Engaging the Poor: Leveraging Local Poverty Assistance Programs to Prepare for Global Engagement

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by

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With globalization, there has been an explosion in travel by academic institutions and the church. For the church, this growth has been in short-term mission trips. Unlike traditional missionaries, most short-term travelers are untrained or lightly trained laypersons. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to understand how local poverty assistance programs could be leveraged to prepare the church today for global engagement. This study provided ten church volunteers with training that included a Scripture overview of the poor, the multidimensional factors of poverty, reducing harm in poverty programs, and the skills for affirming dignity during an interview. Following the training, each church volunteer participated in two interviews with individuals receiving assistance at a local food program. The open-ended interview questions were designed to understand the food program recipient’s personal story, physical and social needs, and faith background. Data collection from the interviews and subsequent analysis through coding resulted in multiple themes, including the willingness of individuals to share their stories, the humanization of the poor, changed stereotypes, and the value of working with the local poor. The transferability of local experiences on global engagement and topics that deserve more in-depth study are discussed.
DEDICATION

I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His blessings which are too numerous to count, including the opportunity to see the *Imago Dai* in uncommon places. I thank my parents for their unwavering love and encouragement throughout my life. I thank my wife, Lori, and our children for their love, support, sense of adventure, and willingness to make sacrifices. I pray my family will find joy in reading this Thesis Project and see the contributions they made in service to *the least of these*. To God be the Glory.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Great Commission has been the church’s mission since the first century. Since the time of the apostles, the mission of the church has been to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and to bring these new disciples into churches so they can worship and obey Jesus Christ.\(^1\) The Great Commission is our mission until Jesus returns.

“Missionaries” is a broad term used to describe short and long-term activities on foreign soil for the express purpose of ministering to people in the name of Jesus and seeing them come to know him or grow in him. A more expanded definition of missions will be provided below in the definitions section of this chapter. Even as the Great Commission remains the goal, overseas missions continue to evolve as the global context changes. In the past two centuries, funding long-term missionaries was the common vehicle for supporting global missions. Today, Christians have more choices than ever on where to spend their mission dollars.\(^2\) With these choices, Christians are giving more money to relief and development activities than traditional evangelism and discipleship.\(^3\) In addition, there has been an explosion of churches sending members on short-term mission trips. For every long-term missionary serving overseas, there are more than sixty short-term mission trip participants.\(^4\) Unlike traditional missionaries, most of the short-term missionaries are untrained or lightly trained laypersons.\(^5\)

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5. Ibid.
spend engaging overseas communities has also changed. In the past, most North American Protestant missionaries went overseas for a career. Over time, this overseas commitment lessened to a few years, and then a few months. Today, the duration can be measured in days.\(^6\) Interest by American academic institutions to send students abroad has also exploded.\(^7\) Although motivations and interests may vary from student to student and university to university, there is a growing interest in traveling abroad.

As a student, with the purpose of long-term or short-term missions, business-as-missions, or in the humanitarian field, it will be difficult not to engage the materially poor when traveling to the Global South. As shared in the World Bank report titled *Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches in Africa,* "Not only are faith communities among the poor, in many cases, *they are the poor.*”\(^8\) When serving overseas, North American travelers will likely experience poverty at levels they have not seen before. According to the World Bank, 736 million live on less than $1.90 per day, and nearly half of the world’s population still lives on less than $5.50 per day.\(^9\) In comparison to the world averages, the United States sets its poverty line at $25,100 set for a household of four.\(^10\) Very few people living in rich countries are impoverished by the standards of the world’s poorest countries.\(^11\) With

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these global numbers living in poverty, travelers must be knowledgeable in working with the materially poor.

Poverty is complex and multidimensional in all settings, both locally and overseas. The poor long for a dependable livelihood, security, and peace of mind, access to healthcare, health, belonging to a community, and the ability to care for their children. The poor are often powerless, voiceless, and lack the freedom of choices that the rest of the community enjoy. The poor are also dependent on those better off for their survival.  

12 These are the same poor that the church is trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This research project refers to the capacity to relate and work effectively with the poor as Poverty Intelligence (PQ). PQ differs from Cultural Intelligence (CQ), which is the capability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations.  

13 CQ is an essential skill for serving in cross-cultural settings but will not provide an understanding of the unique issues of poverty. By treating the symptoms of poverty or misdiagnosing the underlying problem of poverty, people of goodwill may not improve the lives of the poor or may make their lives worse.  

14 Without engaging the poor and understanding the complexities of the poor locally, there is a risk of doing harm globally.

Scripture is clear that Spirit-filled Christians need to “go” into the world and share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Included in God’s plan is that believers “make disciples” by bringing the lost into the fellowship of the church body. The Great Commission is both evangelism and

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14 Steve Corbett, Brian Fikkert, and John Perkins, When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... And Yourself (Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2009), 16.
discipleship (Matt 28:16-20) and creates an imperative for understanding how to engage and work with the poor.

**Ministry Context**

Lynchburg, Virginia, was named for its founder, John Lynch, who, in 1757, at the age of 17, started a ferry service across the James River. In 1786, the Virginia General Assembly granted Lynch a charter for a town, which took in the 45 acres of land that Lynch owned. Lynchburg was incorporated as a town in 1805, and as a city in 1852. Tobacco and iron were important products of early Lynchburg and the ferry system on the James River resulted in Lynchburg becoming one of the largest tobacco markets in the U.S. Lynchburg served as an important storage depot during the Civil War and is known for its proximity to Appomattox where the Civil War ended on April 9, 1865. At the outbreak of the Civil War, 42 percent of the Lynchburg population consisted of slaves and almost 40 percent of the white population in Lynchburg owned or hired at least one slave.

Post-Civil War, blacks in Lynchburg encountered the indignities and injustices of the Jim Crow era. During the 1930’s, blacks were supposed to sit on the back of the streetcar, drink from colored-only water fountains, and attend segregated schools. Blacks were also prohibited from the lunch counter at Patterson’s Drug Store, the privately-funded Jones Library, or from accessing public infrastructure like the Riverside Park pool.

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16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.
The New Deal birthed the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) that was intended to avert the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression through funding for mortgages. These federal policies shored-up the housing market and set in motion one of the largest wealth building opportunities in human history. On the equity of HOLC, John Abell shares, “Unfortunately, those policies were openly racist in their intent and implemented in ways that specifically precluded blacks from being able to benefit from them in any significant way.”\textsuperscript{19} The effects of these polices can be seen today. The “redlined” neighborhoods, areas with limited or no access to HOLC funding in 1937, correlate to city’s urban core today with a black poverty rate over 37 percent.\textsuperscript{20}

In order to understand the economic, political, and cultural South today, it is essential to understand the role of religion. Religion is a crucial influencer of southern culture and is a feature that remains important whether one resides in the urban or rural areas.\textsuperscript{21} The term “Bible Belt,” a familiar label associated with religion in the South, was coined by journalist H.L. Mencken in 1925 following his coverage of the Scopes “monkey” trial in Dayton, Tennessee. The term Bible Belt has been used regularly since that time to refer to a religiously conservative or fundamentalist Christian region in the American South and sometimes the Midwest, though its exact geographic extent remains fluid and debatable.\textsuperscript{22} There is also debate where the geographic center of the Bible Belt, referred to as the “Belt Buckle”, is located. With

\textsuperscript{19} Abell, “Redlining in Lynchburg,” 5.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 12-14.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 513.
its many churches and the presence of Liberty University, Lynchburg has been on the list of possible candidates.\textsuperscript{23} Liberty University was founded in 1971 by Dr. Jerry Falwell Sr.

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, were the first religious group to settle in Lynchburg. Lynchburg is often called the “City of Churches” for the large number and variety of religious buildings found in the city today.\textsuperscript{24} According to the 2010 census data, of the 232,634 inhabitants in the Lynchburg metropolitan area, 146,901 belonged to one of the 455 congregations.\textsuperscript{25}

Heritage Baptist Church (HBC), located in Lynchburg, was founded in 1989. Heritage is a mission-minded church that, as of 2019, supports over 31 missionaries and their families overseas and believes that the biblical mandate given to the Church by Christ is to evangelize the world. Heritage’s role in the Great Commission is to equip missionaries for life and ministry and to send them out with sufficient resources and encouragement to fulfill the mission. Heritage is committed to developing loving and accountable relationships with their missionaries, both personally and for their ministry.\textsuperscript{26} Heritage’s commitment to missions includes 16 missionary families that are members of their congregation who have been sent out by the church. Heritage also supports 15 additional missionary families that are sent by other churches. In 2019, Heritage also sent a total of 91 members on ten different short-term mission trips.

Heritage Baptist Church has created a Mission Strategy that contains six priorities for fulfilling the Great Commission. The first is priority is to reach the most major unreached people groups in the most unreached countries. The second priority is to reach the most unreached

\textsuperscript{23} Brunn et al., “The Bible Belt in a Changing South,” 519.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{26} “Global Ministries,” Heritage Baptist Church, accessed March 22, 2019 \url{https://www.hbclynchburg.com/missions/}. 

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people in reached countries. The third priority is to support missionaries from other countries who can better reach the most unreached countries that have restricted access. The fourth priority are unreached people in countries that currently have Christian churches, but the majority are unevangelized. The fifth priority is to reach other peoples in reached countries where the majority are evangelized. Their lowest priority is humanitarian work as missions.27

For missionaries sent out of the Heritage congregation, the church has developed the Missionary Development Process (MDP). The development process is customized to meet the specific needs, backgrounds, and personalities of candidates. To be considered for the MDP program, candidates must have been a full member for at least four years.28

The MDP has three stages. Stage One is titled Assessments and the Personal Development Plan, Stage Two is Ministry and Field Determination, and Stage Three is for Pre-Field Preparation.29 The three stages contain assessments, required reading, training, practicums, and approval processes. It is anticipated that the completion of the three stages will take three years. In these three years of training there are no topics or activities specifically designed to prepare the missionaries for the multidimensional nature of poverty and working with the poor. At the same time, it will be the poor that the Heritage Mission Strategy will be attempting to reach.

In addition, Heritage Baptist Church also has “Sending Teams” that care for and meet the needs of the missionaries that have been sent out from the congregation. Each Sending Team is comprised of church members who are committed to connect, pray, and minister to HBC missionaries who are serving overseas. The teams meet regularly to pray corporately for their missionary and maintain intentional communication with the missionary so that they never feel that they are “out of sight, out of mind.” Some practical ways this is accomplished is by sending birthday, anniversary, and holiday cards, emails, videos, and care packages. Facilitating prayer and care is essential, especially with the potentially urgent and critical situations of the locations where the Heritage Baptist Church missionaries serve. The Sending Teams are also the first line of hospitality for the missionaries when they are in the area and to make their re-entry as smooth as possible.30 For this study, there were participants from the Heritage Baptist Church Missionary Development Program, from the Sending Teams, and from church members that are not part of either activities.

The city of Lynchburg provides the opportunity for Heritage Baptist Church members to raise their understanding of poverty. With a poverty rate of almost 24 percent, there are ample opportunities to learn.31 Some of the local faith-based ministries engaging the poor include The Salvation Army, The Lighthouse Community Center, and the Park View Community Mission.

The Park View Community Mission is a non-profit organization located in the former Park View United Methodist Church. Park View’s mission is to restore the lives of families and communities by building relationships and providing life-changing resources.

code that the Park View Community Mission serves is one of the most impoverished areas in all of Virginia, with a poverty rate of 41.9 percent.\textsuperscript{32}

The Park View Community Mission receives approximately 80,000 pounds of food each month for distribution through its different programs. Park View's most extensive program is Food for Families, which provides supplemental groceries at no cost to families that are food insecure. Food for Families partners with Feeding America and the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, along with local grocery stores and restaurants such as Walmart, Sam’s Club, Food Lion, and Panera Bread. \textsuperscript{33}

For the Food for Families program, Park View operates a pantry that allows participants to take an active part in shopping for the items that meet their family’s needs. Items available in the pantry include fresh produce, frozen meats, baked goods, dairy products, canned goods, and more. In addition, there are clothing and hygiene items. Participants receive all items free of charge. The Food for Families program pantry is open two days per week, and participants in the programs can shop one time per month. On average, Food for Families serves 750 families per month.\textsuperscript{34}

Park View Community Mission also operates Food for Thought. This program is a Backpack Feeding program that partners with local organizations, churches, and individuals to provide food-insecure Lynchburg City School students with nutritious food to sustain them through the weekend. Food for Thought is currently serving over 750 students each week.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{itemize}
\item[]\textsuperscript{32} “Park View Community Mission,” Park View Community Mission, accessed April 5, 2019, \url{https://www.parkviewcommunitymission.org/mission.org/}
\item[]\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\item[]\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\item[]\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
The Park View Cafe also provides a free hot meal to families and individuals in need every Wednesday night. Various organizations, churches, and groups cook and serve the meal each week and are invited to share in a time of music, a short devotional message, and community interaction. The Park View serves an average of 500 Café meals each month.\textsuperscript{36}

The Community Resource Center provides information on the services available at the Park View Community Mission and other agencies in the area. The areas of resources and assistance include housing, employment, utilities, healthcare, childcare, and more.\textsuperscript{37} Within the same facility, Park View Community Mission partners with several other service providers, including the United Methodist Family Services (UMFS), the Upward Potential Foundation youth mentoring and substance recovery program, Community Access Network health clinic, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension nutrition program. These partnerships within one facility provide an opportunity for a holistic ministry for individuals and families in need. The facility is also the home of Hill City Community Church, a multiethnic, multigenerational, urban church.

The leadership of Park View Community Mission is interested in finding new ways to engage Lynchburg churches in their programs for the poor. This desire to partner with churches, along with their food pantry being open two days per week, and the number of participants in the Food for Families program, positioned the Park View Community Mission as the ideal partner for this research. In addition, the Park View Community Mission is a respected neighbor in the community and provides a safe environment for the Heritage and Parkview participants to meet. The distance between Heritage Baptist Church and the Park View Community Mission is 3.9 miles.


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
Problem Presented

The number of church members that travel abroad to fulfill the Great Commission continues to grow. In post-War North America, short-term missions grew from a relatively small number of participants, barely noticeable to the mission community, to a massive enterprise approaching two million travelers per year.\(^{38}\) During these trips to the Global South, church members may encounter material poverty and underdevelopment outside their experience. If missionaries proceed without understanding, their ability to communicate with the poor may be impeded or diminished, leading to poverty remediation projects that are counterproductive or undignified. As Steve Corbett notes, “If we treat only the symptoms or if we misdiagnose the underlying problem, we will not improve their situation, and we might actually make their lives worse.”\(^{39}\) The problem is that many missionary preparation programs do not prepare travelers for the complexities of poverty and how to engage the poor. For this research, the term “engage” was used to describe when a person intentionally becomes involved with another person. Intentionally engaging the poor provides the opportunity to understand a person’s physical, social, and spiritual needs and to see the *Imago Dei* (the image of God).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN project is to increase the church member’s understanding of the complexities of poverty and how to engage the poor in their local settings before traveling abroad to fulfill the Great Commission. Poverty is highly contextual in different urban, rural,


\(^{39}\) Corbett et al., Fikkert, and Perkins, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... And Yourself*, 61.
local, and global settings. Even with the geographic differences, however, the multidimensional, multifaceted, and multi-sectoral nature of poverty is present in all settings.

**Basic Assumptions**

There was an underlying assumption that Heritage Baptist Church would support the research until completion and that the participants will be engaged in all the activities. This commitment by participants includes classroom training, the research fieldwork, which includes two separate interviews with Park View participants at the Park View Community Mission, and a pre- and post-fieldwork meeting with the researcher.

There was also an assumption that if church members can increase their understanding of poverty and how to engage the poor locally, the knowledge and skills will translate into greater effectiveness in working globally. There have been studies that show student’s perceptions of poverty change after participation in programs directly working with the poor.\(^{40}\) There have been no known studies showing that exposure to poverty locally will have an impact on working with the poor globally.

**Definitions**

*Absolute/Extreme Poverty*: An income level that is not able to meet the minimum physical needs because of the lack of income. The World Bank places this at $1.90/day.\(^ {41}\)


Cultural Intelligence (CQ): The capacity to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures.42

Capacity Building - Defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.43

Civil Society: Civil society can be understood as the "third sector" of society, distinct from government and business, and includes the family and the private sphere.

Community Development: The process where local community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. The process of creating change within the community is also known as grassroots development.

Coping Strategies: The ways one deals with the challenges of daily living. These include the means for resolving conflicts, solving problems, setting priorities, and determining what one can live with and without.44

Development: A process of improving the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. Because of the need to increase household incomes, this is also referred to as economic development. Because of the time required to create lasting change, this is also referred to as long-term development.


Ethnocentrism: The belief that one's culture or ethnic identity is better than other cultures or ethnic identities.\textsuperscript{45}

Generational Poverty: Defined as being in poverty for two generations or longer.\textsuperscript{46}

Global South: A highly favored term used by the development community replacing the terms developing world and third world.\textsuperscript{47}

Missions: Refers to everything involved in carrying out God’s mission on a generational, gender, and global level (Acts 1:8). Missions activities, performed by a host of multi-gifted, spiritually qualified personnel in mono- and cross-cultural context vary widely. Missions addresses the needs of people, following the teaching of Jesus, the Twelve, and the Pauline teams. It neither minimizes people’s spiritual needs, addressed through a broad framework of discipleship, or their physical needs, addressed through the spiritual gifts of help and healing, community development, or other means.\textsuperscript{48}

Moderate Poverty: The income level in which survival is not threatened. The World Bank places this at $3.10/day.\textsuperscript{49}

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO): Any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national, or international level. NGOs are part of civil society.

Paternalism: Action that limits an individual, families, or communities' liberty or autonomy and is intended to promote an external parties’ interests or priorities. A sense of superiority often accompanies paternalism.


\textsuperscript{46} Payne et al., \textit{Bridges Out of Poverty}, 7.

\textsuperscript{47} Haslam and Beaufet, \textit{Introduction to International Development}, 7.

\textsuperscript{48} Steffen and Douglas, \textit{Encountering Missionary Life and Work}, 33.

\textsuperscript{49} Haslam and Beaufet, \textit{Introduction to International Development}, 11.
Rehabilitation: The response period after the life-saving activities are complete to bring people and communities back to their pre-crisis condition.\textsuperscript{50} Also known as early recovery.

Relief: The urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering from both natural and human-made crises.\textsuperscript{51} Also known as emergency response.

Resiliency: The ability to adapt and achieve amid adversity.\textsuperscript{52}

Situational Poverty: Poverty caused by circumstances like death, illness, divorce, that does not necessarily lead to long-time poverty.\textsuperscript{53}

Structural Poverty: The principle that poverty occurs at or near the bottom of the class structure because persons have fewer and less effective choices than those at or near the top and those at or near the bottom are more likely to be effected negatively by changes in macroeconomic policies.\textsuperscript{54}

Subsidiarity: A principle that teaches that authority should reside in the smallest meaningful unit possible. The first authority structure is the human family, as noted in the book of Genesis.

