and describe experiential courses in international social work that are designed as adaptations of reverse mission for social work. The courses, one in Mexico and the other in Ghana, West Africa, integrate content about the global context of practice into the social work curriculum and sensitize students to the worldwide interconnections of oppression. Student projects provide evidence that these courses also facilitate the transfer of learning from developing countries into social work practice with oppressed and/or culturally diverse populations at home in the U.S. Exploration of the utility of reverse mission as an approach to international social work education and practice, however, raises questions about its suitability for social work and whether faith-based organizations and/or educational programs can appropriate it for the profession without the hegemony of religious, social, or intellectual conversion.

CHRISTIANS IN SOCIAL WORK MAY FEEL COMMISSIONED TO REspond to two (or more) missions. Those who believe in Jesus as "Lord" are called to "go and make disciples of all nations... baptizing them... and teaching them to obey..." (Matthew 28: 19-20). Members of the National Association of Social Workers are called to work to advance the primary mission of the social work profession. This mission, as articulated in the Preamble to the NASW Code of Ethics (1996), "is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty." Similarly, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) asserts, in the preamble to its newly adopted Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for social work educational programs in the United States, that "the profession works to effect social and economic justice worldwide (CSWE, 2003, p. 29). Social workers also attend to mission statements of organizations in which they work. A mission statement is a summary of an organization's primary goals, "reasons for existence, and operating values" frequently used to assist in the evaluation of organizational outcomes and to advise the public about the organization's purpose (Barker, 1999, p. 306). In faith-based organizations (FBOs), social work's mission and a religious mission may converge. For example:

> The mission of Saint Louis University is the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity. The University seeks excellence in the fulfillment of its corporate purposes of teaching, research, and community service. It is dedicated to leadership in the continuing quest for understanding of God's creation, and for the discovery, dissemination, and integration of the values, knowledge, and skills required to transform society in the spirit of the Gospels. As a Catholic, Jesuit university, the pursuit is motivated by the inspiration and values of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and is guided by

the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Society of Jesus (Saint Louis University,

Undergraduate Catalog, 2001-2003).

The University also aims "to link its resources to local, national and international

communities in support of efforts to alleviate ignorance, poverty, injustice, and hunger; to extend

compassionate care to the ill and needy; and to maintain and improve the quality of life of all

persons" (Saint Louis University, *Undergraduate Catalog,* 2001-2003). These statements reflect

points of convergence of professional and faith-based missions in a FBO, especially in regards to

service to humanity and the community as well as the focus on knowledge, values, and skills for

transforming society to make it more just.

Social workers who take such mission statements seriously (e.g., many who work in FBOs,

with religious congregations, and/or in international settings where there is less pseudo separation

of church and state) regularly confront questions about religion and spirituality in social work

practice. Netting (2002), for ex ample, asks as she reflects on the meaning of *sectarian, religiously*

affiliated, and *faith-based* for a culturally diverse population of human service consumers, "Will we

be vigilant in doing no harm in the name of faith?" Similarly, we ask, how do social work educators

prepare themselves and others to be culturally competent practitioners who are responsive to

diversity not only in terms of such attributes as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation but

also in terms of diversity of religion and spirituality in people's lives? How do we discuss the

history of social work in the U.S. with its genesis under the inspiration of Judeo-Christian religious

traditions of its philanthropic founders *and* the corresponding history of racism and religious

bigotry, Social Darwinism, colonialism, and capitalism in this country? And how do we

internationalize social work education and practice at home and abroad without exporting culture-

bound solutions and approaches based on culture-bound assumptions about human behavior, values, and beliefs?

A "reverse mission" approach to international social work education and practice may be one way to address the above questions, to internationalize social work, and to prepare students (especially students from the U.S., Canada, and other industrialized nations) to be globally conscious social work practitioners (Abram, Slosar, & Walls, in press). To explore this line of thought, the authors begin here by presenting the concept and models of reverse mission as they appear in theology and mission studies literature.

Next, we describe two of our school's international social work courses (one in Mexico and the other in Ghana) that are patterned after a model of reverse mission. Then, we highlight students' projects and papers that provide evidence that these international courses help to integrate content about the global context of practice into the social work curriculum and to sensitize students to the worldwide interconnections of oppression. Lastly, we consider advantages and disadvantages of a reverse mission approach to international social work education and practice and conclude with a question: Can reverse mission – especially in faith-based organizations and/or educational programs – serve to internationalize social work without the hegemony of religious, social, or intellectual conversion?

Theological Definitions and Models of Reverse Mission

First and foremost, it is critical to note that the concept of reverse mission has been the purview of theological and mission studies. Since the 1970s, the terms "reverse mission" and "mission- in-reverse" surface in the works of several authors (e.g., Smith, 1979; Smutko, 1979; Barbour, 1984; Gittins, 1993). Simon E. Smith, with the Jesuit Missions in the U.S., and Gregory Smutko, a Maryknoll Missioner in Guatemala, both describe reverse

mission as an approach to ecumenical, global mission education that aims to inform Christians in the United States and Canada of some of the injustices developing nations suffer and to heighten North Americans' commitment to the world wide struggle for justice (Smith, 1979; Smutko, 1979). They present models of reverse mission that emphasize the contributions made back at home by North Americans or Europeans returning from their overseas missionary work (Smith, 1979; Smutko, 1979). Somewhat differently, Dr. Claude Marie Barbour, a Presbyterian minister working in Gary, Indiana, describes her "Shalom Ministries" of cross-cultural work and ministry among poor, oppressed, and culturally diverse peoples in U.S. urban centers as "mission-in-reverse" (Barbour, 1984). According to Barbour, the mission-in-reverse approach:

> ...teaches that the minister can and should learn from the people ministered to —including, and perhaps especially, from the poor and marginalized people. By taking these people seriously, by listening to them and indeed learning from them, personal relationships are developed, and the dignity of the people is enhanced. Such presence to people is seen as necessarily allowing them to be the leaders in the relationship. The people are the 'teachers' and the minister/missionary is the 'reacher'...(1984, p. 304).

Furthermore, Barbour describes mission-in-reverse as "both a spirituality and a method of approach to mission and ministry" (quoted in Gittins, 1993b, p. 56). Additionally, Anthony J. Gittins provides another description of reverse mission as he highlights conversion of the messenger or missioner (Gittins, 1993a, 1993b). According to Gittins:

> Mission in reverse would be a reversal, not only of many assumptions about who holds the initiative in mission work, but a reversal too of the direction in which mission is sometimes

assumed to occur, namely from 'us' to 'them'... For [mission in reverse] to happen, therefore, we must discover a different kind of world and be converted from a particular mentality (1993b, pp. 57-58).

Reverse mission, therefore, may perhaps be best understood as an alternative approach to what is generally, widely, and historically thought to be mission work. It is in some ways a reaction to and a critique of earlier mission models that solely emphasized teaching, preaching, and trying to convert people in or of another country or community to one's faith. Today, there are numerous models of reverse mission operating worldwide and covering a wide range of relationships and geographic locales. In some cases, reverse mission is used to describe sending individuals (often pastors or missionaries) of color from their country of origin to industrialized nations. For example, Maryknoll Fr. Joe Healey (2000) cites the case of two Kenyan parishioners from Homa Bay, Western Kenya visiting the St. Cloud, Minnesota Diocese, asserting that "African people are both evangelized and evangelizers" (p. 2). Similarly, it has been used to describe individuals from former Communist countries coming to the U.S., as in Polish Baptists taking discipleship classes at a Baptist church in Texas (Scott, 2002). Other models emphasize the insights that occur in a reverse fashion:

"missionaries are 'missioned to' through 'ordinary' people, believers of other faiths, the poor and sick — those people to whom the missionaries are 'missioned' and 'ministering' through daily living and working together" (Bevans & Schroeder, 2000, p. 6).

The term reverse mission has also been used to describe the work of missionaries or pastors from the same country of origin in a new location, such as Korean immigrants evangelizing

other Koreans in Germany (Wahrisch- Oblau, 2000). Given these different definitions and descriptions, the concept of reverse mission may be so loosely and inconsistently applied that it begins to lose some of it meaning and coherence. Nonetheless, Barbour (1984) and Gittins (1993) suggest reverse mission in its pristine sense can be used to refer to "both a spirituality and a method of approach to mission and ministry."

The Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD) in Mexico is yet another model of reverse mission. Raymond E. Plankey, a lay missioner from the U.S. who had previously worked in Chile founded CCIDD in 1977. It is worth noting that he was part of "...the first collective ecumenical effort at reverse mission by American missionaries in a foreign country" (Plankey, no date, p. 1-2). He and others created CCIDD to promote experiential understanding of rural and urban poverty in Latin America and the Christian struggle to transform society.

With encouragement and support from Cuernavaca's progressive and ecumenically minded Catholic Bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo, and leaders from other churches, CCIDD embarked upon its mission (CCIDD, 1999). Shaped by the thinking of such educators as Paulo Freire (1970), bell hooks (1994), and the Augsburg Center for Global Education, CCIDD embraces the "See-Judge-Act" approach to liberation education and conscientization (CCIDD, 1999). Participants see with eyes made new through encounters with the poor; listen and reflect on people's stories about how they are made poor; take action as allies of and in solidarity with those who struggle for justice; evaluate efforts to effect change and improve social conditions; and celebrate small steps toward social transformation and liberation.

Today, CCIDD is what Plankey describes as a unique center where people can bring together an understanding of social, economic, and political realties within a Christian faith

dimension. The CCIDD program, to date, has engaged some 10,000 people (including our students and faculty) from the United States and Canada in direct encounters with Mexicans and other Latinos in their communities, homes, and places of work and worship. Via these interactions, participants learn about the roots of poverty and oppression in Latin America and Christian commitment to social transformation (CCIDD History, no date).

Description of Two International Social Work Courses

CCIDD's justice-focused model of reverse mission has shaped Saint Louis University School of Social Service's approach to international social work education and practice to date and guided development of two of its international courses for social work students. Although the concept of reverse mission is likely unfamiliar to most social work educators and practitioners, we describe these courses to demonstrate the utility of reverse mission as an approach to international social work education and practice. In 1992, the School of Social Service introduced the "Experiencing Community among the Poor of Mexico" course, which will hereafter be identified as the Mexico course; and in 2000, the School added an "International Social Work: The Ghana Experience" course, hereafter identified as the Ghana course. Both international courses provide a two-week, intensive cultural immersion experience. For the two-weeks in the host country experience, the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD) is home base for participants in the Mexico course. For the two weeks in country experience in West Africa, the capital city of Accra is home base for participants in the Ghana course.

Each summer, the Mexico course involves approximately 20 participants and two instructors. Since the inception of this course, the School has engaged over 150 students, faculty, and other participants in the program at CCIDD. In the Mexico course, students and faculty travel to Cuernavaca, Morelos (about 50 miles south of Mexico City), and learn about realities of poverty

and development from Mexico's poor and those who work with them – all within a Christian faith dimension. Since its inception, the Ghana course has engaged more than thirty students, with two instructors and 8-10 students participating for two weeks each summer. This course features travel to three major cities: Accra, Cape Coast, and Kumasi, as well as to several neighboring villages and communities.

In Ghana, students partner with three nongovernmental organizations as they examine issues of development, indigenous strategies used to address hunger, health, medical care, education, and other issues impacting people of developing countries. The Mexico course and the Ghana course have similar objectives. They aim for students to be able to: understand the culture of the host country and how political, economic and social forces shape its past and future; appreciate challenges faced by the poor in developing countries as well as indigenous social change strategies; infer implications for practice in the U.S. from best practice examples of developing nations; and relate social work practice in the U.S. to social change efforts around the world. Another objective is to enable students to explore opportunities for international collaboration.

Both courses feature concentrated study, lectures, and interactions with the people of the host country. Knowing another language (e.g., Spanish) is not required to be fully engaged for either course because during the Mexico course, communications are fully translated; and in Ghana the official language is English. A dialogical form of education is employed in both international courses, as the participants are encouraged to ask the people themselves about their lives and experiences. The focus is on social work students and faculty hearing from indigenous people, leaders, and academicians. As students and faculty listen, they learn about the social, economic, and political dynamics of the host country and about the role of the U.S. in the impoverishment and oppression of indigenous peoples. Participants in both courses talk directly

with the poor, women advocates, researchers, and workers who are involved in the struggle to help oppressed persons find and speak their voices.

It is noteworthy that the Mexico course, much more so than the Ghana course, infuses religion and spirituality into the course's experiences. The Mexico course provides opportunities to visit a Base Christian Community worship service and a lecture presentation about the indigenization of the Virgin Mary into Mexico's "Lady of Guadalupe." Recommended readings include the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Economic justice for all: Pastoral letter on Catholic social teaching and the U.S. economy* (1997) and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano's *Strangers no longer: A pastoral letter concerning migration* (2003) (as social teachings not religious doctrine). The Ghana course focuses more broadly on the role of community organizations and social/economic development that is sustainable, local institutions, international agencies (e.g., United Nations, UNICEF, etc.), government and nongovernmental organizations and their responses to development limitations.

Participants' Experiences, Reactions, & Reflections

The overall impact of each of these international courses is quite powerful. Many participants report that they found their experience to be "life altering" and "transforming." Participants from the U.S., who come with the preconceived notion that their country can do no wrong, experience an uncomfortable awakening as they learn about the role their country has played in maintaining poverty and oppression in developing countries. Often the reaction of those who are witnessing extreme poverty or the remnants of slavery for the first time is that of guilt. In small group reflections, facilitators assist participants to substitute a more constructive feeling of "com-passion" (commitment to justice with passion) for the less constructive guilt response. In the Ghana course, for example, participants who experience the dark and dismal conditions of the

slave dungeons on the Cape Coast and/or Elmina's slave-holding "Castle" leave saddened but motivated to do something to effect change. One student exiting from a "Door of No Return" ceremony (a reenactment of the capture and enslavement of African people) was moved to voice a commitment to combat modern-day forms of slavery.

International Course Projects and Moves to Action upon Returning Home

Student expectations and requirements in the Mexico and Ghana courses include attendance at a pre-trip class session and post-trip class session; active participation in all scheduled activities; daily journaling to log activities, reflections, feelings, ideas, and resources for the final assignment; conferences with one of the instructors; and a development proposal or analysis paper that compares and contrasts a U.S. and a non-U.S. view on or approach to a social issue or problem. Excerpts from students' proposals/ papers appear in the section that follows.

