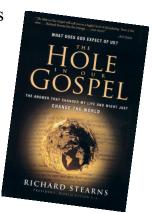


As Christian citizens
we call our democratic republic to
promote the general welfare of all people
because we all bear God's image.

Richard Stearns

President
World Vision U.S.

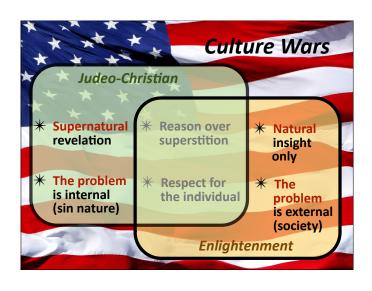


Promoting the "general welfare" with respect to poverty is not easy.

- 1. The nature of poverty is usually misunderstood.
- 2. The culture of poverty is very complex.
- 3. Our response to poverty is often conflicted.

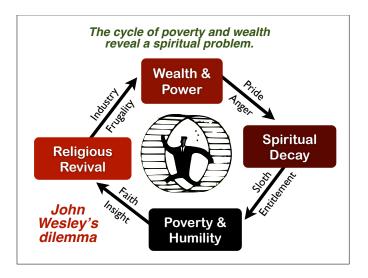
Common misplaced hopes in popular culture.

- ✓ Our basic problems are external - economic, educational, and political.
- √ Christianity is respected to the extent that it reforms our external environment.





√ Honor killing in some Muslim communities.



1 Corinthians 15:50

"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

Our physical body is not the object of salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

It is sown It is raised

a perishable body
in dishonor
in glory
in weakness
in power
a natural body
an imperishable body
an imperishable body

1 Corinthians 6

"18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

Our physical body in this life belongs to God as a holy temple of His Spirit.

Romans 12:1

"I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

Our physical body is to be sacrificed in service of worship.

Is there more to the feeding of the 5000 than the alleviation of material needs?



"45 And immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the multitude away. 46 And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray. 47 And when it was evening, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and He was alone on the land. 48 And seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. 49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were frightened. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.""

"51 And He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were greatly astonished,

52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened."

What insight were they to get?

- ? Jesus will supply all our material needs. But is this the disciples' experience after the light of Pentecost?
- √ We are to be fearless in following Christ by faith. Jesus calls us to tasks that require a walk of faith and resources beyond the natural.
- √ Jesus is the bread of life. We are to find our life (security, significance, serenity) in Jesus, not in this world.

Matthew 16:9-11

"Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many large baskets you took up? Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?"

Example of Jesus being IN but not OF the world.

God calls us to tasks that demand a walk of faith not sight and courage not fear.

"37 But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat!" "

"45 And immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida."



When we feel that God calls us to do something without providing support to do it, we must ask if we are:

- 1) understanding our calling or
- 2) in touch with our resources.

Examples

- ✓ Don't seek fame, fortune, and fulfillment in this world's stuff.
- ✓ Love your enemies, those who have hurt you, or hate you.
- ✓ John the Baptist, Paul, Jesus as models of "abundant life."

Ephesians 1

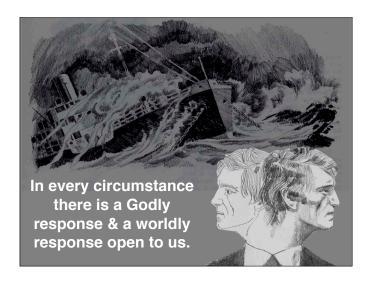
"18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is **the hope of His calling**, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**, 19 and what is **the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.** These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead,"

2 Peter 1

"2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

"4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, 7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love."

"8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble:"



Example of Jesus being IN but not OF the world.

Like Jesus and unlike the world, we see man's basic problem as spiritual not material.

Matthew 4:4

"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

John 6:35

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

John 6:51

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."

John 6:27-29

"'Do not work for the food which perishes, but for **the food which endures to eternal life**, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.' They said therefore to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

✓ When we find our life in Christ we are free to sacrificially address the felt needs of others with spiritual insight.

Lessons for us today

- 1. We must find our energy to love and serve in our relationship with Christ and take our baptism seriously.
- 2. We are to view the suffering and blessings of this life in the context of eternity.
- 3. We must be reminded that there is more to life than this world offers or takes away.

The kind of attention we give to this material world will reveal the true object of our faith, hope, & love.