

Telling a better story by developing creative partnerships to bring spiritual, social, and economic transformation to communities around the world.

Development / Worldview Matrix

CDI School of Development & Biblical Discipleship

"The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." ~ Fmr. New York Senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Which is true? Is it culture or politics that determines the success of a society? Can politics change a culture from being progress-resistant to progress-prone? Is the concept of "progress" legitimate, or is it a modernist myth? By what criteria do we judge the progress of a society or people? Who sets the rules, who grades the tests, and who enforces the rules? All of these questions and more are important when we talk about concepts of development and what causes it to happen. The question, "How do we best live life on this planet?" is one that humanity has debated from our beginning. We are flooded with many different descriptions of the "good life" and how we might achieve it. Now, more than ever, it is important to understand what constitutes right living both personally, socially, economically, and spiritually.

Definitions of the "good life" vary depending upon who you ask or in which cultural context you are exploring the concept. Some might attach the "good life" to an abundance of money to be able to buy things and attain safety, security, and independence. Others might consider the "good life" to involve a certain amount of leisure time, or having their needs met, or having a good family life, or being healthy and personally prosperous or powerful or popular. While there are many different definitions of the "good life," there are some things that we all agree upon:

1. Basic needs, such as food, housing, and clothing are met.
2. Health is secured and proliferates - long life expectancy, low infant mortality, and a reasonable expectation that one can live a healthy life with access to health care in said society.
3. Employment and ability to prosper financially are available to all who work hard and use their talents for their own good and the good of others.
4. Access to culturally appropriate education is available to all.
5. Stable government that recognizes and provides for human rights, personal freedom, and security and safety in a society to the point that citizens feel free to engage in business and social endeavors without fear of harm, oppression, corruption, or the loss of liberty.
6. The ability to engage in personal relationships and marriage and family life unhindered.
7. The ability to pursue personal and community happiness.
8. The freedom of religion/to worship according to conscience and belief.
9. Freedom from fear of oppression, violence, corruption, and abuse.
10. Freedom of expression and speech so that an individual can participate in society and speak their mind and conscience in that society.

These are just a few of the characteristics that many, if not most, can agree make up the "good life." The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights as summarized by Lawrence Harrison in *Developing Cultures: Essays on Cultural Change* (Routledge Press, 2006) assess what the "good life" looks like through the following:

- The right to life, liberty, and security of person
- Equality before the law
- Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion
- The right to take part in ... government ... directly or through chosen representatives
- The right to assure that the will of the people is the basis of the authority of government
- The right to an adequate standard of living
- The right to adequate medical care and necessary social services
- The right to education

Some have complained that these cultural, political, and social characteristics are an imposition of Western values upon the rest of the world and as such, are a form of Western cultural imperialism. But, Harrison answers that charge by merely asserting that the large majority of people all over the world despite their culture agree that

- Life is better than death
- Health is better than sickness
- Liberty is better than slavery
- Prosperity is better than poverty
- Education is better than ignorance
- Justice is better than injustice

But, how do we get there? Some of these aspects can be seen as universal rights, but one does not have to look far to realize that not all people everywhere have these values or realities at work in their cultures or societies. Many countries suffer from the ravages of disease, poverty, war, crime, violence, corruption, hunger, and many other social and cultural ailments. There are cultures that experience high unemployment, lack of economic development, high rates of illiteracy, as well as oppression, fear, and massive amounts of political corruption. There are other cultures that experience family breakdown, depression, discontentedness, envy, overwhelming rates of consumption, obesity, and other social ills related to affluence and hyper-individualism. While every person is ultimately responsible for the decisions that he/she makes, we are also highly affected by the cultural air that we breathe and by the values and social mores that surround us, often without our conscious awareness.

The Role of Culture in Economic Development

"Max Weber was right. If we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes almost all the difference." ~ David Landes, "Culture Makes Almost All the Difference." *Culture Matters*. 2000.