Unconscious Bias: Judgments and behaviors toward others that we are not aware of.\textsuperscript{55} The prejudiced or unsupported judgments could benefit some people while penalizing others.


\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52} Payne et al., \textit{Bridges Out of Poverty}, 128.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 7.


Limitations and Delimitations

As part of this study, the Heritage participants interviewed Park View participants receiving services from the Park View Community Mission in the City of Lynchburg. Research limitations include the Park View participant's willingness to be interviewed and to provide candid responses. The ability of the Heritage participants to absorb the program training material and conduct the Park View interview was also a limitation.

The study also contains several delimitators. These include interviewing poverty program recipients only from Central Virginia and interviewing program recipients that have self-selected themselves as people in need. There was no means to verify the Park View participant's level of poverty. Another delimitation of this study was that it was only conducted through one church. By focusing on Heritage Baptist Church members, the study was limited to individuals with similar education and social-economic backgrounds. The time frame chosen for this study was also a delimiter. The Heritage participant interviews with the Park View participants took place in October and November, and this only provided a snapshot of local poverty. A longitudinal study would be required to fully understand the needs of the poor throughout the year.

Thesis Statement

If church members can understand the complexities of poverty and how to engage the poor locally, they will be better prepared for global engagement while minimizing the risk of doing harm.
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

Poverty is complex and occurs in all races and all countries.\textsuperscript{56} Poverty is also relative. If everyone in a society is in a similar economic situation, the notion of poverty and wealth is vague. Poverty and wealth only exist in relationship to known quantities or expectations within segmented classes of society.\textsuperscript{57} The literature review covers the topic of poverty locally and globally and from Christian and secular perspectives.

Multidimensional Nature of Poverty

One theme that runs through both the North American and global literature is the complexity of poverty. Over the last 15 years, there has been rapid progress in the understanding of poverty. This learning has moved away from the initial view of poverty as a static low-income condition to the recent research that has highlighted seeing poverty as a dynamic, multidimensional phenomenon.\textsuperscript{58} In Deepa Narayan’s 47 country study titled \textit{Voices of the Poor}, the author describes poverty as “the lack of food and assets, the powerlessness that stems from dependency on others, and the helplessness to protect themselves from exploitation and abuse because of their dependence. Lack of food and unemployment are mentioned almost everywhere.”\textsuperscript{59} Other authors add to the multidimensional problem by including the lack of easy access to healthcare and medical centers, addiction among relatives, unemployment of youth, inappropriate rubbish disposal, absence and remoteness of schools for girls, absence or shortage

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{56} Payne et al., \textit{Bridges Out of Poverty}, 6.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
of sport facilities, and lack of parking lots, public transportation, public infrastructure like streets, roads, and pathway lighting.\textsuperscript{60} The complex nature of poverty has been highlighted by authors in both the North American and the global context.

The lack of basic infrastructures like roads, water and sanitation, and public transport are defining characteristics of poverty.\textsuperscript{61} Whereas the rich and many living in the developed world have access to clean drinking water and water for irrigation, the poor often lack these resources. Along with providing opportunities for social connectedness, roads and transportation allow the rural poor to move their agricultural products to markets. On this, Narayan shares, "Where a road passes, development follows right on its heels."\textsuperscript{62} The rural and urban poor are often geographically isolated and lacking affordable transportation. This leads to the poor having their health being further depleted by the long distance they must walk to access work, markets, and services.\textsuperscript{63} In the post-colonial Global South, policies were biased towards projects benefiting the elites. For example, state and private resources were often directed towards specific rural areas for commercial agriculture and specific urban areas for infrastructure and industry. As a result, the development of the most impoverished areas remained relatively neglected.\textsuperscript{64}

Despite advances in health care, disparities in health-related outcomes based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status exist.\textsuperscript{65} For the poor, illness is a


\textsuperscript{61} Narayan, \textit{Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?} 217-8.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.


common dread all over the world. For the poor who are dependent on daily labor, with little cash or other assets, illness can throw a whole family into destitution. Unfortunately, the body is an asset that may be required to monetize for survival. On this Narayan shares, "For poor women, young girls and some boys, the body is the final asset to be sold to earn an income." Adolescents who grow up in poverty are more likely to report being treated unfairly, and this perception of discrimination is related to harmful changes in the physical health of the poor. Studies have suggested that social-class discrimination is one mechanism behind the influence of poverty on physical health.

Employment is a significant obstacle for the poor. The poor survive by patching together a variety of seasonal, low paying, and sometimes dangerous and illegal jobs. Around the world, the poor live and work primarily in the informal economy, not reached by benefits or formal social protection programs. In the U.S., the deindustrialization that began in the 1960s prompted an exodus of manufacturing firms from urban areas shifting more jobs to the informal sector.

Lack of employment effects the poor both economically and in self-estimation of human worth. Programs that do not promote the employment of the poor have the risk of doing harm.

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66 Narayan, *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* 218.
68 Narayan, “Consultations with the Poor,” 17.
70 Ibid., 16.
On this, Robert Lupton shares, “Little affirms human dignity more than honest work. One of the surest ways to destroy self-worth is subsidizing the idleness of able-bodied people. Work is a gift, a calling, a human responsibility.”^73 John Perkins adds to the benefits of creating work opportunities for the poor, “Too much free stuff undermines people’s dignity and feelings of value. The value is more appreciated when it comes out of one’s own effort.”^74

Racial discrimination is not just part of America’s past; it is an ongoing problem. The presence of stereotypes of Black communities and the poor cannot be underestimated in employment. Negative racial stereotypes (e.g., Black people are lazy) are notably merged and co-occur with anti-poor resentments (e.g., not wanting welfare assistance given to ‘‘undeserving’’ minorities). Americans with anti-Black racial animosity often oppose welfare policies because they see Black American males as both ‘‘lazy’’ and ‘‘criminal.’’^76 Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual and gender orientation, and other characteristics continue to distort hiring decisions limiting the employment opportunities for the poor and marginalized. Intentionality and being aware of personal biases is critical in the hiring process. This starts with keeping in mind the subtle bias of favoritism, which often results in the hiring or at least favoring of those who are like the hiring team members.~78

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73 Lupton, Toxic Charity, 152.
74 John M. Perkins, Dream with Me: Race, Love, and the Struggle We Must Win (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 121.
75 Corbett et al., Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence, 47.
Obtaining an education should create opportunities for the poor to move out of their current situation. On this, President Lyndon Johnson said, “Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.”\(^79\) In higher education, this goal has been elusive for the poor. Despite decades of diversity efforts across higher education, many marginalized students still do not feel welcome on campuses or reflected in the curricula or staffing. The challenge for schools is removing poverty-related barriers that hinder students from achieving their educational goals. Some of these barriers include navigating campus and community resources, transportation, childcare, housing, and utility assistance.\(^80\)

Another area highlighted in the literature review was the effects of urbanization on poverty. As of 2008, more than half the world's population had migrated to urban areas. This phenomenon has created several issues, including hunger, where the food-secure poor live alongside the food-insecure.\(^81\) The USDA reports that about 13 percent of low-income census tracts are "food deserts," which are areas with the absence of fresh foods.\(^82\) According to the US National Academy of Sciences, living in a food desert is associated with obesity and other chronic, diet-related diseases. In these areas, children are more likely to drink soda and eat processed foods high in sugar, salt, and preservatives.\(^83\)

Other urban area issues include the intensity of illicit economic activity and crime. As Eduardo Moncada shares, "The developing world's urban century is turning out to be an

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\(^83\) Ibid.
intensely violent one."\textsuperscript{84} The uprooting of millions from their rural roots into an environment lacking traditional social controls leads to an almost total breakdown of moral values, community, and family relationships while immorality, gambling, and drunkenness run unchecked.\textsuperscript{85} Corrupt politicians, landowners, businesspeople, and others cheat the unsuspecting and create deeper poverty. Prostitution and slavery are common means of exploitation of the poor.\textsuperscript{86}

There are some differences between global poverty and that found in North America. The literature highlighted the unique context of the black community. According to economic, educational, employment, and graduation rates, blacks consistently lag behind other groups. The explanations for this vary, but two accounts include the stereotyping of the Black community as lazy, irresponsible, and criminally inclined, and structural barriers leading to opportunities and upward mobility.\textsuperscript{87} In North American urban centers, these disparities lead to blacks becoming disproportionately involved in illegal street activity. For youth, these activities can increase the risk of incarceration as well as the likelihood of receiving an inferior education or no formal education altogether.\textsuperscript{88} The USA is the world leader in incarceration, which disproportionately affects the black community with nearly one in three black men imprisoned at some point in his life.\textsuperscript{89}


\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 92.

\textsuperscript{87} Payne and Brown, “I’m Still Waiting On That Golden Ticket,” 790.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 793.

The urban church cannot escape the effects of poverty and the needs of the poor, with drugs being sold on the street, neighborhood residents in need, high unemployment rates, limited finances for the parishioners to support poverty-alleviation activities, and the higher number of individuals coming to church who need assistance.90

Poverty and Culture

Culture is described as a learned or shared, integrated system of values, beliefs, and assumptions for understanding, coping with, and relating to the world, which results in behavior that is characteristic of a group of people.91 Culture is also referred to as the software of the mind, the operating system that invisibly runs your life, the way humans are programmed to see the world.92

The topic of culture and poverty has been contentious and long debated. The term culture of poverty was coined in 1961 by Oscar Lewis in his book The Children of Sanchez. Lewis argued that sustained poverty created a set of cultural attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices, and the culture of poverty would tend to perpetuate over time, even if the structural conditions change.93 Lewis extrapolated his findings to suggest there was a universal culture of poverty.94 Other writers from this era were Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who in 1961 published a report on the black family. Moynihan argued that the black family was caught in a tangle of pathologies that


92 David Livermore, Customs of the World: Using Cultural Intelligence to Adapt, Wherever You Are (Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses, 2013), under “Lecture 1.”


resulted from slavery and the structural poverty that characterized the life of many African Americans.\textsuperscript{95} This work has inspired further debate and research. Although some agree with the previous work of Lewis and Moynihan, others debate that the values and behaviors among the poor are the same as the other populations of society.\textsuperscript{96}

In \textit{Bridges out of Poverty}, Ruby Payne and the other authors explain the “hidden rules” that occur in poverty, middle class, and wealth classes. For the poor, not understanding these rules create barriers from moving from poverty to middle class. One example highlighted is the casual language used in the poverty culture does not meet the requirement for formal register in well-paying jobs.\textsuperscript{97} Other advocates like Lisa Delpit argue that children from middle-class homes tend to do better in school than those in non-middle-class homes because the culture of the school is based on the upper and middle classes, who are the people in power. This is referred to as the \textit{culture of power}.\textsuperscript{98}

Both terms, the \textit{culture of poverty} and \textit{culture of power}, locate the problem in culture, but in different places and ways.\textsuperscript{99} The critical distinction between Delpit and Payne is the reason why they believe students should be taught the hidden rules. Payne argues that the poor’s educational and economic success depends on their being able to conform to the hidden rules of the middle and wealth class. While Delpit, too, makes this argument, she does not believe that students should passively adopt an alternate code simply because that is the accepted norm.

\textsuperscript{95} Small et al., “Reconsidering Culture and Poverty,” 6-7.
\textsuperscript{97} Payne et al., \textit{Bridges Out of Poverty}, 32.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
Instead, Delpit asserts that students need to know and understand the power realities of this country with the purpose of changing these realities.  

Culture also plays a role in public policy. The public discourse on poverty, and the resulting policies, are themselves cultural products, subject to the whims, predilections, prejudices, beliefs, attitudes, and orientations of policy elites. The poor and church must be at the table when discussing public policy. The need for subsidiarity will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Psychological Effects of Poverty

The effects of poverty on the well-being of the person are wide-reaching and span the material, social, and psychological dimensions. The poor speak extensively about shame, pain, humiliation, and loss of self-confidence. The poor long for peace of mind, good health, and to belong to a community. They long for a safe place where they can exercise their freedoms and where they can care for their children. On this, Narayan shares, "Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally. It eats away at one's dignity and drives one into total despair." For underrepresented populations and those from low-income areas, the church plays a critical role in responding to the psychological effects of poverty. In many cases, pastors become the first responders for the full range of psychological, emotional, and social concerns.

While the global poor mention having a lack of material things, they tend to describe their condition in far more psychological and social terms than our North American audiences.

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100 Redeaux, “The Culture of Poverty Reloaded,” 100.
102 Narayan, “Consultations with the Poor,” 15-16.
The global poor typically talk in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolation, and voicelessness. North American audiences tend to emphasize a lack of material things such as food, money, clean water, medicine, housing, etc.104

**Spiritual Effects of Poverty**

In his book *Walking with the Poor*, Bryant Myers studied the poverty frameworks of Robert Chambers, John Friedmann, Isaac Prilleltensky, Jayakumar Christian, and Ravi Jayakaran. He concluded that poverty is a result of the absence of shalom and that relationships that are not just, harmonious, or enjoyable.105 Made in God’s image, humans were created to be in relationships. Myers highlighted the foundational relationship for each person is with God, self, community, others, and the environment. The biblical story is clear that sin distorts these relationships, and Jesus provides the way for transformation. For Meyers, poverty transformation is fundamentally spiritual.106 The author also shares that these same distorted relationships affect the non-poor. As Meyers notes, “There is a sense that the non-poor are also captive to a web of lies, only the lies are different from those of the poor.”107 In the battle for reconciliation, man has sought help from social service agencies and government programs. Reconciliation is something that requires divine power.108

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104 Corbett et al., *When Helping Hurts*, 86.
106 Ibid., 144-145.
107 Ibid., 145-146.
Assessing Poverty

Conventional household questionnaires reflect a heavy reliance on economic data in the areas of health, nutrition, education, housing, employment, consumption, wealth, income, and expenditure. Measuring physical assets is also an alternative to measuring household poverty. The only risk to this method is respondents being willing to reveal the assets they own.

Unfortunately, the heavy focus on economic indicators in conventional household questionnaires does not reflect the importance of the social, cultural, and ethnic characteristics of the poorest segment of the population.

When working with the poor, there has been a significant focus on participatory research practices using grassroots community-organizing principles. Community organizing refers to the process of mobilizing residents to contribute their expertise and resources to bring change with a focus on justice. In the health-related literature, there is a long tradition of participatory research being used to identify health and social needs within communities. Lay researchers have raised concern that they would be held responsible by poor communities for delivering change. Great care and sensitivity need to take place for researchers not to raise community expectations during assessments.

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111 Fritzen and Brassard, “Multi-Level Assessments for Better Targeting of the Poor,” 100.


114 Ibid., 87.
In working with the poor, self-administered and interviewer-administered questionnaires both have valid uses. Comparative research on questionnaire delivery modes for sensitive variables, such as mental health and sexual behavior, indicate that self-administered methods are generally higher, and possibly more accurate, in rates of reporting.\textsuperscript{115} For collecting household asset-information, respondents were more likely to report a higher degree of poverty using self-administered modes than when questioned by an interviewer.\textsuperscript{116}

Causes of poverty have been a common research topic, and over the last three decades there has been consistency in the public opinion of the root causes of poverty.\textsuperscript{117} Public opinion has identified the primary poverty factor as the individual, assigning responsibility to the person’s character or behavior. Examples of this would be equating poverty with a person’s lack of ability, effort, or moral deficiency. The other two poverty determinants identified by public opinion are structural and fatalistic. Examples of structural are the characteristics of the labor market, failing schools, and discrimination. Fatalistic is described as poor in luck, fate, and divine will.\textsuperscript{118} A biblical perspective on the three causes of poverty in Scripture will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Experiential Learning on Poverty**

The fields of social work and nursing have done considerable work in understanding the relationship between the understanding of poverty and how people treat the poor. One study determined that nursing students who believed negative stereotypes about poor clients tended to

\textsuperscript{115} Sophie J. S. Pascoe et al., “‘How Poor Are You?’ – a Comparison of Four Questionnaire Delivery Modes for Assessing Socio-Economic Position in Rural Zimbabwe,” *Plos One* 8, no. 9 (2013): 1.

\textsuperscript{116} Pascoe et al., “‘How Poor Are You?’” 7.


\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
shame them, which led to a reluctance to access care.\textsuperscript{119} Negative attitudes toward the poor and unsympathetic attributions for poverty by social work students and professionals may influence the choices and quality of services they are providing to the poor.\textsuperscript{120} On the nursing side, negative attitudes toward the poor may interfere with patient-centered care, equal treatment of all patients, and advocacy for the most vulnerable.\textsuperscript{121} The nursing field is built upon the value of compassion and deep empathy for patients that comes from the ability to understand the other’s joys and sorrows. This understanding is enhanced by the cultural competency of those living in poverty.\textsuperscript{122}

In higher education, several graduate schools realized their programs were taking on the characteristics of research institutions with faculty venturing into the field of practice only to collect data. This has led to the recognition that there needs to be a balance between practice and research, with as much integration as possible.\textsuperscript{123} The research in this area has shown that students had a limited understanding of the complex nature of poverty and lacked a comprehensive understanding of the impact of poverty upon the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the poor.\textsuperscript{124} Research has also found that to be effective caregivers, nurses must have


an understanding of the complex nature of poverty, especially the multifaceted health challenges faced by the poor.\textsuperscript{125}

Studies of perceptions about poverty among students, before and after their participation in programs and courses on the topic, show that the more exposure to poor populations and the more knowledge students have about the subject, the more they tend to support the structural explanations of poverty.\textsuperscript{126} Examples of structural factors producing a high rate of poverty are the reproduction of the class system, macroeconomic policies, the structure of the electoral process, the structure of the economy, institutionalized gender discrimination, and institutionalized ethnic discrimination.\textsuperscript{127}

One common tool used by educational institutions for increasing their student’s understanding of the complexities of poverty is the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS). During this simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families, single parents trying to care for their children, or senior citizens trying to live on Social Security. The participants in the simulation will find themselves struggling to find a job or keep a job, feed, and clothe their families, and locate health and social services. The CAPS can be held on-campus in a large meeting space. Up to 26 families (groups of students) can participate in the simulation at one time, and the exercise can be completed in two hours.

Studies reviewing the effectiveness of these simulations show mixed results. They do reflect that after the students experienced the daily hassles of the poor taking care of themselves and their families they have had greater empathy for the poor. At the same time, the simulations

\textsuperscript{125} DeLashmutt Rankin, “A Different Kind of Clinical Experience Poverty up Close and Personal,” 143.
\textsuperscript{126} Lahat, “The Effects of Knowledge about Poverty,” 615.
\textsuperscript{127} Beeghley, “Individual and Structural Explanations of Poverty,” 201.
did not increase the understanding of why people were poor. Another limitation of the poverty simulation is the failure to engage in discussion on broader national, systemic issues. Other studies argue that poverty simulations, as they are commonly used, may perpetuate the systems of inequality they are designed to address. Perhaps the most significant limitation of poverty simulations, as described above, is that it does not put students in contact with the poor. There is no opportunity to hear stories. Interviews with the poor allow people to describe their situations and put words to their interior lives, personal feelings, opinions, and experiences that otherwise are not available to the researcher by observation or simulation.