Greg Shufeldt's Heritage Tours for African Americans: Proposal

Sample Excerpt from Student Paper

Two problems, now evident in both Ghana and the U.S., are cultural oppression and internalized oppression. Wamback and Van Soest (1995) describe cultural oppression as a process "in which the norms and values of the dominant group are deemed superior and serve as the standards for judging all other groups... Cultural oppression involves issues of 'taste,' such as music, art, literature, language, religion, and standards of beauty" (p. 244).

Internalized oppression is "the incorporation and acceptance by individuals within an oppressed group of the prejudices against them within the dominant society" (Peterson, 1986, p. 148). Often manifested in self-hatred, feelings of inferiority, isolation, and powerlessness, internalized oppression can prevent people of the same oppressed group from connecting and supporting each other (Lipsky, 1977; Gainor, 1992).

I witnessed in Ghana what Brown (1997) has described as "the preference for foreign experts, foreign models, standards, and goods [that] is the consequence of African's imitative modernism." This type of cultural oppression constitutes a barrier to experimentation, innovation and self-reliant development. But not all aspects of Africa's culture milieu are negative and problematic. There are many that are positive and could be replicated successfully for development. Examples are the implications of African perceptions of human beings as the fulcrum of development, extended family for the cooperative spirit of self-help development, and traditional sanctions on leadership" (Brown, 1997, p. 168).

Similarly, I have observed in the U.S. a persistent belief that Black Americans (as well as other racial and ethnic minorities) are "culturally deprived or disadvantaged" if they do not reflect what the dominant group judges to be in good taste in regards to dress, music, art, speech, etc. There is also a devaluation of much that is black culture and even a denial that there is such a thing as "black culture." Additionally, in the U.S. there is immense pressure on people of diverse cultural groups to assimilate and to become as much like the dominant group as possible. In the desire to be "American," some people, especially members of racially and culturally diverse groups, have lost touch with their roots, heritage, and values. Being in Ghana helped me to see that black persons in Ghana and the U.S are members of several distinct cultural groups that provide them with a rich and diverse history. I also see that both here in the U.S. and there in Ghana, black persons are adversely affected by cultural and internalized oppression.

The Adinka Tour Club

While in Ghana, I learned of one local approach that targets these forms of oppression and seeks to foster cultural awareness. The Adinka Tour Club, which is sponsored by Wofasie Travel and Tours, provides a tour service called "Know your Country Adventure Tours." The

tours are one-day trips designed to "expose participants to some of the important and unique, historical and environmental sites that make Ghana special" (Adinka, 2002). The tour service provides several different packages that incorporate different aspects of life in Ghana, depending upon the individual's interest. The mission of the group is to help tourists but, more importantly, for Ghanaians who live in the area, especially the youth, to gain exposure to and appreciation of the history, culture, and beauty of Ghana.

Heritage Tours for African Americans

Implementation of a program similar to this in the United States would not be difficult and could serve to address cultural and internalized oppression in poor, predominately black communities of St. Louis. Although I realize that cultural and internalized oppression is not a problem unique to African Americans, herein my focus is on a way to address these types of oppression with African Americans. A pre-existing group called Explore Saint Louis offers tours to sites in the St. Louis area. This group or a similar group could be formed specifically to offer heritage tours to foster cultural awareness among oppressed groups of African American youth, as well as adults in the area. These tours would, for example, illustrate the many important contributions African Americans have made that are featured in the St. Louis area. The tour would visit important African American sites or landmarks in the area such as the Old Courthouse (where the Dred Scott case was presented and decided), the Wall of Respect (a mural depicting African American leaders and contributions), and the Scott Joplin House (where the famous composer lived). Other sites could include churches, schools, newspapers, buildings, cemeteries, and sites related to westward expansion and the abolition movement.

Through my international experiences and study in Ghana, I have learned from the people of Ghana, gained a new awareness about oppression, and have come to recognize the need for

social workers to address the problems of cultural and internalized oppression in the U.S. I realize we can learn from and adapt some of the strategies that are being used in Ghana to address the same or similar problems here with culturally oppressed groups in the U.S. This is but one example. I see opportunities to transfer Ghanaian problem-solving approaches to address other commonly shared problems such as those associated with the privatization of public resources and racial conflict/disparities as well.

Kelle Rose's Proposal for a Ghana U.S. Partnership: Sample Excerpts from a Student Paper1

A number of church-based and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer international service opportunities for young adults (e.g., the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, the Mission Intern program of the United Methodist Church, the Young Adult Volunteers program of the Presbyterian Church USA). These programs suggest formats that can be adapted for a "reverse mission" type of program in which a recent college graduate or graduate student in the United States spends time (from several months up to a year or more) in a different country or community. The person may offer service to the host community and receive hospitality in return.

Unlike traditional international service programs, the proposed program with a community in Ghana adds a second phase of participation in service upon the volunteer's return to the United States. In this critical "reverse mission" phase, the volunteer spends a commensurate amount of time traveling around the U.S. meeting with community and church groups and informing them about the reality of life in Ghana and the roles that U.S. corporate and government institutions play there. The volunteer explores with these community/church groups what they can do to affect policies/policy-makers of key institutions in order to create change that promotes social justice.

GUSP Phase I

The plan begins with the incorporation of a 501(c)(3) organization in the United States for the purpose of implementing this program. The organization, preliminarily called Ghana-U.S. Partnership (GUSP) for the purpose of this proposal, partners with NGOs in Ghana to provide service placements for the volunteers in various communities. The agency placements range from locally developed and operated urban programs like the Center for Community Studies, Action and Development (CENCOSAD) in Accra, to less formal rural placements, such as assisting with development work in small villages like Atwia. Recent college graduates, as well as graduate students, are encouraged to apply for acceptance into the program through GUSP and to participate in the selection of a placement in Ghana in which they are interested.

This can be done via phone interviews or e-mail exchanges with the placement contact person in Ghana, with any phone or other expenses paid by the volunteer (or possibly shared with GUSP if the volunteer needs assistance). Both the volunteer and the placement official must agree before a volunteer is finally placed in the agency or community. The volunteer makes all arrangements to acquire necessary documentation for the type and duration of the visit to Ghana, as well as proper health precautions (immunizations, medicines, etc.), with assistance from GUSP.

After a pre-departure orientation with other volunteers, the volunteer travels to Ghana at a mutually agreed upon time compatible with the needs and schedules of the placement and the volunteer (generally in mid-August to accommodate the academic calendar, but potentially at different times of the year). GUSP provides a minimal stipend to the volunteer for basic necessities. The host agency or community in Ghana with which the volunteer works is responsible for arranging housing and meals for the volunteer. If it all possible, this should be with a family in the community with GUSP providing a stipend to the family to cover some expenses of hosting the volunteer. This will allow the volunteer to integrate as fully as possible into the community. The

volunteer then works for the agency or in the community, learning about the community and how

international institutions play a role in the community and the country of Ghana as a whole.

Structured Time & Experiences for Reflection, Transitioning, & Reintegration

After the volunteer lives and works as a part of the community for two months, he or she

participates in a four day retreat with other volunteers in Ghana in order to process the unique

experiences they are having. These retreats occur regularly at the end of each 2-month period of

service for the duration of the volunteer's service in Ghana. The volunteer then returns to the

United States at the conclusion of the first phase of GUSP service and attends a reintegration

retreat with other returning volunteers.

A significant portion of this retreat consists of volunteers developing a program for how

they will share their experiences with communities in the U.S. through 1-2 hour presentations. The

volunteers are also trained in tactics for influencing the policies of government, corporate, and

financial institutions, such as lobbying and letter-writing campaigns and even social actions.

Volunteers incorporate a discussion of these tactics into their presentations about their their

experiences and how wealthy and/or highly industrialized nations like the U.S. impact developing

nations like Ghana. Ideally, volunteers teach groups what they can get involved in creating more

socially just policies toward Ghana.

GUSP Phase II

After the reintegration retreat, volunteers begin the second phase of GUSP service in

different communities throughout the U.S. by giving presentations to local churches and

community groups. GUSP arranges most of these presentations before the volunteer returns, but

then as volunteers make connections in each community they schedule presentations as well. The

volunteer has a base in his or her hometown or other location chosen in conjunction with GUSP, and travels in a certain region of the country.

Volunteers should be dispersed throughout the country and not congested in certain regions. The volunteer provides housing at the home base whenever possible, at the volunteer's own home or in a home where arrangements have been made for the volunteer to live. Community groups that host the volunteer are responsible for providing housing and meals while the volunteer is in the community, and groups provide a small amount for transportation while the bulk of transportation costs are provided by GUSP. If a volunteer has access to a car, GUSP provides mileage reimbursement in lieu of payment for public transportation. If public or mass = transportation is available, GUSP provides a stipend for ticket purchase. GUSP provides a minimal stipend to the volunteer for basic necessities. There is a mid-point retreat for all GUSP Phase II volunteers to process their new experiences in the U.S. and to deal with culture shock, as well as to exchange advice on presentations. A final retreat at the end of GUSP Phase II service helps volunteers prepare to leave the program and integrate their new experiences into their everyday lives.

The volunteer is finished with the program after completion of Phase II, but volunteers are encouraged to return to Ghana to maintain the partnership and to facilitate the transitioning of subsequent Phase I volunteers in Ghana into Phase II volunteers in the U.S. First- and second-phase volunteers from the same placement will attempt to maintain e-mail contact so that, throughout the GUSP experience, volunteers can communicate with each other and keep the Ghanaian community informed about how previous volunteers' social change efforts in the U.S. are progressing. This also allows the Ghanaian community to maintain a connection with the U.S.

The Impact of Reverse Mission Courses

The Mexico course has generated comparable student projects that tackle such issues as sweatshops, street children, the underground economy, toxic waste dumps in poor communities, and repression of political dissent as common and connected problems in both the U.S. and Mexico. One student project, for example, examined remittances (i.e., portion of Mexican workers' wages that is earned in the U.S. and sent back to their families in Mexico) as the lifeblood of many Mexican families. The student learned that these funds amount to as much as $8-10 billion a year and represent one of the largest sources of foreign currency in Mexico.

Her study disclosed that many Mexican workers in the U.S. must pay exorbitant fees (some as high as 20%) to send remittances to their families in Mexico. Taking a social justice approach to practice in response to the stories and hopes of persons encountered in Mexico, the student proposed a less exploitative exchange that she plans to advocate for in the U.S. Her proposal aimed to have more of workers' remittance money reach those in need, to earmark a percent of the fees collected to support community development efforts in Mexico, and to have the U.S. government match funds paid through fee revenues to augment investments in sustainable community development programs. Other student projects focused on public policy challenges and responses related to such matters as the need for family-based immigration policies, legalization of the undocumented, more humane enforcement of immigration policies and tactics in the U.S. as well as in Mexico. A number of students' action plans involved advocacy against reactionary proposals (based on fears generated by the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks) to reduce legal immigration, undermine human rights, or deny asylum seekers opportunities for protection.

As these excerpts and examples illustrate, students in these international courses learn the importance of employing indigenous development strategies and methods that are culturally

appropriate, acceptable, and credible for their current and future social work practice. Participants also learn the imperative of informing folks back home about the realities of life in poor nations and the role that U.S. corporate and government institutions play in these countries. They learn by seeing, doing, and reflecting on what it all means for them in their practice at home with such groups as abused women, the working poor, and victims of predatory lending. Thus it seems these international courses engage student participants in a distinctly social work form of reverse mission as it generates new experiences, critical insights, understandings, as well as actions for liberatory international and internationalrelated domestic practice, advocacy, and professional exchange.

Implications of a Reverse Mission Approach to Social Work Education and Practice

To explore the utility of reverse mission for social work, we ask you to think about its possibilities as an approach to international social work education and practice. Consider reverse mission to be a particular approach that emphasizes learning from indigenous people and leaders in host countries and communities, raising the critical consciousness of social workers about their cultural biases and misconceptions, and advocating for changes within one's home country that can impact poverty and injustice in the world. We, however, cannot appropriate such a religiously and spiritually-rooted concept from theology for social work without making it explicitly clear that reverse mission as we envision it does *not* involve or call for religious, social, or intellectual conversion of another. Instead of conversion, we emphasize social transformation as articulated by Paulo Freire (1974, 1990). Freire argues that social work is a transformative process in which both the social conditions and participants, including the social worker, are changed in the pursuit of a more just world.

Further exploration of reverse mission for international social work education and practice calls for consideration of its advantages and disadvantages. A discussion follows of both possible advantages and disadvantages of adapting reverse mission for social work.

Advantages

One clear advantage and appeal of a reverse mission approach to international social work education and practice is that it offers a new way of preparing globally conscious and culturally competent practitioners for international-related domestic social work. Krajewski-Jaime et al. (1996) suggest that international experiences may help to move U.S. social work students and practitioners from *cultural ethnocentrism* to *ethno-relativism.* Another advantage of a reverse mission approach to social work is that it is facilitates certain shifts or changes that several authors identify as necessary if U.S. social workers are to be responsive to peoples' needs in a global economy. Lusk and Stoesz (1994), for example, assert that if American social work is to be useful in an international context, it will need "to discard the myopia of a predominately clinical world view" (p. 102). Similarly, Hartman (1990) suggests we move away from a long tradition of intellectual isolationism. Toward that end, a reverse mission approach to international social work education invites integration of resources and authors beyond one's own borders and more international content. Prigoff's (2000) economics text for social workers about the social outcomes of economic globalization with strategies for community action and Poole's (1999) article that makes the connection between NAFTA, American health, and Mexican health, for example, provide content necessary for practice in a global context.

Another advantage of reverse mission as we envision it for social work is that it fosters learning from people in and of other countries. Midgley (1990) suggests that because social work in the industrialized world is increasingly practiced in an environment of rapidly declining resources,

developed nations have much to learn from those who work in conditions of severe resource constraint. Developing nations have formulated creative solutions to problems encountered in their world that are, in many ways, not unlike those encountered in many inner cities, mountain hollows, and reservations throughout the U.S. He and others encourage us to develop new strategies of meeting human needs based on the experiences and expertise of developing nations.

One illustration of such international exchange and borrowing is the case of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. This innovation of helping poor women with credit for self-employment transfers from Bangladesh into the U.S. and appears as micro lending programs in social work practice with poor women of urban Chicago, Illinois and rural Pine Bluff, Arkansas (Jansen & Poppard, 1998). A reverse mission approach to international social work would foster more of this type of transfer of learning from impoverished nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America to impoverished communities within wealthy nations of North America and Europe.

