

WHEN HELPING HURTS DISCUSSION GUIDE

“Poverty is the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meaning (62). Poverty exists where one of more of the four foundational relationships for each person are broken: a relationship with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation” (57).

Most Americans define poverty in _____ terms.

However, poor people define it as a lack of _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Therefore our _____ tend to be toward providing those material things.

Poor people define poverty in more _____ and _____ terms.

Therefore, “[O]ne of the biggest problems in many poverty-alleviation efforts is that their design and implementation exacerbates the poverty of being of the economically rich—their god-complexes—and the poverty of being of the economically poor—their feelings of inferiority and shame”

Poverty alleviation, does not mean making the poor all over the world into _____ (a group, Fikkert notes, characterized by high rates of divorce, sexual addiction, substance abuse, and mental illness).

Three different approaches to poverty alleviation:

The first is _____. It is the urgent, temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering.

The second is _____. It begins once “the bleeding stops.” It seeks to restore people and communities to the positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions.

The third approach is _____. It is the process of ongoing change that moves all people involved (“helpers” and “helped”) closer to being in a right relationship with God, self, others, and creation.

Avoid _____. Do not do things for people that they can do for themselves (115). Avoid resource paternalism which can undermine local businesses and undercut prices. Avoid knowledge paternalism, thinking we have all the answers, if only the needy would listen to us. Avoid labor paternalism. Avoid spiritual paternalism.

Don’t start by asking people what their problems are. Ask people _____. Let the poor share their hopes and dreams. Give them opportunity to see and use their gifts. Don’t view the “helped” as clients of beneficiaries. Look at them as they are: people made in the image of God who have their own resources and abilities.