Eliminating Global Poverty

One of the most controversial topics in global poverty reduction efforts is the effectiveness of foreign aid. On this topic, three different schools of thought have emerged. The first is from those who believe that official assistance is ineffective and has harmed poor countries. Advocated by authors such as William Easterly and Dambisa Moyo, official aid creates dependency, fosters corruption, encourages currency overvaluation, and does not allow countries to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the global economy. Opposite of this view are scholars like Jeffrey Sachs and Joseph Stiglitz, who believe that levels of aid have been too low and that increase levels of foreign assistance are required. The third group is less

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vocal and includes authors such as Paul Collier, who has emphasized the role of poverty traps, and Banerjee and Duflo, who promote specific and targeted aid programs.\(^{132}\)

Collier advocates that it is not large amounts of money and outside top-down interventions that will create lasting change, "Unfortunately, it is not just about giving these countries our money. If it were, it would be relatively easy because there are not that many of them. With some important exceptions, aid does not work so well in these environments, at least as it has been provided in the past. Change in the societies at the very bottom must come predominantly from within; we cannot impose it on them."\(^{133}\) In his book *The White Man’s Burden*, Easterly talks about the tragedies facing the global poor. The first tragedy of foreign aid was the millions of children dying from preventable diseases. The second tragedy was that the West spent $2.3 trillion on foreign aid over the last five decades and still had not managed to get twelve-cent medicines to children to prevent half of all malaria deaths.\(^{134}\)

In the early years, aid was a top-down activity, with little consultation with local authorities or the local population, and almost no coordination across agencies. Many large, wasteful, capital-intensive projects, dubbed “white elephants,” were financed at an enormous cost and with little impact in reducing poverty. This changed over time. Today there is increased consultation with the local authorities, better coordination among aid agencies, and growing concern about the views and opinions of the civil society, including their views on the environmental impact.\(^{135}\)


\(^{134}\) William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-4.

Authors Steve Corbett, Brian Fikkert, and John Perkins provide perspectives on the poor from a Christian worldview. In their book, they share that some of the best efforts to help the poor wind up hurting the help providers and those attempting to help. As noted by the authors, the developed world sees poverty as a material issue, “If we reduce human beings to being simply physical—as Western thought is prone to do—our poverty-alleviation efforts will tend to focus on material solutions. However, if we remember that humans are spiritual, social, psychological, and physical beings, our poverty-alleviation efforts will be more holistic in their design and execution.”

Robert Lupton shares some of the same sentiment as he examines the effects that charity has on those whom it intends to serve and summarizes that much of Americans' charitable giving "is either wasted or actually harms the people it is targeted to help." The author looks closely at the short-term mission trip industry, where the money could have had a more significant long-term impact in the church or community and on those they intended to serve. Lupton also notes that short-term mission trips do not have lasting changes on those who traveled. Because this industry is based on compassion and virtuous activities, there is little scrutiny of the practices and impact. The author goes as far as to call this "religious tourism." The majority of short-term mission trips are to places where the needs are for development programs rather than charity or emergency assistance. On this, Lupton shares, "Betterment does for others. Development maintains a long view and looks to enable others to do for themselves. Betterment improves conditions. Development strengthens capacity. Betterment gives a man a fish.

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136 Corbett et al., *When Helping Hurts*, 71.
137 Lupton, *Toxic Charity*, 86.
138 Ibid., 71.
Development teaches a man how to fish.” Roberts echoes a similar sentiment, “Development is the hope of a nation, not charity.” Roberts expands on the long-term impact from one-way giving, “Once the ‘give out’ is gone, what is left behind? I’ve seen it – nothing.”

There have been voices within the Christian community that believe that the church should be focused on the needs closer to home. Expanding on this point John Perkins shares, “Throughout the history of the church in America, our missions efforts have been focused on developing continents and countries: Africa, Asia, South America, Haiti…while the ethnic neighborhoods in our own country were ignored. Some well-meaning Christians have a theology of mission that seeks to heal the spiritual and physical suffering of people far away, but pay little attention to the needs here at home.”

DeYoung and Gilbert share the principle of Moral Proximity, which states that “the closer the need, the greater the moral obligation to help.” Factoring into Moral Proximity and the need to respond are geography, familiarity, and kinship to those in need. As reflected in the review of literature, poverty is multidimensional and complex and this is reflected in the multiple perspectives and mixed results in reducing poverty both locally and globally.

**Theological Framework**

God is an advocate for the poor. Throughout Scripture, God’s love and concern for the poor are poured out through the pages. The Psalmists share that God “has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy” (Ps 72:13) and “will abundantly bless her provisions;
I will satisfy her poor with bread” (Ps 132:15). The poor can always take comfort in knowing that God cares for them. As Christians take the gospel to the world, they must understand how to communicate with the poor. The basis for that knowledge starts with God’s Word and the dignity of all humanity which flows from Scripture.

The Dignity of the Poor

Genesis stands second to none in its importance for proclaiming the “the whole will of God.” It presents the literary and theological underpinning of the entire canonical Scriptures. The Bible, without Genesis, has no foundation. Genesis provides the creation account of human life and the family.

God has made human life distinct from all other material life by humankind's creation "in the image of God" (Gen 1:25). It is the imago Dei that defines human life. Humanity is uniquely created and uniquely represents God. Genesis 1:25 did not provide the details of what is the image of God in humankind, and this has been the cause of much debate. Suggestions have included conscience, the soul, original righteousness, reason, the capacity for fellowship with God through prayer, posture, etc. Any definition that focuses on one aspect of man, be that physical, spiritual, or intellectual, to the neglect of the others, appears doomed to failure.

The crown of God’s handiwork is human life. It is this unique position and relationship with God that gives all humans dignity. Since all human life is created in the image of God, there

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145 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).
147 Ibid., 61.
149 Matthews, Genesis, 160.
is no person or class of humans lesser than others. The human family has one kindship. There is diversity within the human family according to gender differentiation, geopolitical, and ethnic groups. In working with the poor, it is essential to remember that we do not give other people dignity; God has already given it to them. Humans must work to affirm the dignity of others and themselves. When learning about the poor, it is vital to understand the terms used in Scripture.

Terms for the Poor

As evidence of God’s concern for those in need, the terms “poor,” “orphan,” and “widow” are mentioned in the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Bible 280 times collectively. "Poor" is an umbrella term for those who are physically impoverished or of diminished spirit. In biblical terms, "poor" would include most widows and orphans; however, not every poor person was a widow or orphan. In the Old Testament, the major Hebrew terms used are:

1. Anî, "oppressed," "poor," "humble." These terms are used to designate one who suffers not from a deserved, self-inflicted poverty, but the poverty caused by wrongful impoverishment or dispossession. God is the helper and deliverer of these poor.

2. Ebyôn, "in want, needy, poor." This term originally referred to a beggar seeking alms but was later used more generally for the very poor and homeless. In some of the Psalms it is

150 Matthews, Genesis, 61.

151 Perkins, Dream with Me: Race, Love, and the Struggle We Must Win, 167.


linked with Anî to designate all the righteous who petition God as their deliverer from a need of any kind.

3. *Dal*, "weak," "thin," "low," "poor." This term can refer to physical weakness, but more often it refers to those who are powerless due to low social status, e.g., the poorest class of peasants left behind during the Babylonian captivity.

4. *Rāš*, "poor, needy." This term is used in a purely social or economic sense, especially in wisdom literature.

5. *Miskēn*, "dependent, socially inferior." This term is related to the self-designation still used by Arab beggars. It occurs only in Ecclesiastes; interestingly, in each occurrence, the *miskēn* are wise.

The poor are also discussed in the New Testament. There are two classical Greek terms used for the poor. *Pénēs* denotes the working poor who own little or no property, and *ptóchós* signifies a beggar that is totally dependent on others for help. In the Old and New Testament the poor were part of the community, and the Law commanded how they were to be protected and provided for.

Old Testament Protection for the Poor

God cares for the poor and commanded through the Law that the most vulnerable were not to be exploited. First mentioned in Exodus, Moses states that justice should not be perverted for the poor, "You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit" (Exod 23:6). This is an apodictic law, covering everyone in the community. In advocated for fair and just treatment in or out of court, and honest, even-handed dealings with all people. Exodus 23:3 is focused on

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eliminating favoritism toward the poor, whereas verses 6 warns against favoritism against the poor. Together they prohibit any option but fairness and just treatment for every member of society.\textsuperscript{155}

The Law protected the poor from unfair lending practices, and loan collateral could not be retained from the poor under certain circumstances. “If the man is poor, do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession. Return his cloak to him by sunset so that he may sleep in it. Then he will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the Lord your God” (Deut 24:12-13). These verses conclude with the blessing received from Yahweh when refraining from holding distrained property. It is acknowledged that even within the covenant community, where God’s blessings are bestowed, there will still be those who are poor and marginalized. It is our responsibility, under God, to alleviate their hardship.\textsuperscript{156}

The Law protected the poor from unfair labor practices by specifying that due wages should be paid the same day. “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord” (Lev 19:13-14). These laws should be taken as general principles and are not limited to the specific situations listed. God looks after the poor and disadvantaged and one who fears God will not mistreat them. The proper treatment of the poor is a subject of concern in both legal and wisdom literature.\textsuperscript{157}


Servitude was a fact of life in ancient Israel, as throughout all the ancient world, and the Law references two types: full slavery and indentured servants. The Law protected indentured servants from being in bondage for perpetuity. The Law in Deuteronomy frees the indentured servants after six years of servitude and is based on the recognition that Israel’s ancestors were slaves in Egypt.\textsuperscript{158}

If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today (Deut 15:12-15).

The reason that the servant was not sent away empty-handed was to assist the poor by not having to borrow for the basic provisions immediately. Again, Moses reminds the Israelites they too were poor and among those in need.\textsuperscript{159}

Old Testament Provisions for the Poor

In addition to protecting the poor from different forms of oppression, in the Law God commanded that the community take care of the physical needs of the poor. “If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be” (Deut 15:7-8). Anticipating reluctance to lend to the poor immediately before the year that debts are forgiven, Moses commands the people "not to harden your heart." Those with means are to


\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 320.
open their hands to meet the needs of the poor. These verses go beyond the provision of goods and services for the poor; they are commanding compassionate care.

One practical way the Law provided for the physical needs of the poor was through the right to glean in the fields “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God” (Lev 19:9-10). The landlord was not to endeavor to harvest the corners of the field or to double back to gather any that had fallen when reaping. This standard also applied to the vineyards where the vines were not stripped or fallen grapes picked up. These were left for the poor and aliens who had little income, and during hard times, little hope of earning a living. The provisions provided for the poor required they glean the portions of the field themselves. This act of generosity was not a charity or a handout, but it was a means for those who were without property or who had fallen on hard times to provide for themselves. Since God had shown his love for Israel in Egypt, where they were both poor and aliens, He desires his people to express the same kindness to the unfortunate. In the implied value system in the Old Testament law, people are the most important, animals next, and plants least important. This same hierarchy of value of life is reflected throughout the Old Testament.

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160 Christensen, Deuteronomy, vol. 6A, 313.
162 Rooker, Leviticus, 255.
163 Hartley, Leviticus, 314.
164 Stewart, Exodus, 532.
Another practical way the Law provided for the physical needs of the poor was through the sabbatical years, “but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard” (Exod 23:11). This is an apodictic law, covering all Israelites and all productive land without limit to the type of crop. Scholars believe this is a seven-year cession was accomplished by rotating the parcels among fields and orchards. Under the Law, the poor and wild animals would always have uncultivated fields in any given area in which to forage and harvest the crops because farmers would always be rotating fields, vineyards, and groves in and out of cultivation.  

The Law also provided for the physical needs of the priests and the poor through the tithing of the harvest. “At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands” (Deut 14:28-29). For the people of God in Ancient Israel, tithing was not an option. Part of the offering went to support the priests, and in the three-year cycle, a significant part went to the poor. The primary purpose of the tithe was "that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always" (Deut 14:23). Another provision for food was by providing for the participation of the poor in festivals, "You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. For seven days you shall keep the feast to the Lord your God at the place that the

165 Stewart, Exodus, 530-532.
166 Christensen, Deuteronomy, vol. 6A, 305.
Lord will choose, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful" (Deut 16:14-15). Every member of society was to share in the festivity, including children and resident aliens in their midst. The blessing from God is all-inclusive. For the feasts, the poor sat alongside the non-poor as one family and one community.

The Year of Jubilee also was a respite for the poor that occurred after the seven cycles of sabbatical years. There were specific instructions about the land being returned to the families who had initially been allotted the property, "And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan" (Lev 25:10). These laws provided a safety net to protect citizens in ancient Israel from becoming perpetual slaves and in poverty. Scholars are divided on the origins of the Year of Jubilee, and on many aspects of the Law on the release of debts and slaves found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. In totality, the Law kept the poor and vulnerable as active members of the community, treating them with dignity and justice, intending to restore them as non-poor members.

New Testament and the Poor

Jesus spoke the language of the poor. His Beatitudes, as well as the reset of His Sermon on the Mount, made no sense to the rich of his day, much like they make little sense to most middle-class Christians today. The concern for the poor remained throughout the New Testament, In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus expresses His concern for the poor and how He has come to

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167 Christensen, Deuteronomy, 350.
168 Hartley, Leviticus, 427-434.
169 Grigg, Companion to the Poor, 40.
fulfill the Old Testament profits, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Luke began his portrayal of Jesus’ ministry with the account of His first sermon. This sermon is important because Luke provided the readers with Jesus' description of His mission and ministry.170

Jesus’ portrayal as light and liberator to the poor, captive, and blind is a crucial point in the passage and had been the subject of much discussion, even spawning the Liberation Theology Movement. The oppression expressed in Luke 4 is aimed against spiritual aspirations, as noted by the light and blindness imagery. Compassion, concern, love, truth, and service are to be concretely expressed by the church, just as they were evidenced in the life and ministry of Jesus. Many in stressing the individual have missed these elements of ministry, which reach out to a full range of people’s needs.171

Jesus also repeated a similar invitation that the poor be invited to the feast, “But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:13-14). In these verses, Jesus exhorts the Pharisees to invite not their friends but the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. Unlike much of ancient culture, Jesus urges that reciprocity is not a factor in deciding whom to invite. Hospitality is generosity when no motive exists besides giving.172


Similar to the Law of the Old Testament, there were daily food needs among the poor in the New Testament. “In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food” (Acts 6:1-2). Luke provides a look at the age-old problem of prejudice. This was not necessarily a racial division since all the people were Jews, but we see a cultural problem. The "outsiders" did not act, talk, or live like the pure-blooded Palestinian Jews, so they were treated as second-class citizens. Christians can look at this and make distinctions of importance between taking care of widows and teaching God's truth, between helping ministries and evangelism. Luke does not seem to make this distinction, nor does it appear that was what the disciples intended. Yes, teaching and prayer claimed priority, but not all disciples were involved in that. God calls people to different kinds of ministries and it is important not to attempt to determine levels of importance, but to be faithful in the call. The poor are to be brought to the table to eat along with the non-poor as one family and one community.

One difference from the Law was Paul's emphasis on contributing to the work of the mission, “For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.” (2 Thess 3:10). Not only did the apostles set an example of hard work, but they also embodied their teaching from this pithy precept. It may not have been Paul that originated the saying, but it was Paul who made it part of the Christian view of labor. This verse resonates well with the North American individualistic culture that values hard work

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and achievement. When Jesus talks about being a slave and serving, he is emphasizing the attitude and commitment required to be His follower.

The Slave and Servant

In Mark 10, a request is made for James and John to sit at Jesus' right and left in heaven. In Jewish thought, the right hand of the King was the place of greatest prominence while the seat of the left was second in prominence. Despite the audacity of James and John, Jesus did not rebuke them directly but indicated they did not realize the implications of their request. In the kingdom, the way to glory is sacrifice, service, and suffering. In the kingdom, exaltation involves lowliness. This is a direct conflict to man's human desire for honor, power, and prestige. Although Jesus does not rebuke His disciples, he does challenge them. Jesus summons his disciples and teaches them regarding humility and service, concluding with his example of offering service in place of being served. Jesus used the entire incident to teach the necessity of humility and service, especially for Christian leaders.

In the early Roman Empire, incomes and assets were unequally distributed. In a population of around 50 million, a small elite group at the top of society, the senators and knights, held the majority of wealth, typically in the form of land. At the other end of the society were farmers and farm laborers, both free and slave. The slaves represented the poorest of the poor and the bottom of society. In the middle of the Roman society were a group of skilled and

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176 Ibid, 168.
178 Ibid, 113.
often literate tradesmen and service workers who provided goods and services for senators and
knight. This group was too small to be considered the middle class.\textsuperscript{180}

Jesus also teaches to be a follower the disciples must seek to serve and not vie for
positions of authority; they must be willing to suffer and not flee from persecution; they must be
willing to be last and not insist on being first.\textsuperscript{181} Jesus also taught the disciples that the places of
honor are not his to appoint. Nevertheless, He can tell them what is expected of them. They are
not to be like the Romans who rule over people. Instead, disciples are to seek opportunities for
service.\textsuperscript{182} Next, we will look at Mark 10 and how this service is put into action.

\textbf{Final Judgment and the Poor}

In Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus explained how the followers are to be ready and alert for his
return. Jesus shares that his followers are to fill their lives with care for the needs of others,
especially the needs of other believers, realizing that every unbeliever is a potential believer.
This is truly the work of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{183} Jesus shares that those who will inherit the kingdom
did the following for him, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave
me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick
and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Matt 25:35-36). Upon hearing this,
the disciples were confused, not remembering they had provided such care for Jesus. Responding
to their question, Jesus responds with “Truly I tell you,” the mark of an especially weighty

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, 115. \\
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid, 125. \\
\end{flushright}
saying, and finishes with the central theme of the passage, “for one of the least of these my brothers, you did it for me” (Matt 25: 40).\(^{184}\)

In Matthew 25:35-36, the King described the behavior of these kingdom citizens. When he was in need, they were the ones who acted in compassion to meet his need. His listing of six needy conditions – hunger, thirst, alienation, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment – is not exhaustive but representative of all the needs that a person might have.\(^{185}\) Food, drink, clothing, and health are related to the needs of a person's body. Being a stranger is also related to physical well-being. Because an alien usually had no job or other means of support, there was a strong tendency to view him with prejudice, and even to abuse him. Because of their needy state, foreigners were protected, along with widows and orphans by Old Testament law. Someone in prison was, likewise, unable to earn a living for himself or his family. Such a person was dependent on others to bring him food because the law enforcement system usually did not provide it for him.\(^{186}\)

To treat the disciple, the bringer and representative of the gospel, with deeds of kindness, is in effect to have so treated Jesus. Conversely, to fail to meet the needs of the Christian missionary is to fail to meet the needs of Jesus. There is thus a most remarkable bond of solidarity between Jesus and his disciples. Although disciples are naturally called to do good to all people, deeds of kindness must begin with brothers and sisters of faith, within the church.\(^{187}\)

If Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 25:40 is startling, its parallel is terrifying: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me." What does that mean in a world

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\(^{186}\) Ibid.

where millions die each year of starvation while wealthy Christians live in escalating affluence?\textsuperscript{188} This creates an opportunity for authentic Christian service previously noted in Mark 10.