In addition, application of reverse mission to social work facilitates the transfer of *liberation theology,* which Leonardo Boff (1988) articulates as an alternative conceptualization of the mission of the Church in Latin America. Liberation theology is seen as a theoretical framework that is useful for empowering oppressed people not only in South and Central America but also in North America and Europe. Evans (1992) relates liberation theology to empowerment theory and social work practice with oppressed populations that are struggling for justice, human liberation, and social transformation. Both liberation theology and empowerment theory emphasize skill-building, consciousness-raising, and de veloping self-efficacy as key processes for empowering oppressed people and for transforming societies. Similarly, Manning and Blake (1996) identify approaches to faith-based community development in African American communities that infuse elements of

liberation theology and reverse mission type strategies. These strategies include using places of worship as meeting sites, spirituality and faith as assets for organizing, and culture as a connector for creating a sense of community among people in a locality.

A reverse mission approach for social work also provides a corrective response to remnants of social work's history of conscious efforts and/or unconscious tendencies to propagate American casework abroad and/or in poor immigrant communities of the U.S. This "brand" of intensely individualistic, often-unilateral international social work and international-related domestic social work emphasized assimilation, coping with or adjustment to oppressive conditions, and maintenance of the status quo and class inequalities (Finn and Jacobson, 2003). Just as Arno Peters Projection of the world (in Kaiser, 1987) reframes world geography according to actual proportions and location and provides a helpful correction to Eurocentric distortions now evident in conventional maps, reverse mission has potential to correct similar biases in the way we approach international social work.

A reverse mission approach to international social work education and practice may be equally important as an approach that can dismantle myths and misconceptions that U.S. citizens (including social work students and practitioners) have about developing countries as well as about the level of U.S. aid and the helpfulness of development assistance given to these countries. Africa, for example, "is consistently portrayed in the U.S. as a monolithic mass of primitive tribal wars, disaster, disease, and deaths…Often, Africa's problems are traced to European rule. But increasingly, it is the United States that creates conditions of deprivation and unrest across the continent" (Susskind, 2000, p. 3). Just as David Wagner (2000) charges that American charity has been at best an expression of repressive benevolence, David Sogge's (2002) study of foreign aid confirms that it is an instrument of political interference geared to donors' interests that also helps

the rulers of recipient countries. Similarly, Susskind (2000) argues that U.S. aid to Africa is more about buying influence than giving charity. He notes, "The U.S. has profited greatly from its role as purveyor of funds to cash-strapped African governments. It has used this lev erage to prop up favored regimes and to make policy demands" (p. 5) that protect and favor corporate interest in key areas. Reverse mission seems to caution international social workers who work in institutions that dispense foreign aid, assist with economic development, and collaborate with mission teams that they need to be mindful that they too may be seen as part of a system that reinforces dependency and external control.

A Major Disadvantage

The major disadvantage of reverse mission as an approach to international social work education and practice is that, as appropriated from the fields of theology and mission studies, the "mission" in "reverse mission" has ultimately been about intellectual and spiritual conversion (Barbour, 1984; Gittins, 1993a, 1993b). The theology and mission studies literature, however, is less than explicitly clear about who is targeted for conversion – the people in host countries and communities, the missionaries, or both. Although we make it clear that reverse mission as we envision it for social work is not about religious, social, or intellectual conversion, it may be difficult to disassociate reverse mission from its Christian conversion mission history and aims.

Some may ask what might be problematic about social work's association with the history and aims of Christian conversion mission. As social workers with very limited knowledge of that history and without the expertise of theologians or missionaries, we venture to suggest that the term "reverse mission" cannot be separated from the decidedly mixed history of Christian missions.

While Christian conversion missions have been and still are intimately interwoven with notions of progress, development, and provisions for basic needs, education, and technologies,

there was and may still be a dark side to conversion missions. For example, when Spain conquered the Aztec empire in Mexico, the Crown had a policy of "assigning Indian groups or inhabitants of a town or village to a Spaniard who would extract labor and tribute from them while providing for their Christianization" (Suchlicki, 1996, p. 33). The conquerors also embraced "the doctrine of *just conquest*, which advanced the idea that the Spaniards were naturally superior and had divine authorization to use force to convert the natives and even to enslave them" (Suchlicki, 1996, p. 32).

Similarly, Michael Barratt Brown (1997) described how under colonial rule in Africa, European soldiers advanced in the footsteps of the discoverers and missionaries. He quoted Archbishop Tutu, recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1984, who recalled that long ago it was said, "When the missionaries came, they had the bible and we had the land. They said, 'Let us pray!' They taught us to close our eyes to pray and when we opened them again, we had the bible and they had the land" (Brown, 1997, p. 18). It is, however, important to here acknowledge the complexity of religious conversion and the fact that many of those colonized did embrace Christianity and many benefited from the schools, medical/health services, and development aid that were provided by missionaries.

People's awareness of both the positive and negative aspects of Christian missions is captured in this photograph of a pictorial that was displayed on the wall at a Base Christian Community meeting in Mexico. The above pictorial illustrates the potentially abusive aspect of imposing a religion on a people and the liberatory power of religion for social transformation. Susan M. Chambre (2001) describes similar concerns and hopes that are associated with the Charitable Choice provision of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act, which encourages government support for religious organizations and allows them to display religious symbols. She notes that religiously conservative and evangelical groups

that make no distinction between the religious dimensions of their work and the services they provide have difficulty receiving public funds. This is because "their 'services' inevitably include transmitting religious values, efforts that might be deemed to be proselytizing, an activity that cannot receive public support" (Chambre, 2001). However, according to Chambre (2001), the kind of faith-based organizations and initiatives that do receive government support tend to "incorporate a highly ecumenical and personalized form of faith that reflects trends in the nature of religion in contemporary American society" (p. 435). This suggests that the U.S. public may be more receptive to reverse mission approaches that are less a reflection of any traditional religion and more of a mix of faith traditions and social teaching offered in a nonjudgmental and humanistic fashion.

Christian social workers may be perplexed about how to integrate their faith and professional social work practice in their lives, the profession, and the church and *not* influence religious, social, or intellectual conversion of others while working to foster liberation. Realizing this, we ask the following questions: Is reverse mission, as we envision it compatible or incompatible with a major goal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) of integrating Christian faith into social work practice? Can we--should we--aim to dissociate reverse mission from its historical and ultimate aim of religious, social, and/or intellectual conversion? How do we start where the client is, foster self determination, respect cultural and religious beliefs of non-Christians, help with the ministry of the church--without inviting the same criticism of ethical inappropriateness that has been leveled against conversion therapies (Halpert, 2000)?

As we envision reverse mission for social work, it has the potential to shape a new approach to the preparation of BSW and MSW students for culturally competent practice in a

global era, to provide a corrective perspective on international social work and practice, and to facilitate a shift in the knowledge, values, and skills that we emphasize. Moreover, we are encouraged to infuse the concept of mission into social work practice. Dr. Martin Marty, in his address at the opening plenary session of the 53rd Convention and Conference of NACSW in Louisville, Kentucky, said there are three "words from the theological vocabulary [that] you can carry over into the secular and mixed world of social work. [These are]... vocation...stewardship...and, mission." Thus, it seems he implicitly supports social workers using the concept of mission to inform the profession's approach to international social work education and practice. However, what is left for further exploration, critical examination, and clarification is whether this can or should be done without any drift, motives, or movement toward religious, social, and/or intellectual conversion of others."

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LITERACY AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Nick Cross

Education is one of the basic human rights of all people, but is denied to millions around the world. The reasons are many, HIV/AIDS, poor sanitation, lack of money, lack of schools, lack of teachers, hunger, violence, and corruption, to name a few. To combat these factors citizens must be educated and obstacles must be eliminated. The best way to accomplish this is through holistic methods such as providing free meals to students who attend schools. This article demonstrates the importance of literacy, reviews statistics about literacy in Africa and worldwide, enumerates factors affecting education and finally summarizes some of the literacy efforts internationally.

MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD HAVE fallen through the cracks. About 860 million adults and 120 million children are either illiterate or do not have access to schools (United Nations Literacy, 2003). This does not include children who are in poor schools around the world. Without a decent education system and a literate population it is hard for a country to develop (Greaney, 1996). Literacy is a very important component in

helping developing nations and, as a result, the United Nations (UN) has declared the years from 2003-2012 the UN Literacy Decade.

Statement of the Problem

President Natsagiin Bagabandi of Mongolia, made a statement in December 2001, saying that the "international community would fail to guarantee equal human rights for all as long as it accepted illiteracy" (Rutsch, 2003, para. 3). Bagabandi goes on to say that literacy is the primary requirement and foundation for long term development (Rutsch, 2003). Many world leaders would agree with President Bagabandi's remarks. There are an estimated 121 million children who do not attend school (UNICEF, Accelerating, 2003). In 2000, in the least developed countries, the average literacy rates are 61% for males and 40% for females (UNICEF, State of, 2003).

In many developing countries, girls do not receive an adequate education. While many reasons for this exist, the research shows that when women are educated, substantial developmental progress is possible. In sub-Saharan Africa the average female literacy rate is 49.6% and the average male literacy rate is 66% (Africa: Women, 2001). This problem will be explored in depth in the literature review. Before exploring this topic further, it is important to define the term *literacy*, and to determine how it is being used in the context of international development. After defining the term and identifying the context, it is then possible to explore what various organizations are doing to combat illiteracy around the world, with a special emphasis on developing countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Literature Review

Definitions

Literacy can have different meanings and uses in relation to different topics. Browsing the databases on literacy produced results within economic literacy, technological literacy, family literacy, and reading literacy. Each deals with a unique aspect of literacy. When reporting statistics, each country can create its own definition of literacy. Most organizations dealing with this issue also have their own definitions. The most basic definition is the ability of a person to sign his or her name (International Literacy Explorer, 1999). The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS):

> Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society defines literacy as involving "understanding and being able to use the information required to function effectively in the knowledge-based societies that will dominate the twenty-first century" (Highlights, 1997, Introduction, para. 1).

The United Nations, for its Literacy Decade, defines literacy as being able to express one's thoughts, effectively learn, and to write. The UN also recognized the need to include electronic and information technologies within its definition (UNESCO, 2003). A definition of literacy based on radical theory is whether someone can critically be involved in the social, economic and political realities in which he or she lives (Freire & Macdeo, 1987).

Importance of Literacy

In an article included in *The Drive Against Illiteracy* (1964) C.K. Yearly wrote that "literacy, while important to a community's economic progress, is basically an instrument designed to enhance human dignity and creativity – and as such is a universal human right" (p. 10). Indeed, education is one of the universal human rights as declared by the UN in its 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 says that everyone has the right to a free primary

education and reasonable access to higher education (section 1). This education is to strengthen

the development of personality and to teach respect for human rights and freedoms (Article 26

section 2). All of this education is to be without any form of discrimination (Article 2). Possible

reasons why this has not occurred will be discussed in the next section.

Those who are illiterate "are denied access to important information about health, social,

cultural, and political issues as well as sources of pleasure and enrichment" (Greaney, 1996 p. 5).

Not only is the person lacking important information, but the nation also suffers because, without

literate people, it is difficult to develop the "human resources necessary to create viable

economies, essential services and civil societies" (Greany, 1996, p. 5). Laubach Literacy has

identified six action areas that need to be confronted to reduce poverty and injustice around the

world. They are health, economic self-reliance, environment, education, peace, and human

rights. Laubach identified literacy as the fundamental way to change each and all of these

problems. Persons in the community are given literacy training that empowers them to learn

about and eliminate these social ills. Their model is known as Literacy for Social Change (see

appendix A). A 1963 report by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) calls an illiterate person a "weak link" in development. It actually calls illiteracy a

"straitjacket which must be shed if true progress is to be made" (UNESCO, 1964, p. 18). Louise

Fréchette, UN Deputy Secretary- General, argues that educating women and girls is the most

effective development tool leading to the creation of healthy families. The creation of healthy

families leads to healthy communities, which leads to healthy countries (Rutsch, 2003).

Beyond UNESCO, nearly every UN agency has developed a position on literacy. Each

agency realizes the importance of literacy for fulfilling its mission. The Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations (FAO) says "Education is a prerequisite to building a food

secure world, reducing poverty, and conserving and enhancing natural resources" (FAO, n.d., para 1). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) goes farther and says, "no matter what challenge we face – HIV/AIDS, conflict, poverty, environment, governance or ICT [information and communication technology] – basic education invariably appears as a core element of any solution" (UNDP, n.d.).

It is quite clear that education is a central theme for development across the world. However, this alone cannot solve all the world's problems. Education needs to be a central component to any development strategy and should supplement other programs.

Factors Affecting Literacy

Many factors directly affect the ability to increase literacy rates in developing countries. Vincent Greaney (1996) lists five factors affecting development of literacy: inadequate health provisions, adverse home circumstances, gender inequalities, adverse school factors and inadequate school instruction. It is crucial to remember that an increase in literacy enhances other development factors and vice versa in a cyclic fashion. For example, better health conditions enhance literacy efforts, which in turn enhances the health conditions. Poor sanitation, hunger, chronic malnutrition, micronutrient deficits, infections, and vision and hearing problems are all factors that affect education (Greaney, 1996). Maslow, in outlining a Hierarchy of Needs, notes that basic needs of shelter, food, and security need to be met before more advanced needs can be met. Education would fall under the needs of esteem, such as achievement and competence. This need is the next to last need to be met (Myers, 1999). Increased literacy may result in the ability to take preventative health measures and also increases the likelihood of

earlier treatment, resulting in better living conditions (Highlights, 1997; Browne & Barrett, 1991). Having a female family member who has attended some type of formal schooling may increase the health of the family (Browne & Barrett, 1991).

A study conducted by Lundberg & Linnakyla (1993) identified the home environment as the most important factor for literacy development (as cited in Greaney, 1996). Greaney (1996) listed home factors that may adversely affect the ability of children who are in school to learn. This list includes illiterate parents, lack of reading material, number of household chores and children needing to work. If children are to attend school, these barriers need to be eliminated. These are currently being addressed by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world. Family literacy is a type of literacy that increases the overall literacy skills of the entire family. This approach combines educating the parents with basic literacy skills as well as parenting skills and involves teaching the parents how to teach their children (Padak.& Rasinski, 1998).

A third factor that affects literacy is gender inequality. Much research shows an important link between female education and development. It has already been shown that maternal education has a direct correlation on health issues. In the same study mentioned above, Browne and Barrett (1991) show a correlation between maternal education and higher agricultural production. A 1980 study by the World Bank reported that educated farmers have higher productivity levels than uneducated farmers (as cited in Browne & Barrett, 1991). In cultures where women are the farmers, educating them produces more productive methods of farming. Many reasons exist to explain why women and girls are uneducated or undereducated; most are cultural or economic reasons.