Landes (professor emeritus of Economics, Harvard University) says that cultural values are what makes the difference in development. He explores several cultures that seem to be advancing and looks at the values that are helping that happen in the lives of people. Finally, he circles back around to the German sociologist, Max Weber and his groundbreaking essay, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1904-1905). Landes says,

His thesis: that Protestantism - more specifically its Calvinist branches - promoted the rise of modern capitalism; that is, the industrial capitalism he knew from his native

Germany. Protestantism did this, he said, not by easing or abolishing those aspects of the Roman faith that had deterred or hindered free economic activity (the prohibition of usury, for example) nor by encouraging, let alone inventing, the pursuit of wealth, but by defining and sanctioning an ethic of everyday behavior that conduced to economic success . . . Weber's point is that Protestantism produced a new kind of businessman, one who aimed to live and work a certain way. It was the *way* that mattered, and riches were at best a by-product. It was only much later than the Protestant ethic degenerated into a set of maxims for material success and smug, smarmy sermons on the virtues of wealth.

Landes responds to the predictable criticism of this theory which states that the time for Weber's thesis has come and gone by saying:

I do not agree. Not on the empirical level, where records show that Protestant merchants and manufacturers played a leading role in trade, banking, and industry. Nor on the theoretical. The heart of the matter lay indeed in the making of a new man - rational, ordered, diligent, productive. These virtues, while not new, were hardly commonplace. Protestantism generalized them among its adherents, who judged one another by conformity to these standards.

Two special characteristics of the Protestants that contributed to this advance:

- Stress on instruction and importance of literacy for both boys and girls. This was a by-product of Bible reading for everyone.
- Importance accorded to time. All over Europe, most of the clock and watch makers were Protestant because of this value.

Landes concludes his essay by saying, "History tells us that the most successful cures for poverty come from within. Foreign aid can help but, like windfall wealth, can also hurt. It can discourage effort and plant a crippling sense of incapacity. As the African saying has it, 'The hand that receives is always under the hand that gives.' No, what counts is work, thrift, honesty, patience, tenacity. To people haunted by misery and hunger, that may add up to selfish indifference. But at bottom, no empowerment is so effective as self-empowerment."

Role of Culture in Government/Politics

We are often told in the current age that morality and even law is constantly up for grabs and that it can/should be defined by what the people approve of in a given moment. Democratic Government is to simply reflect the will of the people based on what they deem best or most equitable/just in a situation. The establishment of law and the granting of rights based solely on the will of the people is known as *Positive Law*. *Natural Law* involves the rights of the people deriving not from the people themselves or from the government/lawmakers, but from God/Creator. The whole concept of unalienable rights found in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution derives from the concept of God-given rights summarized in Natural Law.

The Founders of the United States had a perspective on the need for the development of a certain type of person who lived a certain way to be able to enjoy the benefits of a Democratic Republic such as what was designed in the Constitution.

John Adams said in 1798, "... because we have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

George Washington, in his Farewell Address (1796): "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

James Wilson, Signer of the Constitution; U. S. Supreme Court Justice, "Human law must rest its authority ultimately upon the authority of that law which is divine. . . . Far from being rivals or enemies, religion and law are twin sisters, friends, and mutual assistants. Indeed, these two sciences run into each other."

Benjamin Franklin, Signer of the Declaration of Independence "[O]nly a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters."

All of this begs the question: How can some cultures be better than others in producing the aspects required for the "good life"? What if these virtues are missing? Or, is the very concept of one way of life being better than another just a culturally conditioned response that is a product of Western Imperialism and even racist ideas of superiority that are a bygone relic of the past? Are all cultures equal? Or, are some superior to others? Modern anthropology and sociology recoils at the concept that one culture might be superior to another (as we see in the rejection of Weber's thesis), but outside the halls of academia, people everywhere work from the perspective that some places are better to live in than others because of the particular *way of life* that some cultures promote and provide. Even though our egalitarian instincts might reject the idea that one culture is superior to another, much of the way that people live seem to indicate that we really *do* believe that there are better ways to live than other ways that we deem negative. If we can agree that some ways are better than others and that one should seek after, as the Greek philosophers advised, "the Good, the True, and the Beautiful," then we might be able to make some progress in discovering "how" one should best live life on this planet.