Although sometimes understood as confirming salvation by works, this passage need not be understood as incompatible with the gospel of the kingdom as a divine gift. The apostle Paul, a champion of grace, can also stress the significance of good works. Matthew does stress the importance of righteousness as good deeds, but as part of a broader context where God acts graciously for the salvation of his people.\textsuperscript{189}

In these verses and through his ministry, Jesus showed his love for the poor by engaging, identifying, and showing concern for those living in the margins. Scripture does not reflect that Jesus saw the poor as a project or that His mission was to end poverty. Jesus saw the poor as people. In fact, He often selected slaves, prostitutes, and others from the margins of society to fulfill His plans to save the lost.

Categories of Poverty in Scripture

Scripture is clear to reject a single explanation for poverty. In Viv Grigg's book, \textit{Companion to the Poor: Christ in the Urban Slums}, the author states there are three categories of poverty found in Scripture.\textsuperscript{190} The first category is a result of personal sin, and this can be seen in Proverbs 13:25, "The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked


\textsuperscript{189} Evens, \textit{Mark}, 746-747.

\textsuperscript{190} Grigg, \textit{Companion to the Poor: Christ in the Urban Slums}, 36.
suffers want." Poverty may be a result of sin in the family. Addiction to alcohol, indolence, and financial irresponsibility are all causes of poverty.\(^{191}\)

The second category of poverty is a result of a calamity like a natural disaster or death of a family provider. In Ruth 1:1-5, there was a famine in the land that forced the family to relocate, and the death of Naomi's two sons and her husband thrust her into poverty. Naomi's daughter-in-law Ruth was able to find enough for them to eat in the fields from the provision in the Law, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She went into the field and has worked steadily from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter" (Ruth 2:7). The calamity and poverty that Naomi and Ruth experienced were through no fault of their own.

The third category of poverty is a result of oppression. This category can be seen in Zechariah 7:8-10, "And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.'" The word used for oppressing in this verse is related to abusive actions taken to subordinates by those in a more powerful station of life, and nearly always has economic overtones. Oppression is listed alongside robbery, false scales, monetary deception, failure to pay a hireling for work, fraud and taking bribes, and the shedding of innocent blood.\(^{192}\) These verses are a reminder of the mutual obligation of each Judean towards each other to pursue the core values of the covenant through their actions. These actions flow through the character of Yahweh.\(^{193}\)


\(^{193}\) Ibid., 460.
Another example of oppression can be seen in Proverbs 13:23, "A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away." This verse points to poverty being caused by injustice in society and not the fault of the family. Their hunger points to a need for changes in systems within society. Proverbs takes a balanced position by neither dehumanizing the poor on the grounds that they are to blame for all their troubles nor absolving the individuals of personal responsibility. God's Word is timeless, and the wisdom of Proverbs has an application when working with the poor today.

From the Old and New Testaments, the poor were part of the community, and God intended that they are protected from oppression and assisted during times of need. Through the protections and provisions in the Law, the poor were allowed onto the landowner’s property to glean and were invited during the festivals to eat at the same table as those with material resources. Through Ruth, Jesus' lineage was protected and assisted through the obedience of the covenant community. The Law provided opportunities for the poor to be restored and not left in bondage for perpetuity. The poor were to be treated in a manner worthy of His creation.

Motivation from Scripture

Secular academic institutions have done extensive research to determine new ways to teach students about poverty and how to engage the poor. The motivation for these institutions was to prepare students for their vocation and to bring justice to the poor. Christians’ motivations are from Scripture, and there is a clear overlap to the work of the secular academic institutions. Scripture states in the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20) that as believers, we need to "go" into the world and share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians also follow a God who

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194 Garrett, Proverbs, 139-140.
seeks justice for the poor. In Isaiah 1:17, God is looking for repentance of sin and taking on the cause of justice and righteousness, “learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.” God’s people did not need to seek an advantage over the oppressed. God would remove the crimson stain of sin and provide all that they needed and more if they would trust and follow him.196

**Theoretical Framework**

The fields of social work and nursing have researched the relationship between increasing the knowledge and experience of students in the field of poverty, and how students view and treat the poor. These institutions academic research was a combination of cognitive and social constructivism learning theories. Their research included classroom learning and hands-on experiential learning that included service-learning experiences, exposure to the poor, and poverty simulations have been effective in changing student attitudes toward poverty.197 For this research project, the Heritage Baptist Church participants will follow the same theoretical framework with classroom training and opportunity for hands-on learning with the poor in the local Lynchburg context. The theory is that this poverty learning at the local level will translate to preparation for engagement at the global level.

**Three Sectors of Society**

Within each society, there are three sectors. These include the “public” (including all levels of government), “private” (for-profit organizations), and "civil society." The civil sector or civil society includes all non-profits, the church, and other organizations working for the interest

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of citizens. In liberal democratic theology, civil society organizations are the countervailing force against an unresponsive and corrupt state and exploitive corporations.\textsuperscript{198} Actors from all three sectors of society are engaged in poverty alleviation activities. For example, the Park View Community Mission is a local civil society organization that operates a food pantry serving the poor. The Park View Community Mission receives food donated from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a public sector entity, and Walmart and Panera Bread, both for-profit private sector organizations.

**Interventions for the Poor**

There are three broad categories of interventions that North American society generally deploys in support of the poor and those in need. The first category is humanitarian relief and rehabilitation. This includes the urgent and temporary provision of aid to reduce immediate suffering from both natural and human-made disasters. Also known as an emergency or humanitarian response, these activities provide immediate relief and provisions for individuals, families, and communities, and support for the affected to rebuild their lives. Humanitarian disaster responses are fast-paced and are often chronicled through network news and include events like the flooding in the American Midwest and sub-Saharan Africa, and the Syrian and Venezuelan refugee crises. From the public sector, the United States government supports emergency responses domestically and internationally through a variety of agencies and funding mechanisms. From the private sector, companies like Home Depot contribute financially and with human resources to emergency responses.\textsuperscript{199} From civil society, the International Red

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{198} Haslam et al., *Introduction to International Development*, 222.
\end{itemize}
Cross and faith-based organizations like Samaritan’s Purse, World Vision, and Catholic Relief Services are some of the first to respond to global crises.

The second category of interventions on behalf of the poor is through long-term development. These projects focus on creating sustainable change for individuals, families, and communities by changing systems, structures, and behaviors. Because many projects have the goal of raising household income and moving individuals and families from poverty to the middle class, this category is also known as economic development. An example of long-term development projects is helping Haitian coffee farmers increase their product yield, quality, and access to international markets, and working to train teachers to increase test scores and graduation rates in local city schools. These are long-term projects and are not likely to attract the same level of media coverage as the interventions during a humanitarian crisis. Like humanitarian relief and rehabilitation, development projects garner broad support from the public, private, and civil sectors.

The third category of interventions done on behalf of the poor is charity. Charity programs range from addressing short-term needs to long-term chronic poverty and include a variety of provisions, including goods, services, cash, and food. Some have referred to this category as a component of the social gospel. Critics of charity programs state that these programs are neither addressing lifesaving needs like humanitarian relief and rehabilitation or creating long-term change like development programs. All three sectors of society are involved in charity programs. One public sector example is that over 50 percent of families of fast-food industry workers are enrolled in an assistance program, compared with 25 percent of all
workers. On charity programs, Lupton shares, “Food in our society is a chronic poverty need, not a life-threatening one. And when we respond to a chronic need as though it were a crisis, we can predict toxic results: dependency, deception, disempowerment.” One of the biggest mistakes made by the North American church is applying a relief intervention when rehabilitation or development would be more appropriate. Lupton also shares that some church practices may be causing harm, "We fly off on mission trips to poverty-stricken villages, hearts full of pity and suitcases bulging with giveaway goods, trips that one Nicaraguan leader describes as effective in only 'turning my people into beggars." 

One engagement with the poor that is unique to the church is evangelism. Evangelism is the fulfillment of Scripture in the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20). With nearly half of the world’s population living on less than $5.50 per day, the Great Commission will require reaching the poor. Sharing the message of Jesus Christ can be done as a stand-alone activity like street evangelism or in conjunction with humanitarian relief and rehabilitation, long-term development, and charity initiatives. In the case of countries closed to missionaries, the options for doing evangelism without a humanitarian or development component may be limited.

One concern with all the interventions noted above is paternalism, an attitude that those from outside of the community, and often administering the project funds, have all the answers. Development practitioner Jayakumar Christian argues that the economically rich often have

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“god-complexes,” a subtle and unconscious sense of superiority in which they believe that they have achieved their wealth through their own efforts. Individuals with the god-complex also believe that they have been anointed to decide what is best for the poor, whom they view as inferior to themselves.\textsuperscript{205} Practitioners should not see the poor as projects to be changed, but as people with dreams and ambitions that are just as important as anyone else.\textsuperscript{206} Practitioners should also avoid imposing middle-class, outside-of-the-community solutions.\textsuperscript{207}

For this research project, the Heritage Baptist Church participants will not be implementing any of the interventions previously noted to change the lives of the poor. The aim is for the Heritage Baptist Church participants to see the uniqueness of God’s handiwork in human life and to affirm the dignity that God has given them. The theory is that the first step to working with the poor in any capacity or on any initiative is to become a humble student of the poor. This intentional step can reveal the multidimensional, multifaceted, and multi-sectorial nature of poverty that the Park View participants experience on a daily basis.

Bridging the Strata of Society

Sociologists have identified different classes or strata within a society. However imprecise, these have been described as the poverty, middle, and wealth classes.\textsuperscript{208} The population distribution among the classes vary from country to country. The Western notion of a broad middle of society is a twentieth and twenty-first century phenomenon.\textsuperscript{209} Other authors

\textsuperscript{205} Corbett et al., \textit{When Helping Hurts}, 77.


\textsuperscript{207} Payne et al., \textit{Bridges Out of Poverty}, 47.

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., 39-48.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 6.
describe the three classes as poverty, non-poverty, and elite. The elites are made up of persons who hold the most powerful positions, control the most property, and have access to symbolic and political resources. On the other end of the strata, the poor possess few material or political resources and rank at the bottom of the status and power hierarchy. The poor’s lack of assets is reinforced by their low status and exclusion from cultural and political resources. This inverse is also true. All individuals between the poor and elite classes are assigned to the non-poverty strata.

The poor and non-poor are often physically separated through differential land use. The poor are often referred to as living on the “other side of the tracks.” As previously noted, the Park View Community Mission neighborhood has some of the highest poverty rates in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Socially, the poor and non-poor are separated in their participation in the labor markets and political, social, and cultural institutions. The poor and non-poor are also separated though stereotyping and media clichés. The separation also occurs within the Christian community, and as the Reverend Billy Graham quipped that eleven o’clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. Although Reverend Graham was talking about segregation by race and ethnicity, his comment could also be expanded to segregation by socioeconomic factors.

The separation of the poor was not present in the Old or New Testaments. The early church was primarily represented by the lower socio-economic level. It is estimated that between

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211 Ibid., 46.
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid., 48.
82 and 90 percent of the population at or just above the subsistence level, with seven to fifteen percent having a moderate surplus, and three percent being the wealthy elites.\textsuperscript{215} The good news today is that there are some members from middle-class suburban churches that are intentionally moving into urban areas and living in solidarity with the poor.

There is no correlation between being materially poor and not knowing God. The World Bank \textit{Voices of the Poor} project documented the views and experiences of over 60,000 people from over 60 countries and revealed that faith is an integral factor in the lives of the poor and that religious organizations are perceived as important.\textsuperscript{216} An essential part of working in poor communities involves discovering and appreciating what God has already been doing.\textsuperscript{217}

For this research project, the Heritage Baptist Church participants will be meeting the Park View participants at the Park View Community Mission. Although only for a short time, Heritage Baptist participants will have an opportunity to experience a different socio-economic stratum. The theory is that the first step to working with the poor in any capacity or on any initiative is enter the community as a humble student. This intentional step can reveal how God is already working in that community.

The Power of Stories

In the field of reconciliation, the task is to see the “other” as not just a stereotype or statistic, but as a person with value. To be effective in reconciliation, the work needs to “begin at the level of the individual – neighbor to neighbor, then house to house, and finally, community to


\textsuperscript{217} Corbett et al., \textit{When Helping Hurts}, 56.
On reconciliation, John Perkins shares the power of becoming a student and listening to others, “Getting to know the stories behind the statistics can go a long way in helping remove the barriers and pull down stereotypes and prejudices.” The work of reconciliation involves both empathy and sympathy, and the distinction between the two is essential. Sympathy is about experiencing a shared emotion. This can be achieved by seeing the poverty of a rural village on a mission’s trip or serving at a local food pantry. Experiencing poverty firsthand can be an emotional experience. Conversely, empathy involves imagining and seeking to understand the perspective of another person. Empathy involves becoming a student and listening. Listening to the poor affirms their inherent dignity and demonstrates a theology based on humility. Corbet et al. share the importance of having the proper attitude when meeting with the poor, “Until we embrace our mutual brokenness, our work with low-income people is likely to do more harm than good. I sometimes unintentionally reduce poor people to objects that I use to fulfill my own need to accomplish something. I am not okay, and you are not okay. But Jesus can fix us both.”

For this research, the Heritage Baptist Church participants will hear firsthand the stories from Park View participants. The theory is that the first step to working with the poor in any capacity or on any initiative is to listen to the stories of the poor with empathy. This intentional step can affirm dignity, humanize, and change stereotypes about the poor.

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220 Halpern and Weinstein, “Rehumanizing the Other, 568.


222 Corbett et al., *When Helping Hurts*, 67.
The theoretical framework for this research is not about doing something for the poor; it is about becoming students and hearing the voices of the poor. The framework intentionally takes a cohort from a non-poor socioeconomic group to meet with the materially poor. The framework intentionally creates conversations and assigns dignity and value where it is not customarily placed and looks to see where God is already working.

**Summary**

In North America, it is possible to be separated from the materially poor. This can be done by where one lives, shops, goes to school, and worships on Sunday. Even in poverty alleviation, it is possible to volunteer for a service that takes place without any real interaction with someone poor. This is not the story revealed in the Old and New Testament. Through the provisions and protections in the Law, the landless were allowed onto the landowner's property to glean and could eat at the same table as those with material resources. God left the care of the poor to His people. The poor were part of the same community. The poor had names and were known.

The intent of this research is not to recreate the Old or New Testament culture throughout North America. The research intends to understand if through a combination of cognitive and social constructivism learning theories, including studying what Scripture says about the poor and humbly becoming students and engaging the poor, Heritage Baptist participants will have a new understanding of poverty that would be transferrable to their global ministries. This research will be conducted in a manner that will be honoring to God, and the poor, “Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him” (Prov 14:31).
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Chapter Three will describe the research design and methodology for the study. As previously noted, the research design is a combination of cognitive and social constructivism learning theories. The research design includes two sets of participants: the Heritage Baptist Church participants and the Park View Community Mission participants.

The primary focus of this qualitative phenomenological action research is focusing on people’s lives lived, experiences, and realities. This includes looking at the lives and experiences of both the Heritage and Park View participants. Qualitative research is grounded in individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants make sense of their surroundings.

This qualitative phenomenological action research was focused on the Heritage participants asking the Park View participants open-ended questions from three categories. There were questions to understand their personal story, questions to understand their physical and social needs, and questions related to faith. These guided reflections were intended to let the Park View participant know the Heritage participant was there to listen. The interview process not only provided an opportunity to hear the Park View participant's views and perspectives on poverty and life but also symbolically recognizes the legitimacy of their experience. The goal of the research was not to fix poverty or to fix people, but to listen to the lives of those experiencing economic poverty. The interviews were designed for the Heritage participant to

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225 Ibid.
practice listening skills and to encourage the Park View participant to share as much of their story as they are willing to tell. The interviews were characterized as informal and each averaged 45 minutes and ranged from the shortest of 25 minutes to the longest being one hour and ten minutes.

There are no actual rules or guidelines on how many people should be interviewed for qualitative research. Sensing emphasizes, "quality is more important than quantity." For phenomenological studies, John Creswell recommends five to twenty-five participants. Janice Morse sets the number lower, with a minimum of six participants. For this phenomenological study, the original plan was to recruit 12 Heritage participants to interview 24 Park View participants. Because the original design did not attract the set number of Heritage participants, the plan was revised. This chapter includes the original and revised research design and methodology.

**Original Research Design and Methodology**

The following were the six steps in the original design and methodology to facilitate the Heritage participant interviews of two Park View participants:

1. The selection of the Heritage participants.
2. Classroom Training: The researcher will conduct a single classroom training event with all Heritage participants to be held at Heritage Baptist Church. In the original research design, this was a four-hour commitment. The training time included

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participant introductions, research project overview, a timeline, and the signing of consent forms. Training topics included:

a. Introduction to Poverty  
b. The Bible and the Poor  
c. Approaches and Best Practices of Poverty Assistance  
d. Multidimensional Factors of Poverty  
e. Interviewing Techniques, Skills Training, and review of Interview Questions and Fieldwork Assessment Form

3. Pre-Fieldwork Interview. The researcher will conduct a pre-fieldwork interview with the Heritage participant. This activity would take place in a restaurant walking distance to the Park View Community Mission.

4. Fieldwork. The Heritage participants will interview two participants at the Park View Community Mission. The researcher will accompany the Park View participant as an observer.

5. Post-Fieldwork Interview. The researcher will conduct a post-fieldwork interview with the Heritage participant. This activity would take place in a restaurant walking distance to the Park View Community Mission. Steps 3, 4, and 5 would be combined on a single day and would be approximately a four-hour commitment.

6. Focus Group event with all Heritage participants. This externally facilitated event was designed as a four-hour event held at Heritage Baptist Church. The following topics were to be discussed, with each participant answering:

a. What was the most significant learning from the program?  
b. What factors need to be considered in sharing the gospel with the poor?
c. What other groups that would benefit from this program?

d. What assessments and recommendations for program improvement?

e. What recommendations for improving tools used to assess poverty knowledge?

f. What recommendations would be good for assessing the program impact after overseas travel?