For instance, some cultures do not value the education of girls, others fear for the girl's safety while traveling to school (Greaney, 1996). The costs of education, either through loss of income or direct costs such as books or uniforms, are also a major factor for not sending girls to school. Girls also may marry at younger ages, which results in many girls dropping out of school. Young marriage also affects the education of girls in another way: the money spent on their education may not benefit them financially in their old age because the woman belongs to and takes care of the husband's family (Greaney, 1996). UNESCO reports that HIV/AIDS, conflict, and violence in schools are other barriers to education for girls (Girls continue, 2003). Despite lack of education, women take a greater role in the welfare of the family (Women in Literacy, 2000).

A fourth factor is adverse school factors. In rural areas of developing nations, schools may be so far apart that they are inaccessible for some students who want to attend. Many developing nations lack the financial resources necessary to have enough schools for their children. Many families are forced to pay fees for their children's education, which alone can deter children from getting an education, especially beyond the primary level. The cost benefits of education mentioned above for girls, can also be applied to boys in many rural communities. Parent involvement at school is an important indicator of the quality of education provided at that school. In developing nations parents may be inactive at school because of lack of time or energy from working too much or from a lack of interest (Greaney, 1996). Another factor affecting the schools is language. In some areas many of the children who actually attend school, may receive instruction in a language other than their first language.

Finally, inadequate instruction is a problem in many developing nations. Parents' inabilities to support the education of their children forces the children to rely heavily on

teachers and schools for support. This is a problem because many of the schools have poorly trained teachers, large class sizes, poor teaching styles, and lack of achievement data, to mention a few (Greaney, 1996). According to the Republic of Ghana's website (2000, Para 2), "Primary and middle school education is tuition free and will be mandatory when enough teachers and facilities are available to accommodate all the students." Additionally, a report by from Ghana's Ministry of Education (2000) indicates that there is a lack of teaching time, resources, and experienced teachers, and a lack of coordination between the various levels of education in the country. Even with the best teachers, schools are ill-equipped to handle the range of factors that affect teachability of students. Students who are hungry, sick, or feel unsafe will not be focused on education. This reinforces the discussion of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs discussed above.

Africa

Some staggering statistics come from the continent of Africa regarding education and literacy. Niger's Literacy and Basic Education Minister, An Ibrahim, recently reported that 80 percent of Niger's adult population is illiterate (Panapress, 2003). The CIA World Factbook (2003) estimated that Niger's literacy rate is 17.6%. Niger ranks last both in Africa (51 countries) and for the entire world (202 countries) for its literacy rate. Saint Helena (97%), Zimbabwe (85%), and South Africa (85%) are the three most literate countries in Africa, respectively (CIA, 2003). Twenty-six of the bottom thirty-four countries in the world for adult literacy rates are on the African continent (CIA, 2002, as cited on Nationmaster, 2003).

On a more promising note, the average adult literacy rate for sub-Saharan Africa has increased for both men and women between 1990 and 2000. For men there was a nine point increase from 60% to 69% and for women a 13 point increase from 41% to 54% (UNICEF, Summary, 2003). Language is a major factor affecting literacy in Africa. For example, Chad has

over 120 different languages spoken within its borders, Zambia has 70 indigenous languages and 8 major languages, and South Africa has 11 official languages with many addditional languages. Most countries have identified an official language, such as English, Arabic, or French. This diversity of languages means that children who attend school will, more than likely, not be learning in their first language (Donald, Condy & Forrester, 2003).

An estimated forty-percent of the world's children who do not attend school live in Africa. Africa is also the only region where the average enrollment in primary education has dropped in the past ten years (Kigotho, 2003). Free primary education is a basic human right (Article 26, Section 1), however, because of foreign debt payments, lengthy civil wars, and corruption, many nations cannot afford the costs of free education. At the beginning of 2003, when Kenya began offering free primary education, 8.7 million new students were enrolled. The addition of so many new pupils leads to other problems such as overcrowding and the need for more teachers. In Uganda, some schools may have classes with 150 pupils (Kigotho, 2003). Even with the massive improvements in the Ugandan education system, which has seen more success than Kenya, one in four children still do not attend school (Kigotho, 2003).

The continent of Africa is suffering from many critical issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS has already killed 25 million people, including teachers and parents, with 40 million more currently infected. The AIDS epidemic has actually reversed positive trends that were occurring in many countries around the world (World Bank, 2002). This means that stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS is crucial to both overall development and the development of quality education. What is the most effective means of slowing its spread? Education, of course. Factors affecting education mentioned above such as living in poverty, hunger, and girls

not receiving education all compound the spread of HIV. The cycle continues as HIV/AIDS compounds the factors of poverty, hunger, and undereducation. It should be clear that something needs to be done to stop this vicious cycle that has the potential to destroy an entire generation (see appendix B).

Discussion

Research has shown, and common sense says, that education is the key to any development issue. Unfortunately, there is not one specific method that will work for every continent, country, state, community, or school. Successful efforts in one area may be transplanted to another, but these efforts must work within the political and cultural factors of that specific area. Fortunately, the UN has recognized literacy as a major problem that needs to be addressed. It has been the subject of much discussion for years. Beginning in February 2003, the UN declared the next 10 years as the International Literacy Decade.

However, education alone will not help developing nations, especially when other development issues need to be addressed. The spread of HIV/AIDS, hunger, poverty, gender disparities all need to be addressed as well. Also, the lack of potable water and proper sanitation need to be addressed. Various organizations have willingly taken up the call of helping developing countries overcome many of these barriers. Below is a discussion of a few programs that appeared in the research. Beginning in 2002, the World Bank incorporated HIV/AIDS education in all of its development projects. Other groups have gone even farther and are incorporating life skills training into their curricula. One such approach is the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE).

The CLE was first implemented in Australia and is a project of Rotary International. The CLE "links community development with the teaching of literacy" (Donald, Condy, Forrester,

2003, p. 485). It strives to connect the learning activities to something that produces instant valuable results. One example may be that of growing a vegetable garden. CLE also immerses children into learning a second language, for children whose education is not in their first language. Finally, CLE is cost-effective, because it only requires a little additional training for a large return. This is a crucial aspect in the developing world. CLE is rapidly expanding in developing nations (Donald, Condy, Forrester, 2003; Rotary International, 2003).

Laubach Literacy's program, Literacy as Social Change was mentioned earlier but deserves a second look. The six major action areas identified by families and communities are health, economic self-reliance, environment, education, peace, and human rights (see appendix A). Because each area overlaps in the development cycle, Laubach looked for a common link that could be used to end the cycle. They found literacy to be the common link. Literacy for Social Change "integrates fundamental skills, critical thinking, cultural expression, and learner-initiated action to help communities assess their material and social needs and implement solutions to pressing local problems" (Laubach Literacy, n.d., para. 2). Laubach has special programs designed to reach women and "focuses on the vital role of women in family, community and social change (Laubach Literacy International, n.d., para. 1). Laubach's literacy education empowers the participants to continue learning and creating social change after the Laubach workers have left the community.

Central Asia Institute (CAI) provides education and other community development services in the mountain regions of the Middle East. CAI requires local involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating the outcomes. They even go so far as to require the local

community to match project funds and resources. Their focus is primarily on the education of girls, but they go well beyond that. In the 28 primary schools they have opened 8,210 students, 3,400 of whom were girls, have received a primary education. They have also opened training centers for women, and have been instrumental in 15 potable water projects (Central Asia Institute, n.d.).

World Vision, a Christian child sponsorship program, provides education, health care, including free immunizations, and supplemental food for children. They also undertake projects that benefit the entire community such as, digging wells, teaching about nutrition and assisting in agricultural production. While World Vision's focus is on providing the basic needs of the child, it realizes that providing for the needs of the community will trickle down to the child and help the entire community. World Vision served 85 million people worldwide in the year 2002, with 2.1 million of those being children (World Vision, n.d.).

Each UN agency has a different approach toward education, but all see the need for a holistic approach. One agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, addresses all levels of education under its Sustainable Development Department. The FAO seeks to improve children's health and capacity to learn. FAO's educational efforts include sustainable development initiatives, teaching children and communities agricultural techniques, including personal gardens (FAO, n.d.).

Another agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), provides food for education. WFP has three main initiatives, meals at school, meal initiative for daughter enrollment and meals for adults. Through WFP, millions of poor children receive one nutritious meal at school each day. This alleviates hunger for the day and helps the children concentrate. A second initiative is to provide meals for families who send their daughters to school. These meals help to close the

gender gap within primary education. The third education initiative is providing meals to adults in exchange for them attending training sessions in the community (World

Food Programme, 2001).

Finally, UNESCO is the agency taking the lead for the UN Literacy Decade. Education has been one of the primary goals of this agency, the "E" stands for education. UNESCO has always worked for Education for All (EFA). UNESCO has a plethora of programs that include working with the community, working in the community, providing incentives for attending school, and monitoring education programs around the world. UNESCO's initiatives cover the wide range of literacy including early childhood education, primary, secondary, and higher education, technical and non-formal education. Overall, UNESCO is advocating for the educational rights of all humans around the world (UNESCO, 2003).

Conclusion

With 860 million illiterate adults and 120 million children not having access to schools some major changes need to be made worldwide. The developed countries must react and help support the developing world's efforts to develop. Christians need to be actively involved in advocating on behalf of developing countries as well as taking an active role in implementation of projects. Many factors directly affect the availability and the amount of education children receive including, poor sanitation, HIV/AIDS, hunger, and violence. All of these factors need to be addressed to some level for any of them to be successful. Strategies to increase the average literacy rate around the world must be holistic in nature and work from within the community itself.

Based on the calling from God to serve the least of these, Christians need to create holistic strategies that not only address the physical needs, such as literacy, but also social and

spiritual needs as well. Christians have the opportunity to implement programs that can teach

about Jesus while also teaching important life skills. Using the Bible and other teaching aids

could be very helpful in teaching children and adults how to read, write, and think critically. An

informed Christian perspective can also directly affect other issues surrounding illiteracy such as

poverty and HIV/AIDS. However, Christians also need to be proactive in advocacy at all levels

to help developing communities reach their

fullest potential.

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CONTEXT OF SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH FAMILIES IN LATVIA

Vita Roga

This article provides a Latvian point of view on the value of integrating spirituality in social work practice with families. Considering the family as a primary system of education, the author presents a new model for integrating spirituality into the education of families as a means of addressing social problems in Latvian society.

THE LATVIAN PEOPLE HAVE INDICATED THAT THE FAMILY IS one of the most important and vulnerable socialization institutions. Forty three percent of Latvians emphasized the importance of family but 57% inhabitants emphasized the necessity of a good work place with a stable and safe job. (Rigas pilsetas SD ANGB, 2003). Theory and research indicate that a family values orientation is rapidly decreasing. The causes of this situation are the sociopolitical and economic consequences of imbalance in a society. The lack of balance in society predicates the exclusion of different social groups. This imbalance is revealed in fewer material

resources and inadequate social skills for certain identified at risk groups in society. This is often the result of a social disability, indicating the way people fail to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. Sometimes people lose a feeling of identity in their own country. The parents' negative models of behavior have been realized in their children's lives. Statistical data mostly show the following situation: addictive parents have children with alcohol problems. The children of aggressive parents constantly use aggression among their classmates and friends and often they are involved in conflicted situations with adults. As society addresses social problems, spirituality can serve as a resource and a strength to families.

Latvian Families and a Context of Spirituality

As the spiritual side of families reemerges it leads to increased sensitivity and development of the innermost support systems. Improving the family as a system must include the use of spiritual concepts as well as social, cognitive, and emotional aspects. In reality, today's Latvian families need even more emphasis on cultural values as a quality component of social development from generation to generation.

Social Work and the pedagogy in Latvia

Understanding diversity is one of the most critical aspects of social work and social pedagogy practice in Latvia. The oppression period of the Soviet Union (1945 – 1990) in the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) provided strong principles of collectivity and unity. The roles and functions of the Communist party provided unique possibilities for all people, but people were not offered choices that were based on personal strengths or respect for diversity in the population. Although social work did not exist in Latvia during Soviet times (it was introduced in Latvia in 1998), there was a closely aligned profession known as social pedagogy.

Social pedagogy as a science originated in Germany around the middle of the nineteenth-century. The German tradition of social pedagogy has become associated more or less with social work in many European countries. Karl Mager is said to have coined the term in 1844. Prussian educational thinker Friedrich Diesterveg (1790-1866) emphasized the idea of people carrying out their own activity, and of the fundamental importance of democracy (Gudjons, 1998). Today in Latvia, social pedagogy is utilized as additional assistance in all cases when the family and school does not provide for the optimal social and emotional skills for living. This understanding determines the typical working spheres of social pedagogy:

- Treating social and emotional problems in pre-school, and elementary school, and special education school children;

- Providing pedagogical interventions and social training;

- Conducting education groups of adults/parents and young people.

The most popular definitions of social pedagogy are as follows:

- Social Pedagogy as a trend in science (Mudrik, 1990);

- Social Pedagogy as a science on the developing influence of social environments (Mudrik & Semjonov, 1991).

- Social Pedagogy as crisis intervention in school practice;

- Social Pedagogy as group pedagogy and social ethics action;

- Social Pedagogy as assistance to integrate at risk individuals.

Therefore, social pedagogy has a definite emphasis on viewing the child from a holistic perspective. In the Baltic States system, the pedagogy approach was a major guideline in the practice of school pedagogy, which implemented all aspects of communist ideas in the educational

system. For example, school programs could perform elementary school education along five leading tasks: to educate the human in harmony intellectually, morally, physically, virtuously and patriotically.

All tasks were tied to the belief of the Communist party ideology about the successful and happy future for all people of the State. Culture as a quality of social development was in one direction - that of Russia. The following are principles for implementing a direct school program in practice:

- Special concepts of learning (people's knowledge is patriotic validity).

- Unit evaluation of achievement.

- Opening of the school to cooperation with the local Communist party leaders.

- Planned school social activities with all school members participating.

- Orientation of students toward a professional specialist area or occupation (car driver, postal worker, dressmaker, teacher, hair dresser, weaver, or nurse).

In the Soviet system the pedagogy context was working well. All of the subsystems – school, government, family, and enterprise were involved and worked as one big system under only one ideological belief – socialism. Today in Latvia, social pedagogy has appeared as a part of social education used in social work practice with families and children. The current trend of definitions includes understanding how to work with young people, parents, and teachers in the school environment, especially emphasizing interaction between social components.