The Bible gives us a perspective on what God, our Creator wants from us. The "good life" is described thusly,

*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

What is good? What does God require of us? First, we are to act justly. Other translations say that we are to "do justice." This means that we are to act honestly and fairly with others and we are to consider the good of others instead of just thinking of ourselves. We are not to steal, lie, cheat, or oppress other people. We are to do unto others as we would have them to do unto us and we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, as Jesus reminds us. This type of lifestyle inspires trust in a society which enables relationships to grow and flourish beyond family lines. The more "justice" that is shown, the more confidence people have that they will be able to plan for the future, live stable lives, work hard and hold on to what they earn, and invest in themselves, their loved ones, their neighbors, and their community. If people are fearful that what they have will be stolen or that injustice will come to them, the incentive to work and give and act fairly toward others diminishes. Justice is an important mark of any society and it is rooted in the character and justice of God and in the hope that God is the one who will ultimately set things right. We see throughout the Hebrew Scriptures who God wants us to show justice, mercy, and compassion to:

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: Administer true justice, show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the immigrant or the poor. (Zechariah 7:10-11).

This group has been called "the quartet of the vulnerable" and we see God telling us again and again that true religion means that these people receive special care because the world system operates against them.

Secondly, we are to love mercy. If Justice is action, then Mercy speaks to our disposition or attitude. Justice and Mercy are connected as we "do justice" out of a heart of mercy. Timothy Keller, in his book *Generous Justice*, says that "To walk with God, then, we must do justice out of merciful love." We are to treat people better than they deserve to be treated. We are to care for the needs of others and put others ahead of ourselves. When we see broken families or broken relationships or communities torn apart by violence and breakdown, we are to step in and bring peace. The Hebrew concept of *Shalom* comes into play which basically means that things are put right with God and with man and that prosperity and health is had by all. Loving mercy puts one in a position where they help bring shalom to those who have not experienced it as one cares for the needs and interests of others in a world that can often be brutally cold. Sacrificial love is required of the one who "loves mercy" and we find that this love can only come from God Himself through Christ. In the development context, this means that we equip people to work and succeed through education, teaching them to read, and through giving them the skills that they need to step into their own vocations and steward their societies in the way that God intended.

Finally, we are to walk humbly with our God. Faith is required here as we recognize that all that we have comes from God and that He is our Source of provision, health, strength, hope, and prosperity. Submitting to God and putting your faith in Him breeds humility which overflows in thankfulness. Instead of striving and grasping for what the other person has, the man who walks humbly with God looks to God for his supply as he works diligently and ethically to steward the resources that God has provided him through his vocation. This sense of faith in God enables a person and a society to risk, explore, create, and believe that better days are ahead because God is good and is in charge of history. Humility before God causes one to recognize his own great personal sin and the sins of his community, put down his pride, fear, and defensiveness, and to put his faith in Christ alone for salvation, healing, forgiveness, and for recognizing that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

These three components express the good life and they can be seen again in the biblical admonition of Faith (walk humbly with God), Love (love mercy), and Hope (do justice) that we are called to in Matthew 23:23, 1 Corinthians 13:13, and 1 Thessalonians 1:3. When one lives the "good life" as God, the Creator, has outlined it, one finds himself in right relationship with God and with other people - and also with oneself. He can live with hope in what God has planned for the future, his mind is renewed and restored from the ravages of sin and selfishness, he sees people the way that God sees them, he is trustworthy and is able to trust others and work with them, and he is one who lives according to the ethical construct that God has laid out for him as he faithfully and diligently lives out his vocation in the world.

The result of a life lived this way with others living this way results in

- a flourishing of society
- planning for the future
- mutual respect and justice
- advancement in the arts
- and progress socially and economically as people live according to the way that God intended in their personal, family, work, and community relationships.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He replied that one should love God with all that he is and love his neighbor as himself (Mark 12:29-34). Living like this brings

one close to the Kingdom of God, which is the reign and rule of God in all things. Christians believe that the best life that we can live is a life that is in right relationship with God and with others. That happens through faith in Christ alone for salvation, but it also plays out in a myriad of ways as we live significant lives in the midst of culture and community with others and as we play out our God-given vocations. We are to interact with all of life and bring the truth of the Gospel to bear upon all of Creation in every way possible. Some might call this discipleship, but another way to see it is through the lens of "development."