Original Recruitment of Heritage Participants

Recruitment is the first step in the research, and this did not begin until receiving permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to begin the research (see Appendix A). The recruitment for the Heritage participants was accomplished through the Sunday church service bulletin announcement for all attendees to read. The original bulletin recruitment brief ran for two successive weeks and contained the following announcement:

Research Project: Twelve volunteers are needed to participate in a research project with HBC’s local ministry partner Park View Community Mission. The focus is on how local poverty alleviation programs can be leveraged to prepare the church for local and global missions. Approximately twelve total hours will be needed for the project. Please contact Darren Hercyk at dehercyk@liberty.edu for more information.

After potential candidates responded to the announcement in the church bulletin, they received more information about the research. Those responding to the church bulletin announcement were provided an overview of the research, the criteria for selecting participants, and steps to participate in the research (see Attachment B). After two weeks, a total of four persons replied to the church bulletin announcement.

Original Criteria for Selecting Heritage Baptist Church Participants

The research selection criteria required that all participants be active Heritage Baptist Church members at least 18 years of age. The ideal mix of participants would be six from the
Missionary Development Program (MDP) and six from outside of the program, balanced in
gender, and age (half 18 to 35 and half 36 and above). The selection criteria also included the
participant's ability to commit to approximately 12 hours of activities spread over three separate
events.

**Original Steps to Participate in Research**

To apply to participate in the research, interested individuals sent an email to the
researcher with their name, their ability to attend the three research events, church membership
status, MDP program status, gender, and age. For their age, interested individuals only needed to
indicate if they were in the 18-35 or 36-above category. Heritage participants that met the criteria
above would be selected in the order of the date applied with a maximum of 12 participants in
the research. All potential Heritage participants would need to be approved by church leadership
before the final notification. Church leadership would ensure the candidates were church
members in good standing. As noted above, only four persons replied to the church bulletin
announcement, and none of those individuals took the next step of applying to participate. The
feedback received was that potential participants could not commit to volunteering to three
separate events.

**Revised Research Design and Methodology**

With the lack of Heritage applicants, the research design was revised. A single five-hour
research event replaced the previous commitment of three separate four-hour events. To
accomplish this change, the training was reduced from four hours to one hour, and the focus
group was eliminated. The Heritage participant interview with two Park View participants did
not change. The revised research design included the following steps:
1. The selection of the Heritage participants

2. Pre-Fieldwork Interview and Training. The researcher provided an overview of the day that included signing the consent form. This was followed by training and the researcher interviewing the Heritage participant.

3. Fieldwork. The Heritage participants interviewed Park View participants at the Park View Community Mission. The researcher accompanied the Heritage participant as an observer.

4. Post-Fieldwork Interview. The researcher conducted a post-fieldwork interview with the Heritage participant. This activity also took place in a restaurant walking distance to the Park View Community Mission. Steps 2, 3, and 4 were conducted on a single day and were able to be completed in five hours.

Revised Recruitment of Heritage Participants

Recruitment for the Heritage participants again took place through the Sunday church service bulletin for all attendees to read. The revised bulletin recruitment brief ran for two successive weeks and contained the following announcement:

Research Project: Twelve volunteers are needed to participate in a research project with HBC's local ministry partner Park View Community Mission. The focus is on how local poverty alleviation programs can be used to prepare the church for local and global missions. Approximately five hours will be needed for the project. Please contact Darren Hercyk at dehercyk@liberty.edu for more information.

After potential candidates responded to the announcement in the church bulletin, they received more information about the research. A total of 12 persons replied to the church bulletin announcement. Of these, ten participated in the research (see Table 5). Those responding to the church bulletin announcement were provided an overview of the research, the criteria for selecting participants, and steps to participate in the research (see Attachment C).
Revised Criteria for Selecting Heritage Baptist Church Participants

The research selection criteria required that all participants be active Heritage Baptist Church members at least 18 years of age. The ideal mix of participants would be six from the Missionary Development Program and six from outside of the programs, balanced in gender, and age (half 18 to 35 and half 36 and above). The criteria also included the ability to commit to approximately five hours of activities in a single event.

Revised Steps to Participate in Research

To apply to participate in the research, interested individuals sent an email to the researcher with their name, their ability to attend one five-hour event on a Thursday or Saturday morning, church membership status, MDP program status, gender, and age. For the age requirement, interested individuals only needed to indicate if they were in the 18-35 or 36-above category. All potential Heritage participants were approved by church leadership before notification.

Heritage Participant Pre-Fieldwork Interview and Training

Directly before the interviews with the Park View participants, the researcher met with the Heritage participant at a restaurant walking distance to Park View Community Mission. The researcher provided an overview of the events of the next five hours and had the Heritage participant sign the consent form. IRB provided the consent forms that were signed by the Heritage participants (see Appendix D).

Heritage Participant Training

Following the overview, the researcher provided training for the Heritage participant. The purpose of the training was to provide an overview of poverty and the skills to interview the Park
View participant. The training was delivered using a PowerPoint from the researcher's laptop, and the Heritage participant was provided a paper copy of the presentation to allow them to take notes (see Appendix E). The training contained in the PowerPoint included the following topics:

1. **Introduction to Research and Poverty.** This training section introduced the Heritage participant to qualitative research. The primary focus of qualitative phenomenological action research is to learn about how others live their lives. Qualitative research is grounded in individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers are most interested in hearing stories. In this research, there is not a focus on fixing poverty or fixing people. Also included in the introduction are the basic terms of economic poverty.

2. **The Bible and the Poor.** This training section provided an overview of the poor in the Old and New Testament. From the Old Testament, the crown of God's handiwork is human life. It is this unique position and relationship with God that gives all humans dignity. Since all human life has been created in the image of God, there is no person or class of humans lesser than others. The human family has one kindship. There is diversity within the human family. In working with the poor, it is essential to remember that we do not give other people dignity; God has already given it to them. We must work to affirm the dignity of others. Also included in the OT review is how the poor were integrated into the community, OT laws, and the three reasons for poverty in Scripture. From the New Testament is Jesus' love for the poor, engaging the poor, identifying with the poor, and showing concern for the poor. Scripture does not reflect that Jesus saw the poor as a project or His mission was to end poverty. Jesus wanted His followers to bring the poor and marginalized into their own lives and the life of the church to be members of the
Christian community. Also included in the NT training was the lesson on what Scripture says about being a slave and serving.

3. **Multidimensional Factors of Poverty.** This training section provided an overview of the multiple factors that include unemployment, lack of education, the need for health care, transportation, employment, childcare, security, housing access, and infrastructure, and addiction of family members. The training also included the interdependency between the factors and the uniqueness of each person’s situation. There is an emphasis on going slow to understand the complexities of poverty before attempting to jump in with funding to attempt to fix the problems.

4. **Approaches used in Poverty Assistance.** Starting with William Carey, the training provided a review of the different interventions and opportunities to address physical, social, and spiritual needs. Also included is a review of charity, emergency response, and rehabilitation, and long-term development. The lessons provide some key concepts from *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... And You* and *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse It)*. The lesson also emphasizes looking for ministry opportunities that require more time than money, and that can simultaneously address physical and social along with spiritual needs.

5. **Is God Working with the Poor in Lynchburg?** This training section provided two case studies on how the local church was engaging the poor. From *Under the Overpass: A Journey of Faith on the Streets of America*, the author shares his feelings of isolation experienced while living on the street, “In fact, walking into a church where we hoped to find genuine fellowship only to be met by condescension or suspicion or disingenuous
flattery which was the worst kind of rejection.”

From *Dignity: Seeking Respect in Back Row America*, the author shares his observations from his cross-country journey engaging the poor, “In their mind the only places on the streets that regularly treat them like humans, that offer them a seat to sit in, an ear to listen, and really understand their past are churches. They are everywhere. . . . They walk inside the church and immediately they meet people that get them.”

In *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, Blackaby encourages the reader to “Watch to see where God is working and join Him in His work.”

Through the questions that the Heritage participant will ask the Park View participant, the research will attempt to understand how God is working in the lives of the poor in Lynchburg.

6. **Interviewing Techniques and Skills Training.** This training section began with an understanding of cross-socioeconomic communication from *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*. This emphasized the hidden rules among poverty, middle, and wealth classes.

This was followed by watching a video by Larry King, where he explained his interviewing style, asking open-ended questions, and putting the interviewee at ease. After the video, the researcher reviewed the list of Interviewing Basics (see Table 1 below) and the Standardized Interview Questions the

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234 Larry King, interview by Cenk Uygur, Los Angeles, CA, March 26, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YqNyfeIyNc>
Heritage participant used when interviewing the Park View participant (see Table 2 below).

Table 1

Interviewing Basics for the Heritage Participant to put into practice during the Park View interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewing Basics to Affirm Dignity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Type of Questions: Ask Open-Ended Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Posture: Have the posture and attitude of a student. Think about Larry King’s posture in the video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Silence: A long pause indicates you are ready to hear more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Follow the Conversation: After you get the first question out, listen to what they are telling you. They will tell you where they would like to go with the questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use Extension or Clarification statements: “Tell me more about…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Standardized Interview Questions the Heritage Participant asked the Park View Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical/Social Needs Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How have the resources you have received in the last year (food, health, utility support, education) helped you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the single biggest need in Lynchburg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the most helpful support you are receiving in Lynchburg (This can be from Park View, the government, or any other non-profit)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can you share any need that no one is providing in Lynchburg that we wish that Park View would provide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there any services that are being provided that are not useful?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

235 Sensing, Qualitative Research, 86-88.
236 Larry King, interview by Cenk Uygur.
237 Sensing, Qualitative Research, 110.
238 Ibid., 103.
239 Ibid., 86-88.
240 Ibid.
Knowing Their Story Questions

1. How would you describe the last year of your life?
2. What were the events that led you to receive services at Park View Mission?
3. Do you stay with family? If so, can you share more about your family?
4. Where did you grow up? Tell me about the time when you were in 4th grade (nine years old)? What was life like at that time?
5. When growing up, what were your dreams and aspirations?

Faith in the City Questions

1. What has been your experience with the church in Lynchburg?
2. Are churches accessible in the city? Where would someone who was struggling go for spiritual support?
3. Which churches or ministries that have been the most helpful to those in need?
4. How important is faith in your life and in the lives of those who come to the Park View Community Mission?
5. If someone were to say, "God is working in the city," how do you answer that? How is God working?

Table 2 Note: The Heritage participants were trained to only ask the first question for each of the three topics. After asking the first question, Heritage participants were to practice Follow the Conversation from the Interviewing Basics. The additional questions in each section were only used if the conversation did not proceed smoothly. The sequence of questions was modified during actual interviews. This will be discussed later in Results, Chapter 4.

Pre-Fieldwork Interview

Using Table 3 below, the researcher proceeded with asking the Heritage participant Grand Tour open-ended questions designed to enable the Heritage participants to share their background and understanding of poverty. The researcher also used that time to model the Interviewing Basics in Table 1.

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241 Sensing, Qualitative Research, 86-88.
Table 3

*Standardized Interview Questions the Researcher asked Heritage Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How long have you lived in Lynchburg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Where did you grow up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Rural, Urban, Affluent, Poor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Where did you fit into this socio-economic picture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. What was your life like in 4th grade (when you were 9)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Did you have interactions with the poor growing up? Explain?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience and Training Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In your adult life, have you or your church been involved with working with the poor locally or internationally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Relief, Long-term Development, or Charity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Was there a spiritual component? Explain?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Was there a combined social and spiritual component?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Were you aware of any long-term change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you ever had an intentional meeting with someone in poverty to hear their story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What was the most informative part of the training you just received? Can you provide an example of how this would have been helpful in the past?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fieldwork: Heritage Interview of Park View Participant**

On Thursdays and Saturdays from 12:00 to 2:00 PM, the Park View Community Mission operates its Food For Families food pantry. Qualifying individuals and families may receive food assistance one time per month and are required to register when they arrive. On food distribution days, the Park View Community Mission opens its doors at 8:00 AM to allow program beneficiaries to enter, register, and receive their food pantry access number. It is not uncommon to have a cue of beneficiaries waiting for the door to open at 8:00 AM and then continue to wait inside until noon for the food pantry to open. An early arrival allows the program beneficiaries to position themselves for the best selection of food and personal items when the pantry opens. Coffee and snacks are provided in the waiting area at the Park View Community Mission.
Following the pre-fieldwork interviews and training, the researcher and Heritage participant walked to the Park View Community Mission and met with a Park View leadership representative. At that time, the Park View representative would identify a potential program beneficiary participant based on the familiarity with the individual and their suitability for an interview. The Park View representative would introduce the potential participant to the researcher and allow them to explain the research needs. If the Park View participant agreed to be interviewed, the researcher would accompany them to an adjacent semi-private office to meet the Heritage participant.

To begin the interview, the research again explained the purpose of the interview and the plan for confidentiality, and then requested the Park View participant sign the consent form. IRB provided the consent forms that were signed by the Park View participants (see Appendix F). After the consent form was signed, the researcher turned the Park View participant interview over to the Heritage participant. The Heritage participant conducted the interview based on the training and questions received during the training session. After the first interview, the Park View representative identified a second potential program beneficiary participant, and the process was repeated.

Heritage Participant Post-Fieldwork Interview

Following the interview with the Park View participants, the researcher and Heritage Participant walked back to the restaurant adjacent to the Park View Community Mission. The purpose of this last meeting was to debrief the Heritage participant by asking the following general questions, questions specific about the Park View participant responses, and final

\[242\] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 108.
questions about their research project experience. Table 4 outlines the Standardized Interview Questions that the Researcher asked the Heritage Participant.

Table 4

**Standardized Interview Questions that the Researcher asked the Heritage Participant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What surprised you the most from the interviews?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was there any one question (of the three) that was the most illuminating?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Can you think about a question we should have asked?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How did you feel interviewing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What was one interview tip that was the most helpful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Was there anything you did/I did that affirmed the dignity of the participants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Did it get easier when you got started?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Did you worry about the next question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Was it difficult to maintain the posture of a student and not want to solve problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How would you finish the sentence, “the poor in Lynchburg are________________”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. How does that differ from a previous understanding of the poor?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Specific to Interviewing Each Park View Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What was the biggest surprise interviewing (Park View participant name)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do you think the Park View Participant felt about the interview?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Do you think we affirmed their dignity? What could we have done better?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What was the most helpful service they were receiving?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Was this charity, emergency relief, or development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Greatest unmet physical and social need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is something about their life story you will not forget?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Was there any comment that could have made the poverty culture list?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What did we learn about their spiritual life or spiritual life in Lynchburg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did they mention any multi-dimensional factors of poverty?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Why were they poor? 1, 2, or 3? Or just not sure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Was there a feeling or emotion that would summarize your interview?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Questions About the Fieldwork Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Based on the interviews, what is happening spiritually in downtown Lynchburg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. From this, what would be the best way the church could provide spiritual support to individuals, the Park View Community Mission, or downtown?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Based on the interviews, what is the greatest social/physical need?
   a. From this, what would be the best way the church could provide physical/social support to individuals, the Park View Community Mission, or downtown?
3. How could the church address spiritual and physical/social needs together?
4. What connections did you see between the interview and the lesson on poverty in Scripture?
5. On a scale of 1-10, what was your knowledge of working with the poor before this study?
6. On a scale of 1-10, what is your knowledge of working with the poor after participating in this study?
7. How could these training/interviews help Short Term Missions?
8. How could these training/interviews help your Discipleship Community?
9. How did this training impact your desire to work with the poor in overseas missions?
10. How did this training impact your desire to work with the poor in Lynchburg?
11. What provided the greater benefit: the training, or the Park View interview? How would you recommend improving either?

Data Analysis Procedures

Collecting and identifying themes is the primary way qualitative researchers process and analyze data.\(^{243}\) Data analysis is not a science in qualitative research, and the process remains somewhat of a mystery because there are few agreed-on canons or shared ground rules. There are no formulas for determining the significance of the qualitative research findings or for interpreting them.\(^{244}\)

Once the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews with the Heritage participants, the audio recording files were downloaded to a password-protected external hard drive. The raw data was entered into qualitative data analysis software for coding and clustering. Coding provides units of meaning to the interview quotes and descriptions. Great care was taken to


ensure that complex social dynamics were reduced to simple terms without the loss of meaning.

It is not the words that matter, but the meaning of the words in a specific context.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 302.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The focus of the qualitative phenomenological action research was to create an opportunity for the Heritage participants to enter into the Park View participants’ world to understand their lives lived, experiences, and realities. This was accomplished by the Heritage participants traveling to the Park View Community Mission and asking the Park View participants open-ended questions from three categories. There were questions to understand their personal story, questions to understand their physical and social needs, and questions related to their faith.

These guided reflections were structured to let the Park View participant know the Heritage participant was there to listen and learn from their experiences. The goal of the research was not to fix poverty or to fix people, but to learn how to engage those living in economic poverty. The Park View participants shared meaningful and personal experiences from their lives, not as a response to a list of quantitative questions, but through their stories. From the fieldwork, four themes emerged: Getting to Stories, Humanization of the Poor, Being a Slave, and Affirming the Dignity of the Poor.

Park View Participants

The stories the Park View participants shared revealed a diverse group of individuals, backgrounds, and experiences. The 16 Park View participants included nine females and seven males (see Table 1). While Kami and Kaden (pseudonyms used for all participants) were in their early to mid-thirties, most of the Park View participants were older. The majority of the participants were currently living in Lynchburg, while Tammy and Becky were living in

Amherst County, and Garth was living in Halifax country. Oscar shared that he was occasionally homeless, while Doug feared not being able to pay his rent and ending up back on the street in the coming weeks. Most participants were originally from Virginia or neighboring states, while Mary and Kaden were born outside of the United States. Using the U.S. Census nomenclature, the participants were diverse in race and ethnicity.\footnote{As noted in Chapter 2, there are racial disparities in North America. This research did not ask any specific questions related to race, ethnicity, or disparities, and did not attempt to separate the data in that manner. The methodologies used in this research would support future research related to those important topics.}

Ten of the Park View participants indicated they were disabled, which contributed to their need for food assistance. Through the interviews, stories of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and imprisonment were shared. Becky and Elizabeth both shared their stories of victory over substance abuse and the freedom they now experience. Franny was a pastor, and her family needed food assistance while her spouse was finishing his education. Some of the Park View participants shared childhood stories of close families and loving parents. Others shared stories of fear, abuse, and neglect. Some of the stories pointed toward generational poverty, while others were situational.

From the stories shared, all the Park View participants shared that they had a church or faith background. Some were actively involved with the church today, while others were not.

\footnote{“Race and Ethnicity,” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 9, 2019, \url{https://www.census.gov/mso/www/training/pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf}. Note: The Census Bureau defines race as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race. Survey respondents may report multiple races. Ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken into two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics may report as any race.}
(this will be discussed further in Chapter 5). All the participants expressed their appreciation for the Park View Community Mission. This appreciation included the material resources they received and the way they were welcomed and received. Some of the participants thought that the Park View Community Mission was a church. One theme that ran through the Park View interviews was the participant’s social isolation and their desire for more relationships and a feeling of belonging to a community (this will also be discussed further in Chapter 5.) No two persons or situations leading the Park View participants to the Park View Community Mission for support were identical. Based on the 16 interviews, those receiving assistance at the Park View Community Mission were not a homogeneous group.