Therefore, there is a sophisticated tie between social work, social pedagogy and pedagogy because of the acceptance of systems, elements and subsystems, although today the situation is changing. In order to better explain the system approach in practice, I will take one problem and

use the leading components of the school program as an example. The aggression of youngsters is a very serious problem in Latvian schools. School programs consist of four parts: a) the level of organization; b) the level of learning/teaching; c) the level of culture; and d) the level of cooperation.

The disputable point is how to lead the school system actions in order to interrupt aggressive behavior. The teachers, social pedagogues, or school social workers should know what kind of systems are involved in each of these levels and what is better for the problem solving process.

Social Problems of Latvian families

The pluralistic nature of society affects individuals and groups and demands an understanding of the value transition processes, spirituality concepts, individual rights, and justice. This understanding demands practice wisdom from social workers and social pedagogues. "Practice wisdom can be defined as a system of personal and value – driven knowledge emerging out of the transaction between the phenomenological experience of the client situation and the use of scientific information" (Klein & Bloom, 1995). The family is a unique system in Latvian society but social work is also a unique profession. The family is the basic institution of society, requiring special approaches and attention at various levels. The political and socioeconomic conditions have changed in Latvia producing role confusion between educational institutions and the family. Increasingly, violence against children (83%) comes from step-parents, relatives or others persons who take care of these children (Rigas pilsetas SD ANGB, 2003). Additional role confusion comes from lack of support and medical services, high levels of crime, poverty, and an excessive tax system. Therefore, families in Latvia with children have found themselves in the most difficult situation and, as a result, a larger number of families are not well situated in terms of education and other supports.

This has produced significant social problems for Latvian families today. An example is the growing social problem of street children. The current reality in Latvia indicates a growing risk of parental unemployment, and high costs of renting an apartment, lack of appropriate social skills and increasing school absenteeism. In a large number of cases children deal with major social problems such as AIDs, alcohol and drug abuse, and exposure to crime and possible social isolation from life. In today's society children are often more vulnerable and for this reason problems arise in the areas of child safety requiring child welfare help from the national and municipal governments.

However, simply describing demographic statistics is not enough. There is a serious need for a comprehensive approach. Social work is the only profession that can provide this comprehensive approach to practice in Latvia. The traditional social work view of human nature and the whole person has emphasized biological, psychological, and social dimensions. These are referred to as dimensions of the holistic approach in social pedagogic practice, which was adopted as a significant approach in social work practice in Latvia.

Spirituality, Religion, and a Holistic Approach to Persons

Recently, social work conceptualizations of the whole person have begun to include spirituality in many European countries and, for the last ten years, once again in the United States. A holistic approach illustrates the relationship between spirituality and the biological, social, psychological, and transpersonal dimensions of the person. The holistic approach views the family as a unique system. That is why it is important to connect this approach with spirituality. There are many difficulties in attempting to explain the terms spirituality or religion in Latvian society because of the stereotypical meanings of these terms. Most of the Latvian people were taught that churches had a negative influence on the lives of families. The prior government, in Soviet times,

had accepted policies and rules that lead to closing or smashing many churches. However, in 1935, before Latvia's occupation, official statistics indicated a broad spectrum of religious traditions.

Table 1 Religious Traditions in Latvia (1935)

Number (%)

55.2% Evangelical Lutheranism

24.5% Roman Catholicism

9% Orthodox Church

5,5% Old Believers

5% Jewish Believers

(Report on Religious Liberty in the former Latvia, 2000)

During communist rule every effort was made to curtail the influence of religion. Religious organizations were prohibited access to schools, media, books, and workplaces. Even charity work was forbidden. The family system was not at liberty to involve children in active church work. The Sunday schools, religious choirs, or camps were open only after the age of eighteen. Religious publications, with a few exceptions, were limited to yearbooks and song sheets for Sunday services. Everything was under the control of the Communist party – theatres, art, and the family traditions. This systematic attempt to remove religion and God is much more significant than an attempt to control religiosity in society. It was an attempt to control spirituality: a sense of wholeness of what it is to be human. The reintroduction of God and spirituality into Latvian life will be useful for many future discussions in the classrooms of the social work/social pedagogy study programs in Latvia.

According to Canda (1990) spirituality relates to the person's search for a sense of meaning and morally fulfilling the relationship between the self, others, the encompassing universe, and the

ontological ground of existence. This applies whether a person understands this in terms that are theistic, atheistic, nonatheistic or any combination of these. Canda (1997) also described a direction for a spiritually sensitive practice as a helping relationship in which the social worker links personal and professional growth.

Josua Nosa Okundaye, Cathleen Gray, and Lian B. Gray (1999) in the article "Reimaging field instruction from a spiritually sensitive perspective: An alternative approach," also suggest that spirituality is a sense of the person's socialization in the society. The article notes that diversity is reflected through religious and nonreligious expressions of spirituality, which is a very important point when discussing spirituality in Latvia.

The term "spirituality" is not easy to describe, let alone implement in Latvian society. Traditionally, this term meant just religious action among inhabitants, like church attendance on Sundays or church celebrations. During the last five years, the Ministry of Education in Latvia included lessons on religion in the school programs. This policy is a beginning for the development of a spiritual sense of self, or perhaps an acceptance of religious action. This progressive move on the part of the Ministry seems to indicate a growing awareness that, for democracy and liberty to flourish in Latvia, society must be open to and aware of spirituality in order to refract the prior thinking and models of society in Latvia.

Another definition of spirituality shows that it is not about theological walls of any specific ideological system because of difference swithin ideological systems. Described previously, the Communist ideological system in the Soviet Union times was very strong and hard on all the population. Usually we were talking about only belief systems, which meant the Communist ideology. As a concept, spirituality is not considered the equivalent of religion or theology. Spirituality is an essential aspect of being.

Spirituality, Life long learning, and the Social Environment

Spiritual energies promoting a sense of wholeness have a significant influence on the level of psychological and social well being. This relates to the concept of family life-long learning and education, for which Latvian society has a solid foundation. Many authors have been describing life long learning as the "Knowledge Age" that involves cultural, economic, and social life. Patterns of learning, living and working are changeable. As mentioned by Canda & Smith (1994), the conclusion of the Feira European Council invites the "Members States, the Council and the Commission... within areas of competence, to identify coherent strategies and practical measures with a view to fostering life long learning for all." (p.33) Spirituality is a key component in life long learning

In 1999, the Ministry of Welfare formulated guidelines for "The State and Local Government Support Policy to Families with Children" in which it justified the necessity for a uniform family policy, outlining principles for the division of responsibilities between family, society and the state. Guidelines were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on the February 1, 2000 and this family focus has been implemented since 2003. The main task of the new Latvian family policy is to promote the development of fair and appropriate material conditions for families and to reduce differences between generations and strata. Family policy activities should stimulate the improvement of the family situation and enhance the possibility of all children growing up in a safe and secure environment. The needs of various family types were broadly defined and the focus of the policy was on improving the economic ability of parents. The most important elements of safety included self-respect, self-awareness, solidarity, and the individual's primary rights in the social/cultural context.

This context has been described by researcher Curbatov from Russia (Belousa, 2002). He noted that all family members have been involved in different kinds of social/ cultural activities – individual, community, institutional, national or ethnic. This research indicates a key point for successful life in Latvia, that of a commitment to life long education. Long term education of Latvian families must use the context of spirituality because our country is very rich with culture, traditions of history, customs and art. In a global context we can see life long education in the context of translation of traditions between generations, development of traditions and cultural values, historical ontogenesis and filogenesis, spiritual, ecological and other aspects. The outstanding point for researchers is the idea about socialization as a process in life-long education (Mudrik, 1991; Huperc & Schincler, 1999). My prior research began considering the person as an interaction subject in an environment. The results of that work produced the following figure exploring the relationship between the individual and the environment:

The changing social and economic environment and its resulting impact upon Latvian families leads naturally to two key points in the development of a conceptual framework in social work and social pedagogic practice in Latvia:

- Educational development must be integrated with cultural indicators in society;
- Interactions between generations must be improved through values, norms, and traditions in the family structure.

Unfortunately, in reality we can see families with a multiplicity of social problems and these problems are not possible to resolve separately. This point of view proves that the holistic

approach used in social work/social pedagogy practice is the best practice model for the successful resolving of problems and implementing ideas of spirituality. Transitions in Latvian society clearly indicate the most vulnerable is the family without knowledge about interpersonal psychology and ecological philosophy. In other words – without spirituality

A Model for Integrating Spirituality into Family Education

Families need educational and emotional support. The question is this: How would it be possible in Latvia to actualize this awareness and what is currently being done? An answer to these questions can be focused in the current social pedagogues/social worker practice program model in the work with families.

The educational programs involve the following major objectives:

- Educational development must be integrated with cultural indicators in society;
- Developing values, norms, and traditions in the family structure will ultimately lead to improvement of living conditions for society.

To successfully accomplish these objectives, education with the families has to apply a new philosophy based on the new way of thinking. Researcher Belousa (2002) emphasized that social pedagogues and social workers can transform the traditional expression of education through the four crucial points – "learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together."

These four points are integrated into a universal opportunity:

- Protecting each other;
- Interacting with other persons;
- Having the best understanding about another person's position in the environment.

In other words, this program of education has to improve people through enhanced commitment to intelligence, success, awareness, responsibility, critical thinking, ethics, and spirituality. To be successful this educational program demands a systems and ecological approach by professionals. There are different methods in which strategies reflecting educational program models can be applied. Utilizing the holistic approach for this model is very useful in exploring alternatives on how to work with different types of families and groups, and thereby improving their spiritual growth.

Cooperation across the systems

Many educational strategies could be developed in different directions but this article has a major assumption that sustainable education and development must be based on a dynamic process between many factors including social, cultural, economic, and the need to protect human beings as natural systems. All professionals at all levels have to be aware of their own ability and competence to work with families and consistently consider the context of spirituality. A current major barrier is that the holistic life long learning model of families in Latvia is not implemented on a wider level. Hopefully, the full implementation of the educational model for families will be possible increasing the number of people working together in teams with professionals from other specialties and different social institutions.

competence to work with families and consistently consider the context of spirituality. A current major barrier is that the holistic life long learning model of families in Latvia is not implemented on a wider level. Hopefully, the full implementation of the educational model for families will be possible increasing the number of people working together in teams with professionals from other specialties and different social institutions.

The model proposed above requires local sectors and community sectors to cooperate, which is not easy in Latvia at all. Utilizing this expanded model creates a great possibility to reveal and develop the basic values of humanity, improve understanding about life's difficulties and many of the social problems, and how to better resolve them. The program is not only about the necessity of spirituality in our lives. It is a very useful model for what can be done now to promote the survival of the next generations. At this point in time it would be a mistake for Latvian policy makers, educators and families to place the concepts of God and spirituality only as a topic for discussion in the recently reopened churches in Latvia.

Conclusion:

Growth and development of spiritual understanding encourages families with children as well as social pedagogues and social workers. It is a very difficult and ambiguous time in Latvia but we should teach people to trust in cooperation, oneness and unity, and to motivate the search for better communication and commitment. Spirituality in this context plays a significant role in everyone's lives.

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EXPERIENCING SOUTH AFRICA AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN: MOVING FROM THE STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE TO RACIAL AND GENDER "VICTORIZATION"

Kimberly Battle-Walters

2004 marks the 10th year anniversary of the official end of apartheid and the

beginning of a post-apartheid, democratic South Africa. From 1994 until

2004, South Africa has made commendable strides in racial and gender reconciliation,

and from a strengths perspective has built from past deficits and now

provides a model for international reconciliation. This article, however, looks

at moving beyond the strengths perspective and applying the theoretical

concept of racial and gender "victorization" within a South African context.

WITH OVER FORTY-FOUR MILLION PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP ITS INhabitants, the Republic of South Africa has eleven official languages; is predominately Christian; and has four widely recognized racial groups--Africans (black Africans, about 78% of the population), Afrikaners (white Africans of Dutch decent, roughly 10% of the population; this number also includes other whites), Coloreds (a mixed race of people making up over 8% of the population), and Asians (people from India and from other Asian descents -- make up close to 3% of the population). Also known for its pandemic with HIV/AIDS, roughly 20% of males and females between the ages of 15-49 are infected with HIV and in various areas approximately 40% of women of childbearing age are infected (Bureau of African Affairs, 2002). National estimates indicate that about one in ten South Africans (a conservative figure) is affected by this disease.

A Personal Opportunity

In July of 2002 I had the unique opportunity of traveling to this beautiful country under the auspices of teaching and conducting research for six months as a Fulbright scholar. Upon my arrival, feeling somewhat like a "Survivor" contestant who had been dropped off and left without certain amenities that I had grown accustomed to, I nervously wondered what I had done, and just how an African American Christian social worker and social scientist from South Central Los Angeles would embrace and be embraced by both black and white African people who shared a divide of over ten thousand miles? I was supposed to be the specialist.

I had come to South Africa with my expertise in diversity, policy, and family violence to teach in both the social work and sociology departments and conduct research entitled "Race, Class, and Gender in the New South Africa: A Woman's Perspective," yet I had more questions than answers. Even though I had journeyed to the continent of Africa, West Africa, two years prior, I was interested in exploring South Africa and seeing how its women had fared economically, socially, and politically in a postapartheid, 1994 democratic South Africa. Expecting the recently democratic South Africa to be similar to what life was like in the U.S. during the 1950s and 60s at the height of the civil rights movement, I went expecting to be transported back in time. Even as Brown v. the Board of Education of 1954 had established that "separate but equal" laws were unconstitutional in the U.S., and the 1964 Civil Rights Act had stipulated equality for all, the acceptance and application of true equality for all people, especially for African Americans, would be a slow transition. I suspected this would be the same for South Africa.

With 2004 marking the tenth year anniversary of a democratic South Africa and the abolition of apartheid, if the American civil rights movement was any indication of what to expect, I assumed that the widespread acceptance of a truly "rainbow" nation, as South Africa described itself, would be a long time coming. What I had not predicted, however, was the deep reservoirs of resilience, grace, and forgiveness that the people of South Africa would have for ameliorating its wounded past.

Ubuntu: Resilience, Grace, and Forgiveness

In his book *No Future Without Forgiveness* (1999), Archbishop Desmond Tutu relates the horror stories of apartheid that came out upon the commissioning of the 1994 Truth and Reconciliation Committee that he presided over under former President Nelson Mandela. This

committee provided hearings throughout the country to publicly acknowledge institutional wrongs done to African, Colored, and Asian people during apartheid. It also allowed amnesty to be given to certain perpetrators who were forthright with their part in the murderous activities that took place between 1960 and 1994. It requested compensation for victims of apartheid abuse. And it allowed the nation to seek forgiveness on the part of deceased citizens' families (Bureau of African Affairs, 2002). Much to my amazement and surprise, after reviewing this history I learned that receiving public apologies and answers to questions regarding what happened to members of their families was enough for many wronged African citizens to take the higher road of forgiveness and to seek reconciliation among all South Africans.