Secular Liberal culture and philosophy has called for human development and progress for decades now. The idea is that those who are privileged to live in First World nations or in affluent communities are obligated to help those who are in Third World or poorer communities. The reasons given for the disparity between the affluent and poverty stricken societies stem from Colonialism to theft to oppression to racism to the abuses of Capitalism. Marxist theory promotes the idea of a classless society where everyone is essentially equal and no one group has more than another. This egalitarian state is the ideal and seen as the final movement of human development. Much of the impulse behind "development" to lift the poor through means of progress while simultaneously redistributing wealth and power by the direction of the affluent minority who are in control of the means of production and capital. While many of those who work in areas of "Development" are sincere in their desire to help people in need, they are often motivated by a sense of injustice because some have more than others and that those with less should be lifted up while those with more should be forced to give up some power, wealth, and control for the benefit of the masses. Ultimately, this philosophy leads to appeals to force, theft, and violence in order to "level the playing field." And, that leveling often just creates a new ruling class who start the whole process of oppression over again.

The aforementioned is not the type of "development" that we seek, however. We recognize that there will always be richer and poorer people in the world and that some will have more material possessions and power than others because of talent, intelligence, accidents of birth, and other natural and physical causes. True egalitarian outcomes are utopian dreams that can never be reached because someone always either has or is grasping for the power to carry out their own versions of what society should look like. Eventually, people get stepped on and those who gained power to recreate society find it to their liking and do not want to give it up. Instead, they accumulate more and more power for themselves while the people that they claimed to represent become more and more oppressed. The Marxist experiments through the Communist states of the 20th century should explain the folly of this approach, although it seems that we are trying it again, just in different ways.

Christian Development practices have a different goal. They do not attempt to recreate all of society according to an egalitarian pattern via coercion or forced redistribution. They also do not make material wealth or power the direct goal for people in poverty, necessarily. Rather Christian Development seeks to transform society from the ground up by restoring people within the culture/society to the *Imago Dei* (Image of God). It seeks to instill values, wisdom, and patterns of behavior that will lead individuals, families, and communities toward action that esteems all of human life and that restores dignity to people by calling them to align themselves with their God-given creative impulse accessed through work/vocation, planning, stewardship, and the belief that their lives have meaning and purpose beyond themselves. Christian Development is not just outcome-based, but rather, it is process-oriented. It focuses as much on the *Way* that we travel as it does the destination that we are aiming for. It recognizes that no utopian society can ever be constructed because perfectly because man is ultimately sinful and will corrupt even the best attempts to perfect his social standing. Rather, man has limits and must recognize those limits as he seeks to enhance his own standing while simultaneously working for the good of others. The limits that God places upon man are ultimately for his good if he will recognize them

and seek to live in the land that God has shown him through marriage, family, the church, community, culture, government, and other institutions.

When man lives the way that God intended - worshiping and obeying God and valuing himself and other people as those made in God's image - then he begins to counter the effects of sin, superstition, injustice, selfishness, pride, sloth, and jealousy of others upon society. When man becomes content with the life that he has while simultaneously seeking to move forward into the future life that God has for him, he is able to step out of the muck and the mire of poverty and oppression and also help others to do the same. The goal of Christian Development is not wealth and power and equality for all, but rather sustainable living according to the gifts and talents and callings of individuals and communities where everyone is working to make life better for themselves and others. The structural roadblocks of injustice and oppression should be identified, opposed, argued against, and done away with, if possible, but the goal should not be constant equality (because that creates another form of oppression) but rather, the goal should be sacrificial love from one person made in the image of God to another person made in the image of God. We want to see people living according to the purpose that God has for them instead of simply pursuing a materialistic dream. True Development happens when individuals, families, and communities reflect the glory of God in their culture and context and they adequately represent what it looks like to live out the ethic of Jesus in the real world. This is then, spiritual, social, and economic development from a cruciform, or Cross-shaped perspective as people seek to tell a better story of the sacrificial love of God.