**Heritage Participants**

As noted in Chapter 3, the original plan was for 12 Heritage volunteers, with the ideal mix of six from the Missionary Development Program (MDP) and six from outside of the program, with a balance in gender, and age (half 18 to 35 and half 36 and above). The actual participants varied from this plan.

As reflected in Table 1, there were a total of ten Heritage Baptist Church volunteers participating in the research. Of the participants, eight were male and two were female. Although there were only two from the Mission Development Program, the Heritage participants included two former long-term missionaries and one long-term missionary that was back in the United States on furlough. Two of the Heritage participants currently live in the Urban Core of Lynchburg while the other eight live in suburban or rural areas. The Heritage participants had varied exposure to working with the poor. Unlike the Park View participants, the Heritage participants were not diverse in race and ethnicity. Table 5 also lists the Park View participants that were interviewed.
Table 5: Heritage Baptist Church (HBC) and Park View Community Mission (PVCM) Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>HBC Number</th>
<th>HBC Pseudo Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>MDP/ non-MDP</th>
<th>PVCM Number</th>
<th>PVCM Pseudo Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/10/19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>non-MDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Doris</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>non-MDP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>non-MDP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tammy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kami</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/07/19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>MDP</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Becky</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Franny</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14/19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>non-MDP</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/16/19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>non-MDP</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21/19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Quentin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>non-MDP</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Female</td>
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**Theme One: Getting to Stories**

In Scripture there were repeated attempts by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes to trap Jesus into saying something heretical. In Matthew 16:1, the author writes, "And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven." In this
verse, the religious leaders did not approach Jesus with pure motives or the heart of a student. Repeatedly, Jesus knew their hearts were impure and their motives were insincere. To avoid this, as part of the pre-interview training, the Heritage participants were provided the knowledge and skills that included asking questions, listening, affirming dignity, and not trying to solve poverty or the individual being interviewed. By following the principles of the training and approaching the Park View participants with pure motives and the heart of a student, the Heritage participants were provided the opportunity to hear their story.

Repeatable Process

The Heritage participants were outsiders, new to the Park View Community Mission and the Park View participants. The process of the Heritage participant starting as an outsider and moving to being in a place to hear the stories from the Park View participants was repeatable for all 16 interviews. Diagram A shows the process used for hearing meaningful stories. The success was in part due to the initial introduction by someone the Park View participants knew and trusted, the Park View Director of Food for Families. Following the introduction, the researcher explained why they wanted to interview them. The Park View participant needed to understand the research, why the questions were being asked, and why their life experiences were valuable. The Park View participant needed to know the motives of the outsiders and that they brought no harm. This was followed by Heritage participant and researcher having the posture of a student and affirming the dignity of the Park View participant throughout the interview. Lastly, the Heritage participant needed to start with the right question. On average, it took only took five minutes to go from the introduction from the Park View Director to asking the Park View participant the first question.
The questions asked by the Heritage participants during the Park View interviews were developed with the Director of Food for Families based on her experience working with individuals that visit the food pantry. After the first interviews with Martha, it was decided that the best question to start the Park View interviews with was *How would you describe the last year of your life?* That question, along with extension or clarification statements and encouragement, provided the opportunity for the Park View participant to share his or her story. On this topic, Oscar shared his interview with Kent, "When I asked him how his last year was, and he said 'terrible.' He was being very honest, very open. This really prepared me to zoom in and listen to what he is about to say because he is hurting.” Quentin shared the significance of this question, "Hearing about the last year was where I found out what was going on in their heart and what their life history was and out of that came a fuller understanding of what they really needed. This told me where they hurt and where things got out of alignment in their life…the more we listened, the more they revealed.”

The second question that provided the most insight into the life of the Park View participant was *Tell me about the time you were in fourth grade (about nine years old)?* That question brought out responses that ranged from shocking childhood events to pleasant childhood memories. Doug shared that he was sexually assaulted at nine years old, and Becky remembers hiding under the bed when her father came home drunk. When Tammy was nine years old, she lived on the farm with her twelve brothers and sisters. She said life was hard, but all the children got along. Charles shared the insight this question added to the interview, “It was the most illuminating to hear about their lives when they were kids, talking about their parents.”

After spending 20 to 30 minutes on the questions about the last year and childhood, the interview moved to questions about physical and spiritual needs.
Multidimensional Nature of Poverty

During the Heritage pre-interview training, time was dedicated to discussing that poverty was the result of multiple factors and that outsiders should be discouraged from looking for simple “one size fits all solutions.” The Heritage participants were encouraged to listen for the factors of poverty shared as the Park View participant shared his or her story. There were no questions written to specifically ascertain this information.

During the Park View interviews there were numerous poverty factors shared through their stories. These included lack of access to food, education, jobs, health care, and affordable housing, jobs without a living wage, high cost of utilities, disabilities and personal health struggles, and security within their community, , housing repairs, and the lack and cost of transportation. The Heritage participants could see that the poverty factors were very different for the two Park View participants they interviewed. The one theme that ran through the 16
interviews was the desire by the Park View participants for more community in their lives. While the multidimensions of poverty are well-recognized, the one dimension of poverty that has been overlooked is weak social connectedness. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Cross-Cultural Experience

In William Easterly’s *The White Man’s Burden*, the author begins his book by telling the story of a 10-year old Ethiopian girl named Amaretch, which means the "beautiful one." Each day, Amaretch wakes at 3:00 A.M. to collect firewood instead of going to school. As part of his story, Easterly shares about a group of Western television cameramen who, upon encountering the depths of poverty in Ethiopia for the first time, went back to their hotel rooms and cried their eyes out. As Easterly shared, "That is the right response." During the interviews, there were tears shed when hearing the Park View participant's stories of grinding poverty and how they coped. Whether locally or globally, being moved with compassion is the right response.

As shared in Chapter 2, there were debates about the *culture of poverty* and the *culture of power*. This research was not designed to expand that work. From this research, exposure to poverty presented hardships and complexities that are outside the daily norms for the Heritage participants. Examples of this were hearing how Mary bartered for her medications because she did not have healthcare or money, Oscar felt concerned for his security while living on the street, and Becky gave up her children to Social Services as a result of her addictions. As previously noted, no two persons or situations leading the 16 Park View participants to need assistance were the same. For the Heritage participants, hearing the stories of poverty and how individuals coped

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was similar to a cross-cultural experience. By stating this was similar to a cross-cultural experience does not conclude there is one common culture for those living in poverty, but speaks to the learning that can be applied globally. As previously noted, the pool of Park View participants was not a homogeneous group.

On sharing about her experience hearing about poverty, Martha shared, "I don't think people can relate to running out of food in two to three weeks and then not being concerned with ‘What do I do with the last week?’ I think that would be completely foreign. That life revolves around the bus schedule or jobs is not something I can ever consider.” Charles expands on the interviews and the transferability to a global setting, "This is a completely different culture, a totally different environment that's right next door to me. So, if I go into that, if I am serving in that community, learning about cultural differences here in the states, when I go abroad, I am not that shocked. . . we will be more understanding."

For church people to address the physical, social, and spiritual needs in their community, they will need to understand the unique situations in which they live. On this, Robert’s shares, “We must meet society where it is, not where we think it should be or where we have come from.” 250 The knowledge and skills to engage society where it is and to understand the hardships and complexities of poverty can be learned locally to prepare the church for global engagement.

**Theme Two: Humanizing the Poor**

Jesus told stories of people and their lives through parables. Jesus knew what scientists are now learning; people are wired for stories and relationships. 251 If you want someone to learn

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something and not forget it, put it in a story about people.252 Stories about people can bind strangers together. The opposite is also true. Dehumanization, or what social scientists refer to as deindividuation, destroys empathy and compassion. When humans are deindividualized by having their human stories taken away, they can be treated poorly, as seen in some of the greatest crimes against humanity.253

**Humanizing Experience**

During the pre-interview training, the Heritage participants learned from Scripture that Jesus had compassion, and was engaged, and related to the poor (Matt 25: 31-46). Through this research, stories became the vehicle of moving from empathizing with people in poverty to engaging, and then on to relating. As shown below in Figure B, the interviews allowed the Park View participant to tell their stories and go below the surface. The Heritage participants experienced the humanization of the poor during the Park View interviews. The Heritage participants could no longer see people in poverty as a statistic, but a person with a name, dreams, and a story.

The humanness of the poor was explained in many unique ways. In response to the question, *What connections did you see between the interview and the lesson on poverty in Scripture*, Oscar shared, “The humanness of the poor. They struggle in similar ways that I struggle with health issues, family, dying, and marriage issues. They have dignity, and they are people struggling with the same things. Jesus saw the poor the same way as people, real people, not seeing them as a problem or as something to fix. We need to have community and walk together with them.” To the question, *What did we learn about Kami’s spiritual life or the*

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253 Ibid., 141.
spiritual life in Lynchburg, Charles shared, “She is like any other person in the world, she has her ups and downs. She goes to church, and then maybe for a time, she doesn't. She goes back then moves away, like many we know.” After her interview with Ruth, Lori shared the humanness she experienced, “Although life circumstances were very different, a lot of the emotions she expressed, a lot of the way she was talking, I could see myself in her a lot. I identified with her a lot.”

Figure B – Getting Below the Surface

On being asked to summarize his learning about the poor in Lynchburg based on the interviews, Kyler shared the Park View participants were, “Normal people.” To the same question, Karl shared, "Difficult to define. I pictured myself going in there and having a conversation with people who saw themselves as poor. I don't think that is what we did. They both talked about people who had needs greater than their own and how God was meeting their needs. I don't even know if I call them poor.” Based on the interview, Miles summarized that the poor in Lynchburg were "Important." Miles went on to share, "my previous understanding of
helping people that were poor was just giving them what they need. Then you walk away. You don't get to know them. You don't even know their name.”

In ministry it is easy to get busy and miss the people we are serving. When asked how the training and interviews could help the church’s short-term missions, Karl shared a personal experience, “We need to see people as people. I have been to Haiti twice, and I did not have one conversation with anybody on either of those trips like to ones I just had, and I deeply regret that.” When Samuel was asked how this experience could help the Mission Development Program, he shared, “It would be really helpful for our community to learn to listen well and enter into other people’s stories.”

On sharing her previous experiences of building a bridge from outside the community to the poor in Lynchburg, Martha shared, “I just know that when people talk to someone for the first time, they have a better understanding. They can see that this is a person, they love their family, they hurt, and they have battles. You can relate on that level.” When asked to share something about Doris’s life that she will not forget, Martha shared how she could relate from her own life, “Anxiety, I know how paralyzing that can be. It can keep you from school, from going away, and not being too far from home.” From this intentional engagement, the Heritage participants knew how to pray for the Park View participants. When a conversation stays at the surface level, “How can we pray for you?” will need to be asked. Once the conversation moves to intentional engagement, the Park View participant’s physical, social, and spiritual needs were already shared through their stories.

Getting Beyond Stereotypes

When working with poor or marginalized groups, author John Perkins highlights the importance of listening, “Getting to know the stories behind the statistics can go a long way in
helping remove the barriers and pull-down stereotypes and prejudices." The closer we get to people that are different from ourselves, the easier it will be for the fear to go away.

As previously noted, the root causes of poverty have been a common research topic, and over the last three decades there has been much consistency in the public opinion. The primary factor identified from public opinion has been the individual, with poverty considered the outgrowth of people's character and behavior. The other two determinants identified by public opinion are structural and fatalistic. From Scripture, the three categories, or root causes of poverty, are personal sins, oppression, and calamities like a natural disaster or death of a family provider.

When asked to reflect on why the Park View participants were experiencing poverty, the Heritage participants noted a variety of reasons. Caleb shared that for Becky, "It was a combination; I don’t think you can pin this down in her case. It was her parents and her own choices along the way. Not having a spiritual reference or faith of her own or someone to direct her in the right way.” Samuel shared that Edward had "lifelong struggles with different illnesses, whether it be vertigo or blood clots. I would say that he also has a significant amount of dysfunction in his family that has not provided much help." Miles shared that Kaden "was poor at home and poor when he arrived in the US. His legal status also contributed.” On the interviews with Doris and Steve, Martha shared, "I don't think we know enough. One knew enough to further their education but did not follow through on that; the other was in the military; we don't know what happened there." Kyler shared that Garth had "health issues and

254 Perkins, One Blood, 67.
255 Ibid., 164.
maybe some poor judgment in some of the things he has done, in some of the accidents." Karl shared that Mary was probably experiencing "a situation of not being legal, not having access to the rights to work and the rights to education. It’s clear that she works. She was sweeping the hallway right before we interviewed her. When she talks about having a servant's heart, she means it. Obviously, she is someone who does not mind working hard, so there is something else that has kept her poor." Quintin thought that the poverty Oscar experienced was because "he lost his job. He is an older man, and he is worn out; his body is worn out."

On being asked to summarize his learning about the poor in Lynchburg based on the interviews, Oscar shared, “The poor in Lynchburg are spiritual. Both the people I talked to are very spiritual people, prayed, read the Bible, went to church. They had community and were looking for more community; they had people in their lives that had recently been removed from their lives that have left a void. They were still looking for more community, actively seeking community.” Oscar went on to share that this was different from a previous understanding of the poor, “The spiritual side really stands out to me. Sometimes I can just equate a person’s economic status, being poor, with being not Christian. They must not be a Christian if they are poor. It is easy to think that. They deal with the same things I deal with. A parent dies, a marriage that has fallen on hard times, divorce comes. These are all the same things I have; I can relate.”

Karl went on to share his Park View interviews were different from his previous experiences with the poor, “I think that is a preconception based on someone on the street asking me for money. Most of my conversations with the poor on the street were people that solicited me. Not people I stopped and tried to engage and talk to. Panhandlers are what I pictured.” Quintin also shared how the interviews changed his perception of the poor, "My default answer
has always been they are poor because they’re not doing something or they have done something wrong that put them in this place and if we can just figure out what that is, that would solve all their problems. I have always known that it is simplistic, but until I engaged them, I did not have a framework to understand the whole problem holistically." The stories heard during the interviews were not consistent with the previous stereotypes of the poor.

Solidarity and Subsidiarity

The training and Park View interviews provided for the Heritage participants the opportunity to reflect on their previous relationships with the poor. Two terms that the Catholic Church uses to describe the relationships with members of society are solidarity and subsidiarity.

Solidarity reflects the simple biblical idea we are part of the human family and that, as relational beings, are responsible for the well-being of all.257 The Apostle Paul expands on the requirements on the human family, “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” (Rom 12:9-10). Solidarity is the principle that we are one human family regardless of our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world.258 As previously shown in Figure B, intentionally engaging and hearing the voice of the poor within their community allowed the Heritage participants to relate to and see that their human family is broader and more diverse than before. When Samuel was asked what part of the training was most informative, he shared, “The recognition that the importance of time to listen to people’s


story, enter into their story, reaffirm by belief and commitment that our Savior demonstrates incarnational ministry where he is stepping into people’s situations and walked alongside of them.” Hearing the stories of the poor locally will provide the listener the opportunity to tell an own authentic story of someone in need and not just repeat someone else’s assessment of the poor. Hearing the voices of the neighbor locally will also prepare the listener to hear these voices globally.

Subsidiarity is the principle that decisions should be decided at the lowest possible level. Subsidiarity validates and undergirds the idea of voluntary civil society in which people freely associate with and work for politics, ideas, and programs that they deem important. On this, Theologian Albert Mohler shares:

Subsidiarity is a basic principle of Christian theology, deeply embedded in the biblical worldview. If that sounds abstract, let me clarify. This means that the greatest unit of meaning is in the smallest unit of structure, which is to say that marriage is actually the centerpiece of civilization. . . . Subsidiarity also tells us that the most important government action is not at the highest level possible, most abstracted from the real lives of people, but rather at the closest level possible.

The origins of subsidiarity can be found in the book of Genesis with the creation of the family. As previously mentioned when discussing global development, there has been limited success imposing ideas from the outside, “Change in the societies at the very bottom must come predominantly from within; we cannot impose it on them.” After the Park View interviews, Quintin shared why this experience could be beneficial for Heritage’s Mission Development Program (MDP), “Before you go in and determine how to do in ministry, you have to

\[259\] Myers, Engaging Globalization, 230.


\[261\] Collier, The Bottom Billion. 121.
understand. You can only understand by engaging people in conversation and relationships. Sometimes we come in with our strategy from the West or from our perceived solutions without being there long enough to understand what is going on. We think we can determine what success looks like from this side of the ocean." Working at the grassroots level begins with hearing the voices at the grassroots. This principle was demonstrated locally by meeting with the Park View participants and hearing stories and their needs. On sharing how this experience could help short-term missions, Quintin shared, "It would show the importance of slowing down and listening to some of the things that people are saying they need and patiently evaluating what they really need. Rather than just assuming that we know what is needed and bringing it." The Park View participants had many good ideas and should be involved with the planning of any new programs. Hearing the voices of the poor locally can prepare us to practice subsidiarity globally.

**Theme Three: Needing a Christ-Like Attitude**

Through the pre-interview training review of Scripture and the Park View interviews, the Heritage participants were challenged to think about how ministering to the poor and marginalized fit into their daily lives.

**A Lifestyle with the Poor**

As previously mentioned in Mark 10, a request was made for James and John to sit at Jesus' right and left after they ascended. Despite the audacity of James and John, Jesus did not rebuke them directly but indicated they did not realize the implications of their request. In the kingdom, the way to glory is sacrifice, service, and suffering. In the kingdom, exaltation involves
lowliness. By aspiring to places of greatness, Jesus warns that the disciples were in danger of becoming like the Gentile rulers. Jesus emphatically states that his disciples must not be like Gentile rulers but like “servants” and “slaves.” The word translated “to be served” and “to serve” (diakoneō) is the verbal form of the noun in “slave” (doulos). The role of slaves denotes a subordinate position. As noted in Mark 10, being a slave requires service. However, the opposite is not always true; serving two hours on a Saturday or making a donation does not automatically make someone a slave. On the time commitment and obedience required for being a slave, Karl shares, “If you use serving the poor as the end result of fixing a situation, then it is going to feel defeating. As opposed to the mindset of being a slave to all, 24 hours a day, serving the poor and non-poor alike. That gives me a goal I can reach. I cannot fix poverty, but I can live my life that serves people.” Martha expressed concern that those living outside of poverty equate donations with service. On this, she shares, "I don't think people realize; they think that is how we serve the poor. It is easy, and we feel good when they write a check for $100." For this research, we were able to affirm the dignity of the poor by just giving them time. To the question of what was the informative part of the Heritage participant pre-interview training, Kyler shared, “The poor were always with the community, it was very interesting and very encouraging…Yet, it reminded me that I need to be engaged with the poor.”