In fact, the vast majority of South Africans that I spoke to, both formally and informally, were proud and highly protective of their country and ready to rebuild social and economic bridges. From the strengths perspective, South Africans are a resilient people who identify with and have mastered a concept that they refer to as "ubuntu." Ubuntu states that my humanity and dignity is yoked with yours. A common saying tied in with this concept is "A person is a person through other persons" (Tutu, 1999). A person with *ubuntu* is affirming and supportive of others, realizing that he or she is part of a greater whole. Therefore, when the humanity of one suffers, everyone's humanity suffers. This being said, most South Africans have focused on moving forward rather than dwelling in the past. Building up rather than breaking down. Becoming better instead of bitter.

The Role of Women

As an African American woman, it was interesting to me that the African women in particular played such a vital part in helping to abolish apartheid. African women, along with Colored, Asian, and White women took part in the struggles from 1948 when apartheid was

formally enacted (restrictions on blacks had been taking place decades earlier), and throughout

the 1960s and 70s with the banning of African parties and township uprisings and massacres.

They were also involved in the early 1990s when former President F.W. deKlerk released

Mandela from prison and when apartheid laws were officially dismantled giving way to the first

democratic election in April of 1994. They rallied, went to jail, burned their "pass books"

(documents giving disempowered South Africans permission to travel around the city to various

regions), worked underground, participated in guerilla warfare, and gave up their lives to

establish equality for all South Africans and see apartheid end. In honor of South African

women, there is a national women's day to mark such gallant contributions.

With women making such significant contributions to South Africa's revitalization, it is

disheartening that in a post-apartheid society it is the women and children who have been most at

risk for violence (rape and domestic violence), poverty, and discrimination – with rural women

often suffering the most. As I began to talk to these women across the color and class lines, some

common threads that linked their stories were their pride in their country, an optimistic outlook

on the future of South Africa, a willingness to pardon past injustices, and a non-victim mentality.

They had become a model from which the global community could learn. This nation of

women and people had not only mastered *ubuntu* as part of their strengths, but had in fact

experienced what I identified as "*racial and gender victorization.*"

Race and Gender Victorization

What is racial and gender victorization? The racial and gender victorization concept is

defined as "the ability to value one's racial and gender makeup, while not allowing social

stigmas, sanctions against, nor stereotypes associated with one's makeup to inhibit, diminish, or

control one's self-perception, outlook, or the quality of one's everyday lived experiences"

(Battle-Walters, 2004). Rather than rehashing the atrocities that occurred under apartheid, the

victorization concept focuses on a strengths perspective. Building from Dennis Saleebey's

(1996) social work strengths perspective, this theoretical concept looks at empowerment,

resilience, creativity, assets, resourcefulness, and survival skills of women of color. It provides a

new lens through which we can look at not only African women but African American women

and women of color as a whole.

Racial and gender victorization acknowledges the fact that racial and gender inequalities

vividly exist around the world, and that women or people of color are not always in control of

external forces and outcomes of hegemonic practices. However, instead of presupposing that

these South African women are devastated by racist or sexist treatment, it supposes that they

choose to fight for change and focus on a more positive outlook for their lives. They choose to

live their lives and enjoy their lives despite continuous inequities and unethical social practices.

Racial and gender victorization focuses on the empowerment of these African women. They

decide what, when, and how they will let things affect them, and consequently what course of

action to take in response. The power is given to African women to be racial and gender victors

rather than racial and gender victims.

As South Africa continues to rebuild and correct decades of racial, gender, and economic

wrongs, the women of South Africa will continue to play a major part in writing a more equitable

legacy. Although this new legacy may not become perfect overnight, it will indeed be a model

for the rest of the world to follow. Why? Because these women and their intentionally

empowered nation, that has been recovering from hegemonic practices at record breaking speed,

have chosen to follow a model of victorization (strengths based) as opposed to victimization

(pathology based). After acknowledging and consciously acting to correct past wrongs, the

citizens of South Africa have purposely chosen to look ahead rather than behind. This critical

decision to repair *and* repent has set the stage for them to plan *and* prevent. This is an example

from which we all can learn.

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SUSTAINED INVOLVEMENT PRODUCES RESULTS: OKLAHOMA TEAM PARTNERS TO HELP RUSSIAN ORPHANS

Lanny Endicott

Is there evidence that work with Russian orphans has produced positive

results? In seeking some answers, a survey was administered to orphan

graduates during a winter leadership camp (January 2004) conducted by a

team from Southern Hills Baptist Church (Tulsa) and additional Oklahoma

participants. For the past several years the team from Oklahoma has partnered

with faith-based Children's HopeChest (Nadezhda Fund in Russia) to

provide camps and ongoing support for older orphans. This article explores

the results of the survey, their implications, along with a discussion of the

team's expanded mission with Russian orphans.

Sustained involvement of a Tulsa, Oklahoma church with a group of Russian orphanage graduates has realized some positive results in the lives of orphans. Southern Hills Baptist Church, working with Children's HopeChest (herein referred to as CHC), a Colorado Springs-based ministry to Russian orphans, has been providing camps since 2000 for older orphans in the Vladimir Oblast (term for Region). The 2004 winter camp involved Americans from the church and additional Oklahoma participants, including college students and members of additional congregations, to make up the Oklahoma team. Although the team's makeup changes from year to year, there is a consistent core of participants who have worked with each of the four camps in the Vladimir Region.

During the latest camp experience, January 1-4, 2004, I surveyed a sample of 31 orphans, assessing the impact of the involvement and collecting data on a variety of items including personal health, social relations, vocational interests, psychological issues, and spiritual development. A copy of the survey instrument is found at the end of this article. Survey results indicate that American friends have a positive influence on participants' lives. Participating youth were selected by members of the Southern Hills group from a list compiled over three previous summer camps.

Children's Hope Chest

The church has developed an ongoing partnership with CHC, the American not-for-profit organization known in Russia as the Nadezhda Fund (herein referred to as NF, Children's HopeChest's registered organization in Russia), a Christian ministry to orphans in Russia and Romania. Children's HopeChest and Nadezhda Fund are used interchangeably in this paper. George Steiner, began the ministry in 1994 to provide God's hope and practical help to orphans in Russia, beginning in the Vladimir Oblast. Since inception in 1994, CHC has expanded its program model into two regions adjacent to Vladimir (Kostroma and Ivanovo) and has also begun work in the country of Romania.

The mission is two-fold: 1) easing the lives of children within the orphanage system, and 2) assisting teenage orphanage graduates in their transition to independent living. Services include direct humanitarian aid, donations of medical supplies and equipment, a foster-care program, orphanage media centers, transitional homes for orphanage graduates, a technical school life-skills development program, computer training, and counseling programs for orphans and orphanage graduates. CHC also has partnered with Buckner Orphan Care International, based in Dallas, Texas, to provide over 55 foster family homes for older orphans to help them transition into post-orphanage adjustment and societal integration.

Church Involvement

A centerpiece of CHC programs is the involvement of American church congregations and religious groups in providing both summer and/or winter camps for orphans and orphan graduates, with some taking the additional step to adopt an orphanage or technical school. In addition to working with older youth in the region, Southern Hills Baptist Church adopted an orphanage, with church members sponsoring each of the 35 children in residence there. Two

spring camps have been provided for children at this orphanage in the town of Yuriev Polsky.

The church has also provided, on two occasions, work teams to remodel bath and shower

facilities and purchase washers and dryers for doing laundry. To date, ten of the eighteen

orphanages in the Vladimir Oblast have been adopted by American churches, which provide

material assistance and camping experiences.

CHC handles the logistics for participating American teams, including visa acquisition,

transportation, room and board, and interpreters. Participating congregations and organizations

raise the funds to pay for these expenses along with camper enrollment costs and airline tickets.

Camps typically include recreational activities, arts and crafts, and spiritual development in the

young people. The Southern Hills Baptist Church group conducted its first camp in the Vladimir

Oblast in late July to mid-August, 2000, meeting with many older youth who had left the

orphanage system to enter training in technical schools. The latest camp, Vladimir Winter Camp,

was held January 1-4, 2004, with 40 youth and four teachers accompanying them as chaperones.

Thirteen interpreters were hired to provide translation needs. These are university students and

university graduates primarily from Vladimir State Pedagogical University.

The Vladimir Winter Camp 2004 had the purpose of providing the 40 youth with an

intensive leadership camp. The American team provided in-depth Bible study, recreation, and

arts and crafts programs during the four-day camp. In addition, a strong relational small group

focus was established to deepen relationships between members of the American team and youth

participants. A founding purpose for developing CHC programs concerns the older youth who

leave the orphanage system and who, because of lack of family support and maturity, become

vulnerable to technical school peer pressure and have difficulty in their subsequent entry into

society. Many have been known to fail the integrative process and end up in prison, prostitution, and addiction.

Some have even committed suicide. Hence, at the heart of the CHC ministry is providing orphanage graduates with the practical instruction in life skills combined with direct personal adult guidance and emotional support that HopeChest seeks to provide. This approach to orphan assistance is holistic in nature through combining creative programs for guiding and encouraging teenage orphanage graduates along with addressing their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Method

The survey conducted at the Vladimir Winter Camp was not a scientifically selected random sample of youth. It did, however, contain an element of randomness in representing youth throughout the Vladimir Oblast. The 31 youth participating in the camp experience represented some 13 institutions of post orphanage training scattered throughout the oblast. These included some nine technical training schools (where youths can enter after completing the 9th grade), a teachers' training college, a mechanical college, and two universities. Most of the youth attending the winter camp had previously attended prior summer camps. In addition, these youth have also been serviced by NF programs through participation in either family centers (group homes), coffee house ministry in Vladimir (comprehensive service center), and other services, including various discipleship activities conducted by Russian staff in technical schools.

Regarding administration of the survey, instruction was provided to the accompanying teachers to help the youth with interpretation of questions as needed, and encourage honesty in responses. This process attempted to counter the Hawthorne effect (novelty) on validity. Regarding the halo effect on validity, the negative wording of two questions (in the middle of the

questionnaire), was an attempt to avoid a positive response set bias. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed by NF staff prior to administration; and, during the translation process, several Russian translators examined it for relevancy. The questionnaire utilized a Likert Scale (1 to 5 range) where respondents circled appropriate responses to statements presented. The answers ranged from 1— disagree greatly, 2—disagree some, 3—neither disagree or agree, 4—agree some, and 5—agree greatly.

Returned questionnaires were assigned a number, sorted by sex, and means were computed for each youth and according to each of the 27 statements. A table was constructed to display the results. Questions addressed physical (1-4), educational (5-7), social (8-10, 12), psychological (1, 14-16) , and spiritual concerns (13, 17-23), and dealt with general opinions (24, 26-27). Questions 13 and 25 related to a future hope and were classified as spiritual in nature. Questions 14 and 15 were reversed in scoring in order to keep the survey consistent for positive wording.

Results

A response of 3 indicated neither agree nor disagree with the statement; whereas a 4 indicated some agreement; and 5, great agreement. Of all respondents, 16 (just over half) indicated a mean of 4 (some agreement) and above. Twelve scored between 3 and 4 (neither disagree nor agree but leaning more toward some agreement); and three youth scored less than 3 (neither disagree nor agree but leaning more toward some disagreement). The mean response for the 31 students completing the questionnaire was 3.92 (close to 4—some agreement).

Physical Concerns

Question 5, "the place where I live is adequate," scored lowest (2.83). Thirteen (43.3%) reported a 1 or 2 on this item. Other physical responses relating to health, clothing, and

food, scored between 3 and 4 on the scale.

Educational Concerns

The education statements were between 3 and 4 on the scale (neither agree nor disagree to agree some). However, 11 (36.7%) of the respondents scored a 2 or 1 (disagree some to disagree greatly) on statement 5, "I'm being trained in the vocation I like." On question 6, "I do well in school," 16 (53.3%) recorded a 3 or less.

Social Concerns

Of the social statements, the highest score came with "someone to talk to" (4.55). Additionally, 93.5% (scoring 4 to 5 on the scale) have "one person I can talk to when I need help." Other statements were between 3 and 4. Twenty-one (67.7%) recorded having friends who were a positive influence (score of 4 or 5).

Psychological Concerns

Psychological statements all averaged between 3 and 4. Noteworthy in this category, however, is the number of youth who scored a 5 (agree greatly) on the following questions: "I often become sad or depressed" (N=14, 45.2%), "I continue to have bad memories about my past" (N=15, 48.4%), and "I think I need help in solving my bad memories" (N=16, 51.6%). However, on question 11, "I mostly like the person I am," 18 (58.1%) scored 4 and above.

Spiritual Concerns

Responses regarding spiritual statements showed the highest mean scores on the questionnaire. Highest was, "God cares for me" (4.60) where 27 of 30 (90%) of the youth responding to the question reported a 4 or 5 on the scale. Other statements, "American friends helped me believe I have a future" (mean of 4.40 and 83.3% scoring a 4 or 5; and "American

friends help me trust in God" (mean of 4.35 and 83.9%) scored high as well. Also, regarding the question, "I have Russian friends who trust in God," the mean score was 4.24 (76.7%). And with the question, "I believe there is a future for me," the mean score was 4.13 with 25 (80.6%) scoring a 4 or 5. Further, youth responded with a mean of 4.0 (71%) to the question, "I attend church when I can." Regarding prayer, the mean was 4.17 (75.8%) concerning "God answers my prayers." Finally, the score of 3.83 (62.9%) is associated with "I read my Bible and pray."

Program-Related Items

The highest scoring item on the questionnaire related to liking Nadezhda Fund camps (4.94 or 100% scoring a 4 or 5). In addition, those believing that Nadezhda Fund "wants me to have a future" scored 4.35 (with 25 of 31 or 80.6% scoring a 4 or 5). Some 24 (77.5%) of the respondents indicated a desire to "help Nadezhda Fund help youth like me." Finally, 24 (77.5%) youth indicated a desire to "learn to speak English."

Discussion

In analyzing the results, most youth perceived themselves as being physically healthy and having sufficient warm clothing and food to eat. However, having adequate living arrangements is seen as a problem for many youth (in this case over 43%). Regarding being trained for the vocation they like, over 36% did not be!lieve so. In addition, over half of the youth either didn't know or were negative as to how they were performing in school. Socially, the youth mostly (93%) have someone to talk to when they need help; as well as, (over 67%) having friends who exert a positive influence on them.