Much modern scholarship is actually beginning to make similar assertions. While it is springing from more of a Liberal/Secular perspective of development, the evidence is flowing in that states that some societies "develop" better than others in the sense that they help create sustainable, stable, prosperous, and progressing living conditions for their people. These societies are what Lawrence Harrison called Progress-Prone (*The Central Liberal Truth*, 2006; Wolf, 2007). Conversely, other societies are Progress-Resistant in that they continue to foster corruption, poverty, crime, family and cultural breakdown, warfare, violence, disease, and oppression and are ultimately "sick" societies. All cultures seem to be moving toward either sickness or health based on how we experience and pursue the "good life."

Progress-Prone or Progress-Resistant?

Dr. Thom Wolf, an American sociologist, professor, and development professional working in New Delhi, India, has picked up on Harrison's thesis and has developed it further by applying it to the Indian context, as well as other nations. He has also written about the Argentinian sociologist and macroeconomist Mariano Grondona's Paradox and has added his own Cultural Typology of Humane Development (<http://universityinstitute.in/resources/?b5-file=72&b5-folder=55>). Wolf asserts that the principles of development can be considered by looking at communities, cultures, organizations, and even families and individuals from either a Progress-Prone or Progress-Resistant perspective. Since growth and development often happens along a continuum, we can actually assess if we are building in the right values and characteristics that would cause positive growth to take place.

Wolf gives us 8 Cultural Dimensions to evaluate. Where are you, your organization, and your community on this grid? Progress-Prone or Progress-Resistant?

Cultural Dimensions	Progress-Prone Culture	Progress-Resistant Culture
1. Time focus	Present & Future Oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ activistic arrow-time ▪ create the future 	Past or Present Oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fatalistic cycle-time ▪ receive the future
2. Work	Ascetic: Central to Good Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ satisfaction & self-respect, noble & indispensable in workplace ▪ savings invested for subsequent consumption 	Festive: Necessary Evil <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ real satisfaction & pleasure is outside workplace ▪ savings redistributed thru ceremonial consumptions
3. Merit	Achievement-Oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ merit rewarded ▪ conduct counts 	Ascription-Oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ relationships rewarded ▪ connections count
4. Education	Socially Central <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ literacy for all ▪ endeavour of all 	Socially Peripheral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ literacy for some ▪ entitlement by elites
5. Women	Gender equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ formal status of parity ▪ relationships of respect 	Gender inequality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ formal status of disadvantage ▪ relationships of non-respect
6. Sense of Community	Universalistic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ wider society beyond ▪ family trusting of others ▪ public concerns 	Particularistic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ individualistic & familistic ▪ nontrusting of others ▪ non-public concerns
7. Ethics	Rigorous Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uniform application of principles to all persons 	Flexible Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preferential application of principles to known persons
8. Worldview & Civic Pluralism	Public Worldview & Religious Pluralism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conversion in and out ▪ low social violence between groups 	Public Worldview & Religious Monopoly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conversion in, not out ▪ high social violence between groups

Source: Thom Wolf, A Cultural Typology of Humane Development: Qualities of Progress-Prone and Progress-Resistant Cultures Chart. San Francisco: University Institute, 2000. ©2000 Thom Wolf.
Adapted from Harrison, *The Pan-American Dream* 1997 and Grondona, *A Cultural Typology of Economic Development* 2000¹³

According to Wolf, these 8 Cultural Dimensions are fairly universal. Through that grid, one can identify how a person, family, organization, community, or society will function in the future.

Lawrence Harrison was the Senior Research Fellow and Adjunct Lecturer at the Fletcher School at Tufts University. He is the author of *Underdevelopment is a State of Mind, Who Prospers?*, *The Central Liberal Truth*, and co-editor, with Samuel Huntington, of *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. Between 1965 and 1981, he directed USAID missions in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, and Nicaragua. Harrison was also associated with Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Through analyzing over 40 years of data from communities and cultures around the world, Harrison developed and promoted the idea that development happens when certain cultural characteristics are in place. He listed 24 characteristics that work together to create economic and social progress. He does not list them in this order, but as I have worked through these characteristics over the years, I have noticed that they fall into the three broad categories that we see in Scripture of the FAITH/LOVE/HOPE schemata of the Apostle Paul's teachings. Or, we might also consider the JUSTICE/MERCY/HUMILITY ideas of Micah 6:8. If we make these comparisons, we find that Faith and Humility work together, as do Love and Mercy, and Hope and Justice. So, there are three broad categories, each with eight characteristics, equaling twenty four steps to development. NOTE: these categories do not define Biblical Faith, Love, and Hope. Rather, I am proposing that they are associated with those characteristics and flow from them. Obviously, for the Christian, everything starts with Christ and the Gospel.