Serving the poor today is further complicated in our compartmentalized society where, in many cases, we do not live among the poor. Throughout the Old and New Testament, the poor were part of the community, not living in a remote location. In Genesis 12, Abram, a man who

262 Brooks, Mark, 168.
263 Ibid., 170.
264 Ibid., 171.
265 Evens, Mark, 119.
had amassed wealth, traveled with the community which was poor. There was no "other side of the tracks," and there was also no safety-net beyond the community. As experienced during this research, the Heritage participants had to intentionally travel to the Park View Community Mission to engage the poor. Speaking on the compartmentalizing of daily life, Oscar shares,

The biggest thing I find in my own life is that segmenting of time. I find that I have to be intentional in engaging with the poor. It is not part of my regular community, my work life, family life, and church life. In all three of those elements, I don't have the economically poor. So, I need to be intentional to add this element. But, should be intentional or just make this a way of life. How can I make this a lifestyle?

Commenting on the Scripture review of the poor, Quintin adds a similar comment, “We cannot just drop in and bring help and then just leave. We have to be able to build genuine relationships with authentic conversations. If we want to address the needs, we need to be willing to pay the price and stay there. It is going to come at a cost.” As Jesus noted in Mark 10, being a slave requires paying the price.

Avoiding Projects and Programs

The contemporary management practices of executing a strategy by implementing projects and programs have reached the church. Desiring not to see ministry as a project, author Jared Wilson argues that churches should work to free-up member time to work on evangelism, discipling, and other ministry opportunities. On this, Wilson shares, “A bustling crowd may not be spiritually changed or engaged in mission at all….Like those breathless bones rustling about in Ezekiel 37, the activity may signal a life that isn’t real. An over-programmed church creates an illusion of fruitfulness that belies reality.”

While living on the street, author Mike Yankoski shares his concern with internally focused ministries, “Several of the churches that we

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encountered in Phoenix left us thirsty, too. Of course, the body of Christ in one city doesn't represent every city, and our experiences only tell a slice of the story. But we experienced big programs, big churches, and big talk, without much love in action, at least for two unappealing transients like us.\footnote{Yankoski, Under the Overpass, 150.} There is also a trend among Christian donors to support projects with a definable scope compared with open-ended mission activities.\footnote{Kenneth Nehrbass and David Dunaetz, "A Multiple Motives Theory of Church and Missionary Relationships," Missiology, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2018): 401.} This trend of projects and programs feeds into the rise in short-term mission trips, which is now a billion-dollar industry and has changed "missions" from a decades-long commitment to a week-long activity.\footnote{Michael Jaffarian, "The Statistical State of the North American Protestant Missions Movement, from the Mission Handbook, 20th Edition," International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2008): 38.}

The Heritage participants shared a similar concern with seeing the service to the poor as a project or program. When Caleb was asked how the training/interviews could benefit short term missions, he responded, “I don’t think it would.” Caleb went on to explain that “There is a problem with a project mentality when it comes to local outreach. As long as we see this as outreach to Lynchburg, I am really against doing it because it gives you the idea you can check off that box. It should really be a lifestyle and what our whole life is about.” Martha, with her experience in the city, shared the care required to know the person, “The question is what is that initial first introductory step that makes the other person not feel like a project. And the person that is doing it does not perceive it as a project. They need to perceive it as a way of getting to know someone they don’t already know.” Projects and programs resonate well with the North American individualistic culture that values hard work and achievement. When Jesus talks about being a slave and serving, he is emphasizing the attitude and commitment required to be His
follower. Being the slave that Jesus described in Mark 10 can be messy and difficult to fit within contemporary practices.

**Theme Four: Affirming the Dignity of the Poor**

The research design included two sets of participants: the Heritage participants and the Park View participants. The interviews allowed the Park View participants to describe their situations and put words to their interior lives, personal feelings, opinions, and experiences that otherwise are not available to the Heritage participant and researcher by observation.  

**Creating a Dignified Experience**

The Heritage participant pre-interview training emphasized that God has already given the Park View participants their dignity, and it was important that the Heritage participant affirms their dignity. The Heritage participants were instructed that after they ask the first question, they were to listen to what the Park View participant is saying. The Heritage participants were not to lead the conversation but to follow the conversation. With this approach, the Park View participants will end up telling researchers more than they ever intended to say.

The Heritage participants in pre-interview training also viewed a video with Larry King sharing some of his interviewing principles. On the simplicity of the interview, King shared, “I never asked questions over two sentences long” and “I ask good questions, listen to the answer, I followed up, I didn’t scream at guests, and I never counted myself more important.” In the video, The Heritage participants could watch Larry King learn forward and with great

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270 Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 103.
271 Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 103.
272 Larry King, interview by Cenk Uygur.
enthusiasm ask, “What’s it like to? . . .”273 King explained how to get his guest relaxed and more honest. Although King never mentioned affirming the dignity of his guests, everything he shared about interviewing, and the body language he demonstrated, were excellent examples to follow.

In addition to the King video, there were several other interview tips provided during the training. This included asking open-ended questions, having the posture and attitude of a student, becoming comfortable with silence after asking a question, and the use of extension, and clarification questions and encouragement. During Oscar’s two interviews, the Park View participants shared their life difficulties that included death, substance abuse, divorce, health problems, and the imprisonment of family members. During these interviews, Oscar provided the Park View participant the feedback of "I am so sorry to hear that.” On this, Oscar shares, "When they shared some of the deep struggles and hurts, all I could say was ‘wow, sorry to hear that.’ It is not just passing over them but pausing and sympathizing in those moments.” Oscar’s use of sympathy was so appropriate that it was included in the pre-interview training for the other Heritage participants.

After the Park View interviews, the Heritage participants were asked which of the interview tips were the most helpful. The most common response was learning how to ask open-ended questions and becoming comfortable with the silence after asking questions. On that, Quintin shared, “Ask an open-ended question and avoid the idea of how I am going to fix their stuff. Just hold off on that, hold off on anything that is going to draw conclusions.” For Samuel, the most impactful tip was "the reminder to have the posture and attitude of a student. That you are there to learn and that you care. Also, the reminder to affirm in them the aspects of the image of God. In both Garth and Edward, when we had the chance to do that, it was appreciated. In

273 Larry King, interview by Cenk Uygur.
Edward, he was tearing up when we acknowledged that he was a blessing to others. Everyone can do that." Charles shared the importance of the Larry King video, "It was important to ask a question and really listen. It is not about us; it was about them, who they are, and what the needs are here in Lynchburg."

When the Heritage participants were asked if they did anything that affirmed the dignity of the Park View participants. Martha shared, “Listening and not interjecting with your own experience. But making them feel important.” On affirming dignity, Karl shared, “Body language, attention, we really want to know what you think, we really want your opinion on these things. This is affirming knowing that someone cares about what you think or have to say.” Charles also shared, “At the end of the second interview with Kami, you (the researcher) mentioned her being a good mom, that her mom and dad really loved her, that she really loves her kids, and you encouraged her because she did mention she feels bad that she can't give the same kind of things to her kids that her parents gave to her. . . . I think in the end, when you said you're a good mom and you're doing your best, that was helpful.” On Samuel’s interview with Edward, he shared, “I think we started well in affirming his dignity. Calling out the things that he does for others, I do not think he hears that much.”

A Gift

The Heritage pre-interview training placed a significant emphasis on affirming the dignity of the poor. Initially, the emphasis was to ensure the Park View participants felt respected, comfortable during the interview, and to do no harm.

As previously mentioned, the initial introduction to the Park View participants was done through the Park View Director of Food for Families. Because of her relationship with individuals visiting the food pantry, she talked with several of the Park View participants after
the interviews. The Director for the Food for Families shared the following feedback from the
Park View participants:

The best way to describe it was that for our neighbors, it was a gift. The most common
response I received was a heart of gratitude to be able to have an opportunity to share
their hearts, what they have gone through, or open up about things they have never talked
about before or that they have not received the acceptance that they did in those
interviews. That response came in different forms: for a couple of neighbors, it was just
tears, and I hugged them. For others, it was a smile, and I could see that lightness after
walking out of the room. They looked more confident and felt stronger about themselves.
But whichever way it was, you could tell there was a heart of gratitude for that
experience.

Unlike the Larry King interviews seen on television, the Heritage participants were not
interviewing celebrities or persons of influence. These interviews were with the poor and
marginalized. What was intended as doing no harm by the affirmation of dignity, was received as
a gift. For the Heritage participants, this was also a gift for them to hear their stories. Author
Donna Hicks expands on this point, “When we extend dignity to others, we open ourselves to
becoming more caring, more loving, more compassionate. In a word, more human.”
Affirming the dignity of the poor created an unanticipated gift exchange between the Heritage and Park
View participants.

Summary of Findings

The pre-interview training provided the Heritage participants with both knowledge on the
topic of poverty and skills training about how to conduct an interview. When asked whether the
pre-interview training or the interviews with the Park View participants was the most beneficial,
most selected the later, although some indicated that the two could not be separated. On this,

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274 Hicks, Donna, *Dignity: The Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale: University
Karl shared, "Neither one would have been what it was without the other. The training we received on the front end was extremely helpful, especially on how to ask the questions. The Larry King video was huge for me. I think that made the interviews much better and much more meaningful." Quentin echoed the same points, “The training was really key to set-up a successful interview.”

For Oscar, ministry and missions begins locally, "For me, sometimes when I think of overseas missions as far and away . . . but I need to be doing stuff here that I am going to be doing somewhere else. . . . How should my life look now if God chooses to move me overseas. . . . I would be doing similar things in a different context. I want to be faithful here before somewhere else." Caleb expands on the benefits of the local experience and how this could be transferrable to working globally, "Being involved with people's lives and getting on that deeper level is going to make or break how effective you are in sharing Christ. It really comes down to do you want to sell the truth to people, or do you want to be the truth to people and show them the love of Christ. . . . It is easy to read a book like the ones you mentioned in your training without getting your hands dirty and having compassion for people and understanding what they are going through and how much they do need help."

When Charles, a church member and missionary on furlough, was asked about the value of the training and hearing the voice of the poor locally, he shared:

It is probably a voice that is ignored or not heard. As followers of Jesus we’re supposed to be reaching into the lives of those in need, destitute, and desperate, lost, and hopeless. I think if we hear the voice of the poor here right here in Lynchburg, it will be easier to hear elsewhere. It gives you a whole different perspective on life. I have never been worried about making it to the end of the month with food; it has never been a concern of mine. Inserting yourself into ministries like Park View gives you a perspective of how broken the world is and how much in need. The church should be involved in meeting those needs in a big way, physically and spiritually. If you are involved with that here and hearing people, hearing the poor, and listening to their stories, you are going to be much more aware when you do go abroad. Instead of learning something new, you have already
experienced it here. You get on the ground, and you are ready to go, ready to listen, ready to serve.

These thoughts reflect the potential transferability of the experiences gained locally on global engagement. These understandings cannot be obtained by observation or through simulation, but through engaging and listening to the voices of the poor. Because the people in need are most often not in our midst, there also needs to be intentionality in meeting with the poor.

During the pre-interview training, the Heritage participants learned that Jesus moved from empathizing with people in poverty to engaging, and then on to relating. It is not difficult to experience compassion and perform acts of charity when confronted with the poor and destitute. Engaging and relating to the poor requires time and commitment. For this research, the Heritage participants made the time to visit the Park View Community Mission and intentionally engage the Park View participants. The default to charity is a symptom of the lack of intentional engagement and relating to those in need.

In global ministry, engaging and relating to others, particularly with those who we do not naturally gravitate to or understand, is essential. Engagement provides the opportunity to understand a person’s physical, social, and spiritual needs, see the Imago Dei, and hear their hopes and dreams. With the poor, this intentional act can change stereotypes and humanize those who were once just a statistic. From this research, it was learned that the process of engagement can lead to three outcomes. First, listening to stories in a dignified manner is a gift and an outcome of this engagement was an ability to share the love and message of Jesus Christ in a relevant and understandable way. At the end of each Park View interview, there was never a need to ask, “How can I pray for you?” The Park View participants’ physical, social, and spiritual needs were already expressed through their stories.
The second outcome of intentional engagement was understanding the collective physical, social, and spiritual needs of a group or community. Chapter 5 will unpack one long-term community development opportunity identified from the 16 Park View interviews. The third outcome of intentional engagement by the Heritage participants is the potential for a long-term discipleship relationship with the Park View participant. Understanding if these relationships developed over time is beyond the scope of this research. Intentional engagement, listening, and relating to poor and marginalized locally can open ministry opportunities in evangelism, discipleship, and long-term development. These skills gained in local engagement can be transferrable to global engagement. Other forms of interaction like one-way giving, one-way instruction, casual acquaintances, or connecting on social media cannot replace the understanding gained by intentional engagement.

Jesus provided His followers the dimensions of ministry and mission, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The mission’s expansion is expressed geographically, but Acts develops it ethnically as well, so that the gospel crosses all barriers.275 This road takes us from people that are like ourselves, to people with different backgrounds and experiences. Ministry and missions start where a person lives, in the person’s Jerusalem. This is where we understand the people, language, and culture. From there, ministry moves outward to where there are some familiarities yet many differences. Although only 3.9 miles from the church, the experience at the Park View Community Mission was the Heritage participant’s visit to Judea and Samaria. For those living outside of poverty, this can

create cross-cultural experiences. The skills of engaging and relating to the poor and marginalized and understanding their daily struggles in Judea and Samaria will prepare the follower for the road still further from home.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research contributes to the limited literature on how the church can engage and relate to the poor living in their community. As noted in Chapter 4, this understanding can benefit the poor and non-poor, both locally and globally. Subsequence research could address two topics. The first is to understand and map who is already working with the poor in a specific geographical area. The second topic springs from the most common need mentioned by the Park View participants: being part of a community. Both topics represent an opportunity for the local church to engage and relate to the poor.

Mapping Ministry Partners

In their book Experiencing God, the authors share, “Right now God is working all around you and in your life.” Corbet et al. expand on the presence of God, “We are not bringing Christ to poor communities. He has been active in these communities since the creation of the world, sustaining them, Hebrews 1:3 says, by ‘His powerful Word’. Hence, a significant part of working in poor communities involves discovering and appreciating what God has been doing there for a long time.” God is already working in the urban center of Lynchburg, Virginia. The second topic for further study is the understanding of what churches are actively engaging the poor.

During the Heritage pre-interview training, the researcher contrasted the reception the poor received from the church in the books Under the Overpass: A Journey of Faith on the Streets of America, and Dignity: Seeking Respect in Back Row America. In the first book, the author shared his less than desirable reception, "In fact, walking into a church where we hoped to

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276 Blackaby et al., Experiencing God, 15.
277 Corbett et al., When Helping Hurts, 101.
find genuine fellowship only to be met by condescension or suspicion or disingenuous flattery which was the worst kind of rejection.”

In the second book, the author provided a more positive experience and assessment, “In their mind the only places on the streets that regularly treat them like humans, that offer them a seat to sit in, an ear to listen, and really understand their past are churches. They are everywhere. . . . They walk inside the church and immediately they meet people that get them.” These two stories provide a picture of the understanding of the poor and marginalized. Some churches "get them," while others do not. The Park View Community Mission is an example of a non-profit that "get them." All the Park View participants expressed their appreciation for the services and how they were welcomed and received.

As noted in Chapter 4, all the Park View participants interviewed shared that they had a church or faith background. Some were actively involved with the church today, while others were not. The responses from the Park View participants did not provide a comprehensive picture of what churches had ministries to the poor. For the Heritage participants, there was little understanding of who was already working in downtown Lynchburg. When Karl was asked about how the church could provide spiritual support to the city, he shared, "I think it is important to find out how God is already working and partner with those we are already there. We should not come in and see ourselves as the savior. There are already people like Mary and Kaden that are already giving from the little bit that they have. They have street cred, and they have an in. Finding out the persons of peace in the community and asking how we can help them." Understanding who is already working in a geographic area, or mapping, is a skill that

278 Yankoski, Under the Overpass, 222.
279 Arnade, Dignity, 112.
could benefit the local church, the local poor and the marginalized, and would be transferrable to global engagement.

The Need for Community

As noted in Chapter 4, the one theme that ran through the interviews was social isolation and the Park View participants desire for more relationships and belonging to a community. This need was not a response to a specific question but part of the Park View participants telling their stories. This section will look at how this could be provided in the context of the Park View Community Mission or similar organization.

Charity, Emergency Response, and Development

In the Heritage pre-interview training, there was time allocated to understanding the differences between charity, emergency response, and development. On charity programs, Lupton shares, “Food in our society is a chronic poverty need, not a life-threatening one. And when we respond to a chronic need as though it were a crisis, we can predict toxic results: dependency, deception, disempowerment.”280 One of the biggest mistakes made by the North American church is applying an emergency response intervention when development would be more appropriate.281 In charity and emergency response, the level of interaction is lower, and there is an emphasis on providing inputs like food or other physical assets. On this, Lupton shares how this may cause harm, "We fly off on mission trips to poverty-stricken villages, hearts full of pity and suitcases bulging with giveaway goods, trips that one Nicaraguan leader describes as effective in only 'turning my people into beggars.'”282 The Heritage pre-interview

280 Lupton, Toxic Charity, 7.
281 Corbett et al., When Helping Hurts, 101.
282 Lupton, Toxic Charity, 4.
training also discussed how money and the inappropriate use of charity could exacerbate the problems of engaging and relating to the poor. The experiences gained through this were achieved without financial inputs, just the Park View and Heritage participant's time.

The emergency response example provided during the training was the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In these verses, the man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho fell into the hands of robbers who stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and left him half dead. The story ends with the Good Samaritan extracting the man in trouble from his perils and providing for the means of his recovery. There is no indication that the restored man and the Good Samaritan entered a long-term relationship.

The Heritage pre-interview training also included the ministry and life of William Carey. Referred to as the “Father of Foreign Missions” and author of An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens, Carey also left a legacy of lasting accomplishments. After arriving in India in 1794, Carey founded the Senate of Serampore College in 1818, India’s oldest university, and founded the Agri Horticulture Society of India in 1920. Carey and his team also translated the Bible into 40 Indian languages and opened over 100 schools.283 William Carey found ways to address people's physical, social, and spiritual needs and can be a model for development in ministry. The Heritage participants were encouraged to look for new ways to engage the Park View participants and move from charity to development.

In development there is a greater emphasis on building relationships and imparting skills and, less of an emphasis on the material. There is an opportunity to know and understand the person. Time is the key required for development, and that is why it is often termed long-term.

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development. As shown in Figure C below, the ability to impact lives increases with the level of interaction with program participants.

