A PHILOSOPHY OF DEVELOPMENT
for
MINISTRY AMONG WOMEN IN PROSTITUTION

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To Dr. David Lim and Dr. Mel Luna
and to my Support Group
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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline and articulate a philosophy of development that is rooted in and emerging from, and at the same time speaks to and informs, the work of Samaritana Transformation Ministries, an evangelical ministry among women in prostitutes in the Philippines. It is rooted in and emerging from Samaritana’s work because its ideas and principles have come from the context of the struggles, joys, and lessons being learned in the context of that ministry. It speaks to and informs Samaritana’s ministry because every action needs a framework, a philosophical underpinning, a motivating and driving force behind and beneath and within it, giving energy, direction, and shape. And so this philosophy of development is dialectic, an attempt at synthesis within the action-reflection-action dynamic, a conversation between contemplation and action.¹ I hope to integrate here lessons being learned from a ministry imbedded in transformational development work among marginalized women in the Philippines, and a philosophical framework for doing this ministry that has integrity Biblically, theologically, psychologically and culturally. And, I hope that this framework is an active, dynamic movement back and forth between active ministry and philosophical, theological reflection, with both sides of the dialectic informing one another, questioning one another, and enriching one another. For, as Parker Palmer would say, action and contemplation, or doing and being, can really not be separated, but are a part of the same whole.

This philosophical framework is not only a dialectic between action and reflection, it also represents a dynamic exchange between my own intellectual thinking and reflection on my own experience and empirical observations, as well as that of my community, the ministry team of

¹ Parker Palmer, in his The Active Life (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991), writes about what he calls “contemplation-and-action”, a grammatical way of reminding us that action and contemplation actually belong together and cannot be separated. Thus we may have “contemplative action” and “active contemplation” (pp. 15-34).
Samaritana. I am created as an individual man, with my own thoughts, questions, words, feelings, actions, and responsibilities, and I must be true to and accountable for these. I am also, however, created as a relational being, created for community. My thoughts, questions, actions, words, emotions, and responsibilities are surfaced not in isolation but in the rich and fertile ground of community, in which I am invited to root myself, and to which I am accountable.

What follows is a series of themes or principles that I have come to believe are crucial to the process of “transformational development”. I present them here not in any particular order, but rather as a sampling of what I believe are the key elements of a ministry among wounded women.

**Development as Human**

Development and development work have become a commercialized industry. There are professional seminars for professional workers, who engage in inputs using log frames, hoping for outputs and impacts, which they report to development funders. Library shelves and bookshops have a growing number of titles to sharpen the skills of development workers. Capacity building and organizational development interventions, along with costly consultations, all aim to produce sustainable development institutions. This is not to say that we as development workers and development organizations are not responsible to learn and employ the most effective, efficient strategies, make the best use of our resources as stewards, and do the hard work of research, communication, feasibility studies, project planning, monitoring, financial accounting, reporting and evaluating.² Sadly, although much of this activity, energy, and resource allocation come from good intentions, it sometimes misses the point. The point of

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² See Cheyne’s *Incarnational Agents: A Guide to Developmental Ministry* for a good working toolkit of principles and tools involved in development projects, clearly and simply presented for practitioners.
development is, or ought to be, humans. At the end of the day, if we have not developed women, men, and children, we have spun our wheels and created a lot of smoke but have been about the wrong thing. Veteran activist Jim Wallis rightly says, “Always remember that when you’re dealing with projects and campaigns, you’re dealing with people.”

This may seem self-evident, but a short look at the history of development as an academic focus, or as a profession, tells us that in reality development has often become other than human-focused. An honest look at current development work suggests the same. People are too often missed and invisible in the development process.

Humanizing development work begins with an affirmation – or reaffirmation – of the inherent beauty, worth, and dignity of each human being. For Christians the keystone of this is Genesis 1:26-27, where we find that God created women and men as image bearers: Imago Dei. This means that each person carries within them the likeness of God, the attributes of God, however marred, hidden, or wounded. Every human being is therefore sacred, and has a sacred story. Jesus’ life and ministry were very human. That is, Jesus very deeply valued every woman, man, and child, and that was evident in his interactions with all. He stopped and took time with individuals, asked questions and listened, shared in the thresholds of life with people (like weddings and funerals), offered touch, welcomed children, honored women. Jesus gave special honor and attention to those society disdained and marginalized.