Basic Worldview Needed for Personal, Spiritual, Social, & Economic Development

FAITH/HUMILITY/Head - Love God and others with a submitted and transformed Mind.

Rationality - James 1:5; Proverbs 4:5-7; Prov. 15:14; Phil. 1:9-11, 4:8-9; Matt. 22:37; Rom. 12:1-2 - See Rodney Stark's *The Victory of Reason*

Self-Discipline - 2 Timothy 1:7; Titus 1:8; Proverbs 13:18; 1 Peter 1:13-16

Rigor of Ethical System - 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Luke 9:23-27; Exodus 20; 2 Peter 1:3-11

Education System - Deuteronomy 4:9; Eph. 4:11; Matthew 28:20; Titus 2; 2 Timothy 2:15

Experimentation, Criticism - Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 4:1-3; Phil. 3:12-14

Dissent - Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; James 1:19-20

Match of Skills and Jobs - Vocation - Exodus 18:17-23; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31

Stability and Continuity - James 5:7-8; 1 Peter 5:8-10; James 1:2-8; 2 Cor. 1:17-22 -- FAITH

LOVE/MERCY/Heart - Love God and others with your whole heart/affections.

Equality/Authority - Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; 2 Cor. 8:13-15

Identification with Others - Romans 12:5; 14:1,10,13; Mark 12:31

Cooperation - Amos 3:3; Ephesians 4:29-32; Ephesians 2:14-18

Compromise - 1 Peter 4:8; Phil. 2:1-4

Trust - Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:25-28

Expectation of Fair Play - Proverbs 17:6; 18:5; Col. 4:1; Leviticus 19:15

Health System - Leviticus 13-15; James 2:14-17

Social Progress - 1 Peter 2:13-3:15; Romans 12:9-13:14 -- LOVE

HOPE/JUSTICE/Hands - Love God and others with all of your strength.

Future Orientation - 2 Cor. 1:10, 20-22; Rom. 12:9-21; Matt. 7:24-27; Eph. 2:10,22; Rev. 21:5

Justice - Exodus 23:1-9; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8; Proverbs 14:31; Matt.12:18-2

Attitudes about Work - Vocation - Col. 3:17, 23-24; 2 Thess. 3:6-13

Creativity - Exodus 35:30-36:2; Psalm 150; Genesis 1:1, 26-28, 2:18-20

Planning - Ephesians 5:15-18; Isaiah 32:8; Proverbs 15:22

Hard Work - Vocation - Ephesians 4:28; Proverbs 6:6-11; 15:19

Rewards for Merit - Matt 16:27; 25:14-30; Prov 19:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17-18

Economic Progress - Acts 2:45; 4:32-37; Eph. 4:28; 2 Cor. 8:7, 13-15; 9:6-11 -- HOPE

When a person, organization, community, or society is experiencing a continual renewal of these virtues and values, studies have shown that there is continual advance toward what most would agree is the "good life." This is what the Hebrews also called *Shalom*, or Peace. All of these virtues are also Biblical Values. As Christians, we know that perfection of these virtues do not save a person or make them righteous, but their presence as the building blocks of societal advancement do give credence to the idea that there are ways to live that are better than others that can lead to human flourishing and that definitions of morality are not as up for grabs as we are led to believe. We actually can live in the way of Jesus and "tell a better story."

Another explanation of these characteristics presented in a different way by Thom Wolf can be seen in the following table with 15 characteristics. From these examples, we can see the body of evidence explaining that how we think and act both individually and in society together determines how we will develop and grow as a society.