Some 58% of the youth liked "the person I am." However, 45% indicated having times of being sad and depressed and 48% expressed continuation of having bad memories of the past. Half of the youth stated the need for help in resolving their bad memories. Highest scores in this

study occurred within the spiritual realm. Ninety percent (90%) of the youth believe that God cares for them. Some 80% of these youth believe they have a future and that their American friends have encouraged them to believe so (83%). Both American (83%) and Russian (76%) friends have also helped them to trust in God. Additionally, youth also attend church when they can (71%), read their Bibles and pray (62%), and believe that God answers their prayers (75%).

Results from the questionnaire also reveal that all youth (100%) like attending NF sponsored camps run by American groups or Russian staff. Some 80% believe that the NF wants them to have a future; and 77% have an interest in someday wanting to work with NF to help other youth like them. An additional 77% want to learn English.

Implications

The following five patterns suggest possible program emphases by CHC/NF staff:

1. Having adequate housing is a challenge for many youth. This inadequacy applies to
   both housing in technical schools and following graduation from them. For example,
   one technical school known to the author has a
   chronic problem with poor heating. Continued work is needed to help youth find
   sufficient housing to meet their needs.

2. Since over a third of the youth believed they were being trained in vocations they
   didn't like, it is important that they be helped with both choices and opportunities
   regarding the vocations they want to pursue and withplacement in schools that will help
   them achieve their desires. There are times when youth are placed in technical
   education programs to fill slots; this includes some youth who aren't sure what they want
   to study. Nevertheless, assessment of vocational interests is important. And securing
   the training to match their interests is necessary to their future employment success.

3.   Many youth continue to have issues with depression and need help in working out

their troubled pasts. A structured approach might be to identify children (perhaps when

they first enter the orphanage system) who need counseling assistance and provide the

service. Additionally, counselors working with abused and neglected children need

continuing education to enable them to provide relevant counseling assistance.

4.   NF camps should continue as American participants in them have significantly

benefited these youth. Not only have American participants helped them trust in God, but

have helped these youth believe in their futures. Russian Christians have been helpful to

them as well. Spiritually speaking, these youth, for the most part, attend church

when they can, read their Bibles and pray, and, importantly, they believe that God both

cares for them and answers their prayers. These spiritual results, at first sight,

seem overly optimistic. Perhaps several youth responded with a response bias toward

their American friends who conducted this particular camp. On another note, however,

the results may indicate the cumulative effect of numerous contacts with American

groups (including the Oklahoma Team) over the past several years through sustained,

long-term efforts. Significantly, youth also mentioned the positive effects that Russian

Christians have had on them. This may reflect the work of NF staff that

routinely provides disciple-making activities, computer training, and other services to

orphan youth in orphanages and technical schools throughout the region.

5.   Finally, a significant number of these youth have an interest in helping others as

they themselves have been helped through the NF. These youth should be identified and

nurtured for their potential through leadership development activities. Additionally,

assisting these potential leaders with training in English will further enable them

to work with American and other English-speaking groups. Perhaps such a group of nurtured youth will one day provide the next generation of leadership for working with Russian orphans and orphan graduates. Three of the interpreters for this winter camp experience were orphanage graduates attending the state university studying English.

An Expanded Mission

The Oklahoma Team is broader than just one church. This diverse team of Christians has expanded its service to helping Russian orphans and orphan graduates by developing a fund to further support orphanage graduates. Working through the Tulsa Community Foundation, team members established a fund to assist aspiring young professionals to gain needed educational training to service children in the Russian orphanage system. Called Oklahoma Aid Supplying Scholarships for International Student Training (OK/ASSIST), the program has the goal of helping Russian undergraduates gain advanced degrees from two Oklahoma universities: the graduate counseling program at Oral Roberts University (Tulsa) and the School of Social Work of the University of Oklahoma (Tulsa and Norman).

Training Russian students in counseling and social work, and their return to work in Russia will help professionalize these disciplines for serving orphans and assist the orphanage system in better meeting the needs of orphans. Funds are solicited through contributions from individual and organizations. OK/ASSIST is a not-for-profit fund with tax exempt status. Participating students sign a contract with CHC and OK/ASSIST for their return to Russia upon graduation to work with CHC (Nadezhda Fund) or governmental programs serving orphan children. Currently one student is attending her second year at Oral Roberts University and another is scheduled to attend the University of Oklahoma in August 2004. Additional students are scheduled to be aided by the OK/ASSIST fund to remain in Russia and attend graduate

education at Russian universities, Bible schools and theological seminaries. Prospective students are thoroughly assessed regarding their passion and calling for working with orphans.

Finally, the Oklahoma Team assists Russian orphans attending technical schools or training colleges with tutoring needs to prepare them for taking university exams. Passing these comprehensive tests will facilitate their entrance into Russian universities and various specialty schools (i.e., art schools), thus helping them to pursue their vocational dreams. CHC staff assesses the needs and capacity for these students and utilizes funds through OK/ASSIST to hire appropriate tutors. Several youth are currently in the university system through the specialized tutoring received. Sustained involvement in the lives of Vladimir (Russian) orphans, through conducting camps and training programs, facility remodeling, tutoring assistance, and sponsoring educational advancement for students in counseling and social work, has resulted in changed lives and a beginning realization of the goal to improve the orphanage system by caring for orphans and preparing them for the future. This involvement is made possible through partnerships between the Oklahoma Team and CHC.

APPENDIX

Vladimir Winter Camp 2004 Assessment Questionnaire

Circle the number which best represents your answers each of to

the following statements. (1- disagree greatly with the statement;

2-disagree some; 3-neither disagree or agree with the statement; 4-

agree some; 5-agree greatly with the statement)

1 2 3 4 5 1. I believe that I am a healthy person.

1 2 3 4 5 2. I mostly have enough clothing to stay

warm.

1 2 3 4 5 3. I mostly have enough food to eat.

1 2 3 4 5 4. The place where I live is adequate.

1 2 3 4 5 5. I believe I am being trained in the vocation
I like.

1 2 3 4 5 6. I do well in school.

1 2 3 4 5 7. I believe my vocational training will help
me find a future job.

1 2 3 4 5 8. I have friends who are a positive influence
on my life.

1 2 3 4 5 9. I have at least one person I can talk to
when I need help.

1 2 3 4 5 10. I believe others like me as a person.

1 2 3 4 5 11. I mostly like the person I am.

1 2 3 4 5 12. My teachers/care givers are proud of me.

1 2 3 4 5 13. I believe there is a future for me.

1 2 3 4 5 14. I often become depressed or sad.

1 2 3 4 5 15. I continue to experience bad memories
about my past.

1 2 3 4 5 16. I think I need help in solving my bad
memories.

1 2 3 4 5 17. I believe that God cares for me.

1 2 3 4 5 18. I attend church when I can.

1 2 3 4 5 19. I read my Bible and pray.

1 2 3 4 5 20. I believe God answers my prayers.

1 2 3 4 5 21. I have Russian friends who trust in God.

1 2 3 4 5 24. I like participating in camps sponsored by

Nadezhda Fund.

1 2 3 4 5 25. I believe Nadezhda Fund wants to help

me have a future.

1 2 3 4 5 26. Someday I want to help Nadezhda Fund

help youth like me.

1 2 3 4 5 27. I would like to learn to speak English.

SOYLENT GREEN IS PEOPLE:

CANNIBALISM OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN

AND CHILDREN THROUGH SEXUAL

TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

Lisa L. Thompson

Sexual trafficking of persons for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation (e.g. prostitution, pornography, live-sex shows, and stripping) is rampant throughout the world. Because most anti-trafficking efforts focus on supplyside or "push" factors primarily attributable to trafficking victims, but typically ignore demand or "pull" factors such as the demand for commercial sex created by the existence, tolerance, and fostering of sex markets, governments (with the exception of Sweden) and non-governmental organizations alike have been largely unsuccessful in stemming the flow of vulnerable women and children into the global sex industry. The roots of the resistance to linking sexual trafficking with prostitution, and to aggressively seeking the sex industry's extermination are deep, and often lie embedded in factors such as profit, corruption, myths about the "harmlessness" of prostitution, cultural attitudes about male sexual privilege, as well as gender inequality. To expose self-serving motives and the fallacy of "permission-giving" attitudes and beliefs, this article examines demand for commercial sex, specifically prostitution and trafficking for prostitution, metaphorically as cannibalism. The author has traveled to Bangladesh, the Netherlands, and Mexico, and reports some firsthand observations.

THE YEAR IS 2022. UNCONTROLLABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION, pollution, corruption, and greed have led to a catastrophic greenhouse effect that has destroyed virtually all plant and animal life on earth. The few remaining places where agriculture is possible are guarded like military compounds. Urban centers are brimming with people; economies are in shambles; masses are without work and thousands are homeless. Civil society is a foggy memory; in its place, authoritarian government rules with the requisite cruelty and callousness. Predictably there are severe food shortages. Meat and vegetables have nearly become things of the past, except of course, for the wealthy. For those unable to afford the exorbitant price of a wilted stalk of celery, much less a cut of beef, there's Soylent— unpalatable chips of dehydrated nutrients.

To stay alive the underclass must spend considerable time and effort in obtaining their rations of water and this so-called food. Different varieties of Soylent are distributed on different days of the week. Some days, people swamp the distribution centers for Soylent Red, and on others, Soylent Yellow. However, the rationing centers are most overwhelmed with people on Thursdays— Soylent Green day. Riot police are necessary to control the crowds of people vying to get their share, since no one wants to miss out on their meager allotment of the new, more appetizing Soylent Green, a derivative of seaweed.

This is a snapshot of the hopeless dystopia depicted in the 1973 American film classic *Soylent Green*. As bleak as such a portrayal may seem, the plot continues to forecast an even darker future for the world. What the audience discovers is that Soylent Green is not a byproduct of the sea at all. In truth, the government is conspiring to conceal that Soylent Green is processed from the dead bodies of human beings!

The primary source for this flesh: euthanasia centers. Viewed as a further strain on an already overburdened society, the elderly are encouraged to admit themselves to the euthanasia centers for a quick (just 20 minutes) and pain free death. Once death is achieved, the bodies are unceremoniously packaged in white bags, and loaded on trucks headed for the Soylent plant. At the plant the bodies are unloaded and placed on a conveyor belt that ultimately plunges them into a murky "broth" that is the stock from which Soylent Green is prepared. After this climatic revelation, the movie dramatically closes with the now well-known line, "Soylent Green is people!" Such a story seems quite fantastic, and perhaps to most, completely unrealistic: a future in which humanity cannibalizes itself? However, from another perspective, *Soylent Green* is much more modern reality than fiction.

Prostitution and Sexual Trafficking: Cannibalism on a Global Scale

"Cannibalism," used in the context of the sex industry is a shock word. People tend not to mind the word cannibalism so much if they happen to be having an anthropological discussion regarding remote tribal peoples who a century or two ago made dinner from leg of man. And although occasional incidents of cannibalism still occur, generally speaking, the practice of humans eating the flesh of other humans is considered a thing of the past. This being the case, cannibalism is something we rarely have the occasion to think or talk about. As a result, startled reactions and quizzical expressions are among the typical reactions from people whenever I have equated the everyday occurrences of prostitution and sexual trafficking with the practice of eating human flesh.

Can these things really be similar? Are the buyers of sex killing and devouring women and children (girls and boys) in prostitution?

Yes, quite.

While, they—Sexploitators as I will call them—may not roast their victims over an open fire and eat them for supper, those they partake of when they make sex a commercial exchange, are destroyed in spirit and quite literally used as items for consumption. These Sexploitators, when they are hungry for food, buy a meal.

They eat it. The food disappears. They are energized by it, until once again the urge for food returns. In the same way, when Sexploitators are hungry for sex, they buy it. They devour it. The thing devoured disappears. They are energized by it, until once again the urge for sex returns. Thus other human beings are just morsels they consume to satiate one of their physical urges. How is this any less barbarous than the flesh eating of former times? Are people really "things" to be consumed? If it is morally reprehensible to offer human flesh as an entree in a restaurant why should human flesh be fare in the sex industry? Isn't it uncivilized that women and children are reduced to produce in the world's brothels, massage parlors, and on street corners? It is as if they were not human beings at all, but merely things: things without being, dignity, identity, or any intrinsic value that would place them somewhere higher in the social order than a plate of meat and potatoes.

The sex industry most definitely looks like a manifestation of cannibalism to me, but this is evidently not a view shared by many others. Perhaps this explains why the world cares little, if any, for the woman or girl in prostitution, and why hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of women and children, are trafficked into prostitution each year (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2003; United Nations Information Service, 2003).

Figures of the estimated number of people trafficked annually vary widely. Additionally, the author cannot locate any disaggregated estimates of people trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation versus labor

Sexual Trafficking: Serving Up the World's Women and Children

Supplying the great demand for fresh human flesh in the world's sex markets is more of a challenge in some parts of the world than others. But sex-restauranteurs need not worry; sex traffickers are their able agents, on hand to provide global importexport solutions.

For sex traffickers, serving up the world's women and children begins with knowing where to get them, and this is really no challenge if one just knows where to look. The easiest to harvest are the most vulnerable. If you are a woman or child, lacking education, desperately poor, a victim of sexual violence, a widow, an abandoned wife, a runaway, an orphan, or perhaps a refugee, there is a trafficker just ready and waiting to whisk you away. (Community Customwire, 2004; Leighton & DePasquale, 1999; Raymond & Hughes, 2001; Sorajjakool, 2003; United Nations Information Service, 2003).

Like any skilled hunter, the trafficker knows how to set the trap—use plenty of bait. Play on the quarry's hopes for a better life: offer them their dream job or any job; lure them with tantalizing tales of the life they will lead in a foreign country; promise them love; promise them money; promise them anything (Hotaling & Levitas-Martin, 2002; Hughes, 2000). Occasionally, though, the standard traps do not work. Nevertheless, the resourceful trafficker will not be thwarted. In certain countries there is no difficulty in finding a lost child with whom to abscond. Drugging and kidnapping are also effective means of procuring a victim. There are still further options, such as negotiating with impoverished parents to indenture their children to "work" in another city (Trujillo, 2004; Hotaling & Levitas-Martin, 2002; Freed 1997).

The produce secured, there is the matter of getting it to the sex market. Here the sex trafficker performs a function similar to the trucks and conveyor belts used to move human bodies to the Soylent Green plant—moving humans from their original location to either domestic or international sex markets. (Gunnell, 2004; Raymond & Hughes, 2001).