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5 Margaret Guenther writes about a chaplain in charge of training theology students at a home for the elderly. He told his students, “Visit with the residents, talk to them, and listen to their stories. And when they ask me what to do about those who are unable to speak, unable to hear, perhaps even unconscious, I tell them the same thing: sit with them and listen to their stories. Each of those very old people, no matter how fragile their hold on life might be and no matter how useless they might be in the eyes of society, is a rare parchment. A rare parchment waiting to be read” (Guenther, Toward Holy Ground: Spiritual Directions for the Second Half of Life p. 127).
When my wife Thelma and I began visiting women in bars as a couple, we frequented one small karaoke bar, sat at a table, ordered drinks, and ask the waiter to send a girl to our table. We tried to get “Sandy”\(^6\) to sit beside Thelma so that the two of them could hear each other over the booming of the sound system. After a round of drinks, we were on our way. The next week we went back to the same bar and asked for Sandy again. She came out, surprised but with a beaming smile. Many women were pleasantly surprised that we remembered their names, birthdays, and other information they shared to Thelma. In a place where they entertained men who really didn’t care what their name was, or who they were, honoring their names was a way of affirming their dignity and humanity.

For our perspectives and our strategies to be fully human, we need to have a Biblical anthropology, a way of understanding humans and the human condition that comes from the framework of God’s story. We also need to pay attention to what other disciplines tell us about humanity, such as psychology and sociology. We need to have a clear understanding of what it is that makes a woman a woman, and a man a man. What are the deepest longings and yearnings, fears and pains, common to all people? What are the things that we hold in common as humans?\(^7\) In order for our ministries to and with others to be human, we must have a rich understanding and acceptance of our own humanity, and all that entails. This means that all of us in the development process, the community and the development workers, should be on an honest journey of deepening self-awareness and self-understanding, of psycho-spiritual growth.\(^8\)

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\(^6\) All of the women referred to in this paper are real women we have befriended in Samaritana’s ministry, but their names have been changed in order to protect their anonymity.

\(^7\) I recommend Jean Vanier’s *Becoming Human* as a wonderful collection of five talks he delivered on what it means to be human, and how to reclaim our humanity in a broken world.

\(^8\) David Benner, in his very helpful *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel*, is presenting a contemporary evangelical attempt at soul care that integrates psychology and spirituality. Personally, I have also found the *enneagram* a very useful tool for self-understanding, which has a fairly integrative framework taking into consideration spiritual and psychological dimensions. Of the many resources now available about the enneagram, I recommend *The Wisdom of the Enneagram* by Riso and Hudson, and *Discovering Your Personality Type* by Riso.
The unexamined life is not worth living, and we cannot help bring others to places of the heart and of humanity where we ourselves have not gone.

### Development Prioritizes the Most Vulnerable

Development takes place in a real context. The reality of our world is that there is extreme inequity and often harsh disparity. There are some persons who are more capable than others in defending themselves, pursuing their dreams, living and growing. Others, because of a complex and varied number of reasons, are more vulnerable, weak, and powerless. Development should always aim at touching the lives of the poorest of the poor, the most weak and vulnerable. We take our cue here from Jesus, who outlined his “mission statement” at his inaugural address: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). These persons may not be the most receptive, responsive, or capable. True development however should be biased in the favor of these persons – not primarily because of the agenda of funding agencies, or of an ideology, or because it makes us feel better ourselves, but because this reflects the heart of God.

