



North American Association of Christians in Social Work

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**EXPLORING THE SPIRITUAL CAPITAL PARADIGM AS A
STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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Exploring the Spiritual Capital Paradigm as a Strategy for Social and Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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Presentation Outline

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Opening Reflections

- “The most important development for the church has not been in the west at all, but in the astonishing shift of Christianity's center of gravity from the European industrialized nations to Asia, Africa and Latin America” (Andrew Wall, Retired Professor and Missionary, Christianity Today, 2007)
- “African Christianity was not just an exotic, curious phenomenon in an obscure part of the world, but that African Christianity might be the shape of things to come”
(Lamin Sanneh, Yale University historian, Christianity Today Magazine, 2007).

Inspiration for this Study

- U.S. remains a reference point and role model of in Faith-based initiatives, social policies, church management in the global south e.t.c
- Mischaracterization and underestimation of the influence of the U.S. in global development after 9/11 (Fear, Media's representation of Africa e.t.c)
- Inadequacy of other Models to address challenges in Africa (Economics, socio-cultural, political e.t.c)
- Potentials connected to mentoring the mass of Pentecostal /charismatic/evangelical movements.
- Strategic role NASW can play in Africa.

Study Abstract

- This presentation proposes a paradigm shift for social workers in our efforts to address social and economic underdevelopments in sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, the paradigm of ***spiritual capital*** is presented as an emerging mechanism for development. Implications for professional social work practice and social work education are also highlighted.

Learning/Presentation Objectives

- Following this workshop, participants will be able to:
 1. Understand the emerging conceptualizations of spiritual capital (a subset of social capital) in current literature and research.
 2. Recognize the nexus of psycho-social and spiritual factors that motivate people in sub-Saharan Africa to embrace spirituality or other faith-based initiatives and how this can be positively explored.
 3. Identify this new paradigm and its potentials for social, community, and economic developments in sub-Saharan Africa.
 4. Appreciate the evidence of social, economic and community development initiatives and interventions that are framed around spiritual capital and lessons for social workers with a calling to the continent.
 5. Explore academic, field-based practicum, and exchanges with congregations involved in social service provisions and social work programs in Africa using spiritual capital as a bridge to this partnership.
 6. Articulate several roles that the NACSW and its members can play in achieving the mandate of the great commission in communities, congregations and social work programs in Africa.

Overview/Statistics About Spiritual Capital in Africa

- The African Continent is the second largest and second most populous continent (an 967 Million people. It has **54 countries** (Population Reference Bureau 2008)
- An estimated 234 million Muslims and 470 million Christians (from little over 9 million in 1900) living in sub-Saharan Africa (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2010)
- SSA accounts for 21% and 15% of the world's Christians and Muslims respectively (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2010)
- 95 percent of Africans affiliate themselves with religion (The Association of Religion Data Archives [ARDA], 2006).
- 75 percent of Africans identify religious leaders as the group they trust most (BBC/Gallup Poll, 2005)
- Pentecostal movements in the African continent is second to no other continents (Maxwell, 2000; Kalu, 2007). Africa is one of the choice destinations for missionaries.

Theoretical/Conceptual Construct of the Paradigm

- Spiritual Capital as an out-growth of the theories of Human Capital (Theodore Schultz -1979 Nobel Prize Economist) and Social Capital (Gary Becker -1992 Nobel Laureate and economist)
- Term spiritual capital traced to the works of 1993 Nobel Laureate economist Robert Fogel and Univ. of Penn. Pol. Scientist John Dilulio.
- Studies show that spiritual capital is a major generator of social capital in the U.S. (Putnam, 1995;2000).
- 1998 Nobel Prize Economist Amartya Sen's "Capability" concept considers spirituality as measure of capability, functioning, social justice (Sen, 1981,1999), analogous to wellbeing (Syed, 2007) and human agency for self-determination (Alkire, 2005).
- Conceptualized broadly as the spiritual and /or religiosity dimensions of social capital (Iannaccone, 1991; Metanexus Institute, n.d., Religion and Development Research Program (RaD) n.d., Templeton Foundation, n.d)
- The Metanexus Institute (2003) working definition of spiritual capital is:
The effects of spiritual and religious practices, beliefs, networks and institutions that have a measurable impact on individuals, communities and societies.

Emerging role of Spiritual Capital in Development

- The World Bank long ago acknowledged spiritual capital as a mechanism for development (World Development Report, 1985; Ryan 1995; Clarke, 2007; Noy, 2009).
- The founding of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) in 1998 by the former World Bank Director, James Wolfensohn and former Arch. Bishop of Canterbury, U.K., Lord Carey of Clifton.
- The policy influence, consultation and lobbying of the UN MDGs by religious and inter-religious organizations like United Methodist Church, the World Conference of Religions for Peace, and Islamic Relief with offices in the UN (Boehle, 2010; RaD, 2009).
- At least 263 accredited RINGOs with the UN (Berger, 2003).
- The establishment of the Global Interfaith Network on Development and Population by UNFPA (UNFPA, 2008).
- Partnerships and Development Cooperation with religious and inter-religious organizations as significant constituencies and development actors (Clarke, 2006; Goldewijk, 2007; Boehle, 2010)
- Supplier of professional or material infrastructure and resource base (Boehle, 2010).

Evidences of Spiritual Capital in Socio-Economic Development of Africa

- **Education and gender equality** (Adamu, Para-Mallam, Ajala, & Lanre-Abass, 2010)
- **Poverty Reduction** (RaD,2009,2010; Christian Aid,2010)
- **Health** (Malaria, HIV/AIDS,TB Maternal-Child, Reproductive health)(Wolfensohn, 2004; Bohett & Zambra ,2010 Berkeley Center for Religion & World Affairs, George Washington University) (CHAN's TB and Leprosy project)
- **Peace-Building and Post-conflict resolution** (Tearfund Project in Burundi and Rwanda, Berkeley Center for Religion & World Affairs ,2010;
- **Refugee and Internally displaced people (IDP) e.g. Islamic Relief Work** (Kirmani &Khan,2008); **Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Vision** (Bendetti, 2006)
- **Spiritual organizations/Institutions central to USAID programs in Africa** (Hearn,2002)
- **Social Action, Governance and Democracy** (RaD Policy Brief, 2010; Stambach, 2010)

Implications for Christians in Social Work

Social Capital offers the following opportunities/potentials :

1. Research and SW Interventions
2. Funding (USAID, UN Agencies, RaD, Templeton Foundation, Metanexus e.t.c)
3. Collaboration and work with UN accredited RNGOs
4. Mentoring (Social Work schools in Africa)
5. Integration of spirituality or faith in the bio-psycho-social assessment, intervention and treatment milieu.
6. Acceptance and role model of “Made in the U.S.A”
7. Exchanges/Field Placements/International Practice
8. Shaping social and public policy in the African continent
9. Reverse missions and indigenous knowledge (IK) learning
10. CSWE/EPAS Competency-based education (Section 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice) i.e. Recognize global interconnections....p.5
11. NACSW expansionary influence and capacity building

Q & A

- Thanks for your time and attention.

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