The deft trafficker will employ any number of methods to get the goods to their final destination. In instances of domestic trafficking (trafficking of the victim within their country of origin), this can be a simple as luring a girl away from her family for a day, sending her by courier to a city only a few miles away, and selling her off at the local brothel. In many cultures, once she's been violated there is no going back to family and friends, no matter how close her relatives may be geographically. The sex trafficker turns cultural stigma to personal advantage, for once the girl has been "spoiled," in many societies' view she is unredeemable (Freed, 1997).

With international sex trafficking (trafficking of the victim across international borders), often it is necessary for the trafficker to obtain false travel documents for the victim. This is done with surprising ease, as there usually is a corrupt immigration or border official ready and willing to help the trafficker in exchange for cash. Sometimes though, the victim is able to obtain authentic documents (based on their false belief that a new job and better life is waiting for them in another country) and thus forgeries are not necessary (Hughes, forthcoming 2004). In the end, it matters little whether the documents are fake or genuine, since the trafficker confiscates them from the victim upon arrival in the country of final destination (Hughes, 2000).

The trafficker will leverage this to maximum effect by threatening to expose the victim to police or immigration officials, and further asserting that the victim will be arrested and/or deported for being in a foreign country without authorization (The Protection Project, 2001). To some people this may not seem like much of a threat (often because we have a better perception

of police and justifiably so). But when one is from a country where police are little more than criminals themselves, the perspective and fear level changes dramatically. Add in the complicating factor of significant language barriers between the victim and the surrounding population and this gives the sex trafficker even greater leverage (The Protection Project, 2001).

Having the produce procured and safely transported, there remains only to "package" and sell the goods. The packaging process often begins when victims are presented with certain clothes they are commanded to wear: clothes that recede, plunge, and squeeze—the general principle being to reveal and tantalize (The Protection Project, 2001). A bit of seasoning might also be required, since some future clients will expect expert sexual performance. Given that the victims have likely had little, if any, sexual experience some traffickers show the girls pornography as a form of preparatory instruction for their future premier on the sexmarket.

Other traffickers will take it upon themselves to personally "initiate" them. However, those traffickers looking for the highest profits will restrain themselves, since virgin flesh fetches the highest sale price (Tyler, 2003).

By this point the victims have realized that instead of getting a decent job as a waitress, au pair, housekeeper, nurse, model, or even factory worker, that the true fate awaiting them is a slot on a brothel menu. Vigorous protests ensue, but to plead and beg is useless. Their entreaties are only met with intimidation, threats of violence (including the threat of death to themselves or their family members), horrible brute force, confinement, and starvation (Long, 2004; Farley, 2003; Raymond & Hughes, 2001). Their destiny is to be just one more course on the bill of fare: an appetizer, entrée, or dessert for a ravenous Sexploitator.

The Sex Market: Human Flesh for the World

Procuring, transporting, and packaging complete, the sex trafficker must now sell his goods. Like any farmer who to sell his crops takes them to market, so too, the sex trafficker must take his crop to market—the sex market. Fortunately for the sex trafficker, sex markets exist with great ubiquity in nearly every part of the world (Economist, 2002, Zouev, 1999).

Here are a just few sex market highlights: There is the famed red-light district of Amsterdam where women are on display in windows for passersby on the street. That women are on exhibit in much the same way as zoo animals, and that they can be bought and sold for sex, seems to have little impact on the tourists that stream through the area for their personal viewing, and perhaps, sampling pleasure (Bindel, 2004). There is Tijuana's notorious "Zona Norte" where on any given evening, scores of young women and girls are sexual fare for sale on the city street corners (Larson, 2003). In India, more than 2.3 million girls and women are believed to be commodities in the country's sex markets (U.S. Department of State, 2004). The International Organization for Migration (2003) reports that South Africa may be Africa's sex capital, since it is the main destination for victims of sexual trafficking in southern Africa. In Australia, prostitution is such a booming business that shares of brothel stock are publicly traded on the country's stock exchange. Business has been good, and accordingly The Daily Planet Ltd., the first such traded stock, has plans to launch a "sex Disneyland" in Sydney, and intends expansion to the U.S. In fact, they hope to build a little city called Metropolis in Las Vegas, Nevada, which would feature a 50-room brothel, hotel, nightclub, strip club, pool, and airstrip. The Metropolis would be an addition to Nevada's 28 existing licensed brothels, at which the state health division estimates 365,000 sex acts are performed each year (Canadian Press, 2003). If this does not seem like enterprise enough, consider all the other "businesses" that can serve as fronts for prostitution: massage parlors, strip clubs, escort services, health clinics, chiropractic and

aromatherapy clinics, even auto repair shops (Associated Press, 2002; Oliver, 2003; Ugarte, Zarate, & Farley, 2003; Wahid, 2003). In other words, even the most unskilled sex traffickers will have little difficulty in selling their produce in light of such overwhelming global demand for human flesh and so many venues for its sale.

All that is left to the sex trafficking process is for the produce to be inspected and payment made. Inspection can consist of a general assessment, or a fully unclothed viewing (Ahmetasevic, 2003; Ahmetasevic & Harbin, 2002). Purchase prices for human flesh vary widely. Women and children can be bought and sold for prices ranging from about $50 U.S., the equivalent price of a Smoothie Maker from the average retail chain, to prices as high as $15,000, more than enough to buy a new car (Associated Press, 2000; UNICEF UK, 2003). The value depends on factors like freshness (i.e. age) and physical beauty. Country of origin can also be an element for costing, as some sex markets pay more for what is considered exotic cuisine in their part of the world. It all depends on what the Sexploitators at the local sex market are demanding.

The final sale price also depends on what the local sex market is able to pay per sex act. In countries with higher currency values, the Sexploitator's payment for sex has more value than that of the Sexploitator buying sex in a country with a weak currency. Thus a brothel owner's rate of profit per sex act will vary according to currency values in their country of operation. But in the final analysis, the brothel owner's pay out for human flesh is not a cost to the owner at all. The brothel owner simply confers responsibility for paying the purchase price to the victim (Freed, 1997). In addition, the debt is further inflated with the victim's cost of living expenses such as housing (such as it may be), food (which may or may not be provided), and clothing. The total debt that some victims are expected to pay off through prostitution can be as high as

$40,000. (International Organization for Migration, 2003). For many victims paying off "their debt" is impossible, because brothel owners continue adding to their balance with daily cost of living expenses. (Raymond & Hughes, 2001; Freed, 1997). And in cases where with time the debt is significantly reduced, the brothel keeper can simply sell the victim to another sexrestuaranteur and the debt-payment process begins anew. When ultimately, a victim's shelf-life expires, it is little bother to the brothel owner. The victim has yielded high profits, and after all, there is a world of fresh, ripe victims and a sex trafficker ready to reap the harvest (Pearson, 2001; Mcalllister, 2000). For Sexploitators around the world, it all adds up to a meat eaters delight—a veritable cornucopia of choices. It is a global banquet on human flesh, and human misery.

The Salvation Army Bangladesh: Storing Up "Treasure" in Heaven

The Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers and their tributaries criss-cross the flat, wet land of Bangladesh, where 90 percent of the land is less than 15 feet above sea level. Rice is the major food grain crop. Other crops include jute, wheat, tea, and vegetables. The capital city is Dhaka (E. Flintoff, personal communication, February 8, 2004). With about 140 million people, Bangladesh has the seventh largest population of any country in the world. The congested old city of Dhaka, with 80,000 people per sq. km. is said to have the highest population density in the world. More than 80 percent of its people are Muslim, with a sizeable Hindu minority, as well as small groups of Buddhists, Tribals, and Christians. The major ethnic group is Bengali, and Bangla (Bengali) is also the dominant language, though English is widely used in government, commerce, and education (E. Flintoff, personal communication, February 8, 2004).

In some respects the country's condition, in particular that of Dhaka, is similar to the state of affairs in the fictional movie *Soylent Green* described earlier. The pollution is especially

bad, a perpetual fog seeming to hang over Dhaka. And as just mentioned, the population is staggering. Poverty, too, like a plague, is ravaging millions. The poor are everywhere, living on the streets or in meager shacks loosely and haphazardly assembled from boards, poles, twine, and bits of corrugated metal. How they survive off the proceeds of their begging and scavenging is a mystery. For those blessed with work, a fair daily wage is about 120 Taka— roughly two U.S. dollars. Many earn less.

There is one "economic sector," however, that does not appear to be lagging—the flesh trade. Bangladesh is a source country for women and children trafficked for international sex markets (as well as forms of labor exploitation), and additionally supports a substantial domestic sex trafficking industry (Hughes, Sporcic, Mendelsohn, & Chirgwin, 1999). It is in addressing Bangladesh's domestic sex market that The Salvation Army Command has dedicated substantial time, energy and resources. In Old Dhaka, women meet in a Salvation Army center. Some are old, some middle-aged, others quite young, but all are facing the same challenge: how to escape from the sex market. The stories of how they each came to be in prostitution are all unique, yet share many commonalities. Some were orphaned and subsequently sold to a brothel by a family "friend" or relative; others were lost at train stations as children where a "kind" stranger sold them to the "care and shelter" of a brothel; others were victims of rape afraid to return to, or rejected by their families; and still more were lured with promises of work, but were instead taken to a sex market. For all, their suffering is greatly compounded by the contempt of society, their concern for the welfare of children they have borne, and the daily onslaught of sexual abuse that their bodies have endured in the brothel.

For a year they are able to meet in the respite of the Salvation Army center. During this time they are given counseling and encouragement, receive skills training in handicraft making,

form friendships among themselves, and are refreshed by the love and caring of the program staff. Here they will hear that not only does God know of their suffering, but that He has suffered with them through his Son. The love and compassion offered in that room – only a few floors above the dusty and hectic street, and just a short distance from the red-light district – goes an incredible distance in transforming their lives. Most who have gone through the program have been able to find jobs and to leave prostitution behind for good.

The handicrafts they make are sold at The Salvation Army's "Sally Ann" shop in Dhaka, as well as its sister shop in Norway. Decorative ornaments, napkin rings, and hand-made cards are among the goods for sale in the Dhaka store, which is frequented principally by expatriates living in Bangladesh. (The Westerner hungry for a taste of home can also enjoy a treat of waffles and coffee in the Sally Ann Coffee Shop.) Other Salvation Army programs also manufacture goods that are sold in the two shops, and thus provide desperately needed jobs for poor women at risk for sex trafficking and prostitution, as well as for women, who tragically, have already experienced commercial sexual exploitation. For example, The Salvation Army Savar Compound in Bangladesh is host to a knitting factory. In addition to producing blankets, sweaters, and scarves for export to the Norway Sally Ann Shop, the factory functions as a training center where women are taught the skills necessary to work industrial knitting machinery. A Salvation Army sewing center in Jessore provides training and work to rural women. Their handembroidered table linens are among the items sold by Sally Ann. Development of the Sally Ann shop and its product line has been a long process and a learning experience. Interestingly, what today exists as a high-end retail shop had its beginning in potato chip manufacturing! While the chips were tasty and popular, in the end the enterprise was too labor intensive. Another abandoned venture was cookie production. Eight years later though,

with constant care and attention, Sally Ann is blossoming. The Dhaka store is beautifully laid-out and stocked, and exports to Norway continue. Even so, running a business enterprise this complex is no simple undertaking, and "profit" remains elusive.

How does one measure profit in a project like this? Is it by financial statements and bottom lines or by the number of lives restored to their original dignity and grace? If we measure by the latter, today we can already see the glowing hope in the faces of women once ravaged by commercial sexual exploitation. But ultimately only when we stand on the other side of Jordan will we really be able to count all the treasure that has been stored up in heaven – the precious souls of these women and girls redeemed.

Closing the Sexual Steakhouse

Much like the steak dinners served in restaurants around the world, women and children are the main courses in the global sex market. In the selling of their bodies for sex there is a manifestation of cannibalism—humans consuming other humans. If the problem is daunting because the scale of the global appetite, it is even more overwhelming in light of the blindness and callousness of society-at-large, as well as much of the church, to the existence of this fiendish feast.

The Salvation Army, in times past, responded passionately to this same crisis. In a letter published on July 11, 1885, in *The War* on the very topic of sexual trafficking, William Booth himself wrote: "Now something must be done, and somebody must do it. Thank God, The Salvation Army never sees an evil without asking the question, 'Can anything be done to remove it?'" (Booth, 1885).

More than a century later, once again The Salvation Army has begun to ask itself this question, and answers are on the horizon. Specifically, General John Larrson has approved the

formation of an International Anti-Trafficking Task Force within The Salvation Army and already steps have been taken towards it creation. Lt. Colonel Dawn Sewell, a veteran Salvation Army officer who has earned her stripes serving in appointments to some of the world's most difficult and afflicted areas, will facilitate the work of the 15 member group which is to have representation from each Zone. (Colonel Sewell also energetically manages International Headquarters' anti-trafficking desk, a position created only one year ago.) The formation of the task force will facilitate concerted and strategic efforts to combat sexual trafficking. And, too, there are Salvation Army Commands like Bangladesh that are fighting the problem at the grassroots, winning the battle one life at a time. These are important steps toward closing the sexual steakhouse and ending the cannibalization of the world's women and children through sexual trafficking and prostitution. But it absolutely, unequivocally is not enough.

Babes in Brothel-land

In a town in Bangladesh: The entrance to the brothel is a narrow passage way winding its way back from the street. It opens into a courtyard around which are clustered a tattered, dilapidated assortment of shacks. The structures are partitioned to make small rooms each with doors that face the courtyard. Women mill about and carry-out their usual morning routine: washing of clothes and bodies, tidying of rooms, eating of breakfast. And there among them are at least three little girls. They are lovely and to the outward eye appear the same as other children: like ones that go to school or that play childhood games with their friends. But, like the women they live with, their bodies are sold daily in acts of prostitution. We saw them, we spoke with them, we hugged them, and then we left them. Yes, for a variety of reasons, none of which seem good enough, we walked back through the winding alley and left them behind. There is every reason to believe they are still there—in the brothel—still being raped (but when there is

money involved most people just call it prostitution). Unless something miraculous happens they will stay there and grow up in the brothel. Once their breasts begin to develop they will become less sympathetic to the eyes of the world. Christian compassion will wane. As they mature, people will assume they are women who chose this "profession" instead of it choosing them (Leidholdt, 1999). They will be dubbed "commercial sex workers" or more pejoratively as "prostitutes." These labels will be their brand-name. It will advertise to the world that like Jimmy Dean's sausage or Tyson's chicken, that they are human meat for sale.

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