TABLE 2.1

Typology of Progress-Prone and Progress-Resistant Cultures

Based on the original structure of Mariano Grondona with inputs from Irakli Chkonia, Lawrence Harrison, Matteo Marini, and Ronald Inglehart

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Progress-Prone Culture</u>	<u>Progress-Resistant Culture</u>
<u>WORLDVIEW</u>		
1. Religion	Nurtures rationality, achievement; promotes material pursuits; focus on this world; pragmatism	Nurtures irrationality; inhibits material pursuits; focus on the other world; utopianism
2. Destiny	I can influence my destiny for the better.	Fatalism, resignation, sorcery
3. Time orientation	Future focus promotes planning, punctuality, deferred gratification	Present or past focus discourages planning, punctuality, saving
4. Wealth	Product of human creativity, expandible (positive sum)	What exists (zero-sum)
5. Knowledge	Practical, verifiable; facts matter	Abstract, theoretical, cosmological, not verifiable; debate matters

VALUES, VIRTUES

6. Ethical code	Rigorous within realistic norms; feeds trust	Elastic, wide gap twixt utopian norms and behavior=mistrust
7. The lesser virtues	A job well done, tidiness, courtesy, punctuality matter	Lesser virtues unimportant; love, justice, courage matter
8. Education	Indispensable; promotes autonomy, heterodoxy, dissent, creativity	Less priority; promotes dependency, orthodoxy

ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR

9. Work/achievement	Live to work: work leads to wealth	Work to live: work doesn't lead to wealth; work is for the poor
10. Frugality	The mother of investment and prosperity	A threat to equality
11. Entrepreneurship	Investment and creativity	Rent-seeking
12. Risk propensity	Moderate	Low; occasional adventures
13. Competition	Leads to excellence	Aggression; A threat to equality--and privilege
14. Innovation	Open; rapid adaptation	Suspicious; slow adaptation
15. Advancement	Merit, achievement	Family, patron, connections

There is much more that can be said about this, but it is important to note that the fate of individuals, organizations, communities, and societies and nations is not fixed or set in stone. Transformation is possible and it has happened before. It will happen again.

One other aspect must be considered, which is the concept of structural oppression and injustice. There are systems in place in societies that keep people bound both from a worldview perspective as well as from a cultural and political perspective. When laws are written to oppress one group and give favor to another, that is not justice and it is often not something that any one individual can do anything about. Examples abound such as oppressive governmental systems such as Communism or Hitler's Third Reich. Also, we can remember and reflect upon the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow Segregation, and Racism in the United States. These societies are not changed over night and, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, the wheel of injustice that would grind people underneath it to dust often must be spiked.

The Christian advocates for personal and social change in the same way. By prayer, devotion to God, sacrificial love for others, proclaiming the gospel and demonstrating the effects of the gospel, and by applying the truth of God's character to every situation. We have open eyes to systems of injustice that keep people bound in broken thinking and cycles of violence, anger, destruction, and despair, and we work to set captives free and proclaim the ethic of God's Kingdom in our communities. The Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 then become subversive time bombs that we drop into situations of conflict and degradation and we trust God to burrow the seeds deep and to create lasting change as we cooperate with Him. There are certainly systems and structures of oppression, but the way that we opposed those must be rooted in the sacrificial love exhibited through the Cross of Christ. For the Christian, everything begins and ends with Jesus, through whom God is reconciling the world back to Himself (Colossians 1:15-20).

Goal of Curriculum Development for Pastors, Teachers, and Development Workers to use in rural/urban mission schools for character formation to prepare students for participation in economic and social development:

- Develop 3 (Justice, Mercy, Humility) large lessons, 8 modules (Wolf) and 24 micro lessons (Harrison) that would introduce students to development concepts in a way that promotes character education with a connection to larger social/community development concepts. Create lessons for elementary, middle school, and high school ages.
- Develop lessons from both a Christian and a secular perspective so they could be used interchangeably based on the audience.
- Provide online support/resources that would go along with each lesson, but also make each lesson very simple so that it could be used in a village/non-resourced setting.
- Develop both a student's workbook and a teacher's guide book that could be translated into other languages.
- Develop activities that would reinforce concepts for appropriate age groups.
- Develop teacher/pastor training.

The purpose in doing this is to shape Christian discipleship in a way that would specifically prepare students with the attributes that they need to help build their societies in positive ways as along the lines of their vocations they love God and love people to the ends of the earth.

The ultimate goal would be to shape change-agents whose hearts were fashioned after God's will/ways and who were thus able to disciple their communities and their nations.