Figure C – Opportunity to Impact Lives

Social Well-Being

During the interviews, all the Park View participants expressed the desire to have greater community and interactions with others in their life. After the Park View interviews, the Heritage participants were able to articulate some of these needs. When Martha was asked about the biggest surprise of interviewing Steve, she shared, “That he said that he did not necessarily prefer to be alone. Part of it was to be strategic, keep himself under the radar and out of trouble. He would be okay having more interaction with people.” When Quentin was asked about the emotion that would summarize his interview with Barbara, he shared, “Sadness and confusion.
Here is a woman that is looking for community, connection, and support but cannot find it. She says she goes to a local church, but people just come and go. She is seeking community but not finding it there.” When Caleb was asked what Becky’s greatest need was, he shared, “Food is important, but not a desperate need. I would say that it is more of a social need. Becky said she has a spiritual need. She really does not know many people. How many people does she know since she does not do the things she used to do? How many deep relationships does she have? I think there is a pretty deep need there for community.”

Poverty alleviation has historically focused on household income, and there is now an interest in expanding this to include social connectedness. Corbett shares this need and points to how the global poor can be misdiagnosed:

While poor people mention having a lack of material things, they tend to describe their condition in far more psychological and social terms than our North American audiences. Poor people typically talk in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolation, and voicelessness. North American audiences tend to emphasize a lack of material things such as food, money, clean water, medicine, housing, etc.

Social isolation contributes to multidimensional poverty and vice versa, and mitigating social isolation can improve the lives of the poor. The World Bank’s former Chief Economist Kaushik Basu argues that an individual’s sense of belonging in the community also influences their ability to reach their economic potential, “Once people are treated as marginal over a period of time, forces develop that erode their capability and productivity, and reinforce their marginalization. Such people learn not to participate in society, and others learn to exclude them,

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285 Corbett et al., When Helping Hurts, 66.
and this becomes a part of "societal equilibrium."  

287 Social infrastructure, places for the marginalized to gather, can be one of the best ways to repair the fractured societies we live in today. 

288 Sometimes the poor just lack a place to go.

Moving from Charity to Development

As mentioned in Chapter 4, all the participants expressed their appreciation for the Park View Community Mission. This appreciation included the material resources they received and the way there were welcomed and received. This can also be observed with the participants at the Park View Community Mission on non-food distribution days. Some are there looking to volunteer, while others are just looking for a place to go. The goodwill that the Park View Community Mission has gained with its participants is an asset that could be further developed. Although the Food for Families program is a food charity, there is an opportunity to leverage this goodwill into long-term development. One suggestion would be to establish a program to allow any participants at the Park View Community Mission to come for the community and fellowship they are desiring. The new program could practice subsidiarity by allowing a select group of Park View participants to be involved with creating the program. Other than serving a cup of coffee, there would be no other inputs other than the time of a facilitator and volunteers. Specifics of a new program are beyond the scope of this research. The potential of leveraging the Park View Community Mission’s goodwill into a long-term development program can be seen below in Figure D.

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This community-building activity would be an excellent place for a church to partner with the Park View Community Mission to engage and relate to the poor and marginalized. To be successful, there would need to be an intentional shift from the American project culture of “doing” to a more global culture of “being.” The doing culture emphasizes meeting goals and achievement while the being culture emphasizes the quality of life. John Perkins shares a similar thought on the church, “In our Western world we don’t do well with grief and suffering. Our rugged individualism has trumped the call to shared grief.” When Lori was asked to share how the interview with the Park View participants impacted her desire to work with the poor in Lynchburg, she shared, “I am reminded that a big part of supporting people is just going to be

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290 Perkins, *One Blood*, 68.
listening to them. Listening to them to best understand how to help them and just to be their support.” From the interviews, this is what the Park View participants were requesting.

Intentional engagement by listening to stories and relating to the poor and marginalized can open ministry opportunities in evangelism, discipleship, and community development locally, and are transferrable skills for global engagement.
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September 11, 2019

Darren Hereyk  
IRB Approval 3858.091119: Poverty Immersion: Using Local Poverty Alleviation Programs to Prepare for Global Engagement

Dear Darren Hereyk,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,
APPENDIX B: ORIGINAL OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Greetings _______ and thank you for inquiring about the research partnership between Heritage Baptist Church and Park View Community Mission. My name is Darren Hercyk and I am a Heritage member, adjunct professor, Doctor of Ministry student, and the research lead for this project. Prior to moving to Lynchburg, our family lived overseas for 18 years serving in missions through humanitarian response. This research was born out of the desire to link what is already happening locally to engage in missions globally.

Research Overview:
Twelve volunteers are needed to participate in a research project with HBC’s ministry partner Park View Community Mission. The focus of the research is to determine how local poverty alleviation programs can be used to prepare the church for local and global missions.

Criteria for Selecting Heritage Baptist Church Participants:
- Active Heritage Baptist Church members at least 18 years of age.
- Twelve participants will be required. The ideal mix would be six (6) MDP participants and six (6) participants that are not in the MDP program. The ideal participant list would also be a balanced in gender (half male and half female), and age (half 18 to 35 and half 36 and above).
- Ability to meet the total time commitment of approximately 12 hours (three separate events at four hours each noted below).

Steps to Participate in Research:
1. To apply to participate in the research, send an email to Darren Hercyk at dehercyk@liberty.edu with the following information:
   a. Name
   b. Are you a Heritage Baptist Church member (y/n)?
   c. Are you in the Missionary Development Program (y/n)?
   d. Are you able to make the three research events noted below (y/n)?
   e. Gender (M/F)?
   f. Age (I only need to know if you fall into the 18-35 or 36-above category)?
2. Heritage participants that meet the criteria above will be selected in order of the date applied. A maximum of 12 participants will be selected for this research.

Research Steps and Time Commitment:
1. 12 Heritage Baptist participants will be notified they have been selected by Friday, September 28th.
2. Classroom Training with all participants. This training will provide an overview of what the Bible says about the poor, multidimensional factors of poverty, basics and concerns of poverty alleviation programs, how God is working in the life of the poor, and how to conduct the interview at Park View. This is a four-hour time commitment on Saturday morning, October 6th at Heritage Baptist Church. Heritage participants will need to sign a Consent Form during the Classroom Training event.
3. Fieldwork will be held at Park View Community Mission located at 2420 Memorial Ave, Lynchburg, VA. This is a four-hour time commitment on a Thursday or Saturday.
between October 11th and November 14th. The following are the details for the fieldwork:

a. Each Heritage participant conducts two separate interviews with Park View participants while they are receiving assistance at the Food for Families program. The interview will use a series of open-ended questions to understand the life of Park View program participants, their physical needs, and how God is working in downtown Lynchburg. Darren Hercyk will be part of the participant introductions and be present during the interviews as an observer.

b. The trip to the Park View Community Mission includes a pre- and post-fieldwork interview with Darren Hercyk.

c. A Focus Group with all Heritage participants will consolidate the learning from 24 Park View interviews. The Focus Group will evaluate the value of the experiential poverty learning and review the appropriateness for other applications such as preparing for short-term missions. The Focus Group can also be used to inform the church’s future engagement in local urban ministry. This is a four-hour time commitment on Saturday morning, November 16th at Heritage Baptist Church.

4. Please note that the identities of the Heritage and Parkview View participants will not be revealed in the researcher’s thesis.

Please contact me with any questions.

In service and compassion,

Darren

Darren Hercyk
Adjunct Professor
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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Training Champions for Christ since 1971
APPENDIX C: REVISED OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Greetings __________ and thank you for inquiring about the research partnership between Heritage Baptist Church and Park View Community Mission. Yes, we still need volunteers.

My name is Darren Hercyk and I am a Heritage member, adjunct professor, Doctor of Ministry student, and the research lead for this project. Prior to moving to Lynchburg, our family lived overseas for 18 years serving in missions through humanitarian response. This research was born out of the desire to link what is already happening locally to engage in missions globally.

Research Overview:
Twelve volunteers are needed to participate in a research project with HBC’s ministry partner Park View Community Mission. The focus of the research is to determine how local poverty assistance programs can be used to prepare the church for local and global missions.

Criteria for Selecting Heritage Baptist Church Participants:
- Active Heritage Baptist Church members at least 18 years of age.
- Twelve participants will be required. The ideal mix would be six (6) MDP participants and six (6) participants that are not in the MDP program. The ideal participant list would also be a balanced in gender (half male and half female), and age (half 18 to 35 and half 36 and above).
- Ability to meet the total time commitment of five hours at a single event.

Steps to Participate in Research:
1. To apply to participate in the research, send an email to Darren Hercyk at dehercyk@liberty.edu with the following information:
   a. Name
   b. Are you a Heritage Baptist Church member (y/n)?
   c. Are you in the Missionary Development Program (y/n)?
   d. Are you able to make the three research events noted below (y/n)?
   e. Gender (M/F)?
   f. Age (I only need to know if you fall into the 18-35 or 36-above category)?
2. Heritage participants that meet the criteria above will be selected in order of the date applied. A maximum of 12 participants will be selected for this research.

Research Steps and Time Commitment:
1. Select fieldwork date. Fieldwork will be a five-hour time commitment on a Thursday or Saturday between October 10th and November 14th.
2. Fieldwork will be held at Park View Community Mission located at 2420 Memorial Ave, Lynchburg, VA. The fieldwork will include:
   a. Basic training. This will include topics on what the Bible says about the poor, multidimensional factors of poverty, basics and concerns of poverty alleviation programs, how God is working in the life of the poor, and how to conduct the interview at Park View.
b. Interviews. Each volunteer conducts two separate interviews with Park View participants while they are receiving assistance at the Food for Families program. The interview will use a series of open-ended questions to understand the life of Park View program participants, their physical needs, and how God is working in downtown Lynchburg. Darren Hercyk will be present during the interviews as an observer.

c. Debriefing. Each volunteer will have a debriefing with Darren after the Park View interviews.

3. Volunteers will need to sign a Consent Form prior to the Park View interviews. Please note that the identities of the Heritage and Parkview View volunteers will not be revealed in the researcher’s thesis.

Please contact me with any questions.

In service and compassion,

Darren

**Darren Hercyk**  
*Adjunct Professor*  
*John W. Rawlings School of Divinity*

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
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APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR HERITAGE PARTICIPANTS

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 9/11/2019 to 9/10/2020 Protocol # 3858.091119

CONSENT FORM

Poverty Immersion: Using Local Poverty Alleviation Programs to Prepare for Global Engagement
Darren Hercyk
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study to determine the feasibility of using local poverty alleviation efforts as a vehicle for preparing students and churches for local and global ministry. You were selected as a possible participant because of your interest in global missions and fulfilling the Great Commission. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Darren Hercyk, an adjunct faculty member and doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of using local poverty alleviation efforts as a vehicle for preparing students and churches for global ministry.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Attend a group poverty training event with all Heritage participants. The training event will not be audio or video recorded. This event will take approximately four hours on a Saturday.

2. Visit Park View Community Mission to conduct two interviews with individuals receiving assistance from the Food for Families program. Darren Hercyk will be present, and these two interviews will not be video or audio recorded. While at the Park View Community Mission, Darren Hercyk will conduct a pre- and post-interview briefing with you, and these discussions will be audio-recorded. The total time commitment for all these activities will be approximately four hours and can be scheduled on a Thursday or Saturday.

3. Participate in a focus group with all Heritage participants. The focus group will be audio-recorded. This event will take approximately four hours on a Saturday.

Risks: Participants who have not worked with the poor may experience awkwardness during the interview or while visiting the Park View Community Mission.

Benefits: The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include an understanding of the multidimensional aspects of poverty, experiencing what Park View Community Missions is doing in Lynchburg, and developing an appreciation of what missionaries may be experiencing while working with the poor.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.
Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. This will include:

- In any report published, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.
- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym, and I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- For the interviews that will be recorded and transcribed, the recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- All electronic data will be stored in a password-protected computer. All data in paper format will be scanned and stored in the password-protected computer. All paper documents will be shredded. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Heritage Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Darren Hercyk. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 434.386.7885 and at dehercyk@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. Adam McClendon, at pamelclendon2@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.
Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

____________________________________________________  ______________
Signature of Participant                                        Date

____________________________________________________  ______________
Signature of Investigator                                        Date
The intro slide is shows humanitarian workers in Haiti talking to a community member after Hurricane Sandy. It is important to hear stories. This research will determine if these global skills can be developed locally.
The training will provide Heritage participants the knowledge on the basics of poverty and the skills to engage the local poor. The research is not designed to fix poverty but to engage with individuals experiencing poverty.

Common Poverty Terms

1. **Absolute/Extreme Poverty**: An income level that is not able to meet the minimum physical needs because of the lack of income. The World Bank places this at $1.90/day. 10% of the world population lives at this level.

2. **Moderate Poverty**: The income level in which survival is not threatened. The World Bank places this at $3.10/day. 50% of the world population are at this level.

3. **Situational Poverty**: Poverty is caused by circumstances like death, illness, divorce and does not necessarily lead to long-time poverty.

4. **Generational Poverty**: Defined as being in poverty for two generations or longer.

*Note*: All of these definitions are a form of economic poverty. We know as Christians living in a broken world, there are many other forms of poverty.

Basic terms for economic poverty.


The section will provide an overview on poverty in Scripture
The training is designed to provide the Heritage participate the skills to affirm the dignity of the Park View participant during the interview.
The key point is the when we read the Bible, we need to see the poor in every story. Abraham was traveling with the community which were mostly the poor. For us today, we can isolate ourselves from the poor. This is not what God intended.

God's Promise to Abraham in Genesis 12

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan.

In the OT and NT, the poor were part of the community – there were no “other side of the tracks.” There was also no safety-net beyond the community.
The Bible provides three reasons for poverty and they are all a result of The Fall. Poverty will not end until Jesus returns.
There is much that can be learned about poverty from the story of Ruth.
Naomi experiences situational poverty through a famine and the death of family members. In the absence of government assistance programs, where did she go for help?

Ruth 1:1-5

“In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.”
The Old Testament Law provided for Ruth and Naomi and provided them an opportunity to restart their lives.
As noted, the Old Testament Law kept the poor and vulnerable as active members of the community, treated them with dignity and justice, with the goal of restoring them as non-poor members.
The widows, orphans, and sojourners were the most vulnerable members of society and mentioned in Scripture many times. Society must care for the most vulnerable.
Scripture does not reflect that Jesus saw the poor as a “project” and His mission was end poverty. Jesus wanted us to bring the poor and marginalized into our own lives and love them.

If Jesus returned to Lynchburg today, we may find him at Park View Community Mission. Why, because the is where His people are. Jesus will be looking for us there.
These verses are often used to motivate us to serve the poor. It starts with being a slave and then doing what slaves do. It is possible to serve (or write a check) without have the heart of a slave.
Jesus desired us to have the heart of a slave. This means joining the race to the bottom and not the top. Which direction are you heading?

https://flowvella.com/s/2no1/9D00E92E-3709-4DE2-AA26-5C18FD71C3DB
Jesus is washing the feet of the disciples to demonstrate being a slave. This is not an example of serving the poor. Being a slave means serving everyone.
Again, this is an example of being a slave and responding to the needs around us. It is unlikely the man who was travelling was poor. We need to be a slave to all people at all time.
Like the Good Samaritan, we need to respond to emergencies around us. Lupton is clear that just because people are poor does not mean it is an emergency and we need to give stuff away. As the Nicaraguan leader shares, there is harm that occurs when that happens. Jesus wants us to love the poor by showing concern, engaging, and relating with them.

The Heritage participants in this research will learn about poverty through hearing stories.
Poverty is complex. It is not caused by a single factor.

There are many factors for poverty. Remember that every person is different – this is complex and not easy to draw or solve! During the Park View interviews, the Heritage participants will listen for the poverty factors in the stories being shared.
The example of William Carey addressing spiritual and physical/social needs together

- Father of Foreign Missions and author of “An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens”
- The Founder of Agriculture and Horticulture Society of India
- Bible translator and educator
- Advocate of woman’s causes like foot binding

William Carey addressed physical, social, and spiritual needs. He did this by focusing on long-term development and is a model for us.
Robert Lupton shares the problems that occur when we only look at charity (short-term needs).

There are different ways to engage physical/social and spiritually. Teaching English or tutoring are excellent opportunities to address physical, social, and spiritual needs at the same time.

Long-Term Development (think William Carey)

Emergency Response (think Good Samaritan)

Charity

Opportunity to Change Lives

There is a time for charity or responding to emergencies, but our focus needs to be building relationships and long-term development.
Around the world, the church is seen as a partner in working with the poor. Because of their desire to follow God’s plan of showing concern, engaging, and relating to the poor, they have earned a seat at the table.

As noted by the quotes, the author shares his disappointment with the response by the church.

As noted by the quote, the author shares a very positive impression of the church’s work with the poor. What is the difference in the writing of Yankoski and Arnade? Part of this research is asking questions about what is happening here in Lynchburg.

If you want to help the poor, you must get beyond what you just see and let the stories take you deeper.
Our plan is to lead with a good question and the follow the conversation. Additional questions will be provided if there is a pause in the interview.

This chart was created to help the Heritage participants realize that the interviews will produce stories that are outside their norms.

Larry King provides some basic skills in asking open-ended questions. He is an example of affirming dignity.

Soft Questions? Larry King Explains His Interview Style, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YqNyfeIyNc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YqNyfeIyNc)
These are all essential in the Heritage interviews at the Park View Community Mission.

The Heritage participant will be asking three categories of questions. After the training, time will be allocated to reviewing the specific questions in detail.

The Three Focus Areas for Research Questions

1. “Tell Me About Your Last Year?” We are going to try to learn as much as we can about the person.
2. What are the social/physical needs of people in Lynchburg (and who is already providing services to the poor)?
3. What are the spiritual needs of people in Lynchburg (and who is already doing this work)?
APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM FOR PARK VIEW PARTICIPANTS

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 9/11/2019 to 9/10/2020 Protocol # 3858.091119

CONSENT FORM

Poverty Immersion: Using Local Poverty Alleviation Programs to Prepare for Global Engagement
Darren Hercyk
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study to determine the feasibility of using local poverty alleviation efforts as a vehicle for preparing students and churches for local and global ministry. You were selected as a possible participant because of your interest in global missions and fulfilling the Great Commission. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Darren Hercyk, an adjunct faculty and doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of using local poverty alleviation efforts as a vehicle for preparing students and churches for global ministry.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Participate in a 30-45-minute interview with a member of Heritage Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA. Darren Hercyk will be present, and the interview will not be video or audio recorded.

Risks: The risks in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks that you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: The participants should not expect to receive any benefits for taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include improving how Christians work with and share the love of Christ with the poor in Lynchburg and around the world.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. This will include:
• In any report published, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.
• Participants will be assigned a pseudonym, and I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
• All electronic data will be stored in a password-locked protected computer. All data in paper format will be scanned and stored in the password-locked protected computer. All paper documents will be shredded. I may share the data I collect from you for use in
future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Park View Community Mission, Liberty University, or Heritage Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Darren Hercyk. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 434.386.7885 and at dehercyk@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. Adam McClendon, at pameclendon2@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

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Signature of Participant

Date

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Signature of Investigator

Date