Liberation theologians from Latin America have given us a phrase that helps capture this prioritization: *the preferential option for the poor*. This is not a naïve romantic notion of the poor. It is not better to be poor economically and socially. Nor are the poor less problematic, less prone to foolishness, less self-centered than the rich, powerful, and comfortable. Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf, quoting Ciroan, notes “the great persecutors are often recruited among the martyrs not quite beheaded.” Poor victims who are empowered and liberated but not
transformed can become as oppressively evil as their former tormentors. Concerned persons have a tendency to romanticize poverty and the poor, but this serves to add another layer of suffering on the poor. Portraying the poor as somehow noble and virtuous, or desirable, may serve the fantasies of the middle class and wealthy who have chosen voluntary evangelical poverty or downward mobility, but these fairy tales will not serve or empower the poor. This preference is not exclusive, but simply reminds us who should be prioritized as we make decisions of who to be in solidarity with. This preference is a reflection of what we understand the heart of God to be. God has a special solidarity with the poor, the weak, the vulnerable, the voiceless and the powerless not because God loves these any more than those who are powerful, rich, and in control, but because the small, weak, poor, and powerless have no one on their side in the world – they are in need of an advocate and a protector. As God’s people, we take the same priorities as the God we follow. Our development initiatives should focus first on the small, the weak, the vulnerable, the poor and those who have no voice. “Union with the poor and the oppressed requires a commitment to combat poverty as an evil that degrades the lives of many people. Material poverty is not a Christian ideal, but is rather a subhuman condition caused by our sinfulness and the selfish exploitation of the weak.”

Prioritizing the most poor, vulnerable, weak, and small means making concrete decisions with regards to how we spend our time, how we allocate our budgets, and how we structure our programs. Development programs can easily begin to channel more and more of their resources into the more responsive beneficiaries, the less problematic individuals, the more quantifiably measurable activities, and the equipment and infrastructure to maintain and build the

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9 Volf, p. 104.
10 Wallis, in Richard Rohr: Illuminations of His Life and Work, p. 188.
11 Gutierrez, pp. xxv-xxvi.
12 Au, p. 171.
organization. It is worth making honest ongoing critical self-evaluations even in Samaritana as to whether these decisions are made at the expense of the most poor, vulnerable, weak, and small who may actually be the ones we state as our priority on brochures and proposals.

**Development as Transformation**

Development as I understand it is not *simply* about uplift, although an improvement in skills, insight, understanding, social standing, opportunities, or income level may be a part of what the whole process includes. True development, however, is best characterized by deep, lasting transformation of all the persons involved. That includes the oppressed as well as the oppressor, the poor and the rich, the target beneficiaries and the development workers. The transformation should also include the systems and structures that are in need of change, which may require advocacy, legislative action, and wider social change. Indeed, Gutierrez writes “The goal is not only better living conditions, a radical change of structures, a social revolution; it is much more: the continuous creation, never ending, of a new way to be human, a *permanent cultural revolution*.”

Bryant Myers uses “transformational development” as distinct from the traditional “development” in order to be free of the baggage of the often loaded and negative sense of “development”. He is also making a distinction in order to highlight that development as he understands it seeks “positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, and spiritually.” Moreover, development is transformational because it requires hard work, commitment, and struggle against the Evil One and all of the evil forces that seek to stop human

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13 Ibid., p. 21.
progress and development. True development involves decisions – making new choices and choosing life where once we chose death.\textsuperscript{14}

With this in mind, we may define transformational development as the restoration of relationships in all their dimensions… with God through Jesus Christ, with ourselves and our communities, with all of those who are “other” to us, and with the earth and all of creation.\textsuperscript{15} It would be difficult (and inappropriate) to find a single verse or passage from the Bible to try and express this. It is more important to bathe ourselves in the whole Biblical narrative and have a grasp of the movement of God in history – past, present, and future – than it is to formulate neatly packaged proof-texts. But perhaps, Jesus’ statement “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10) communicates something of the holistic nature of Jesus’ mission, a redemptive image of God’s vision for us and all of God’s creation. Transformational development is about bringing the deep, complete changes needed to give birth to new life in all its fullness.

Samaritana’s vision statement is an attempt to articulate a transformative vision.\textsuperscript{16} Our vision includes the women we minister with, the Church, and society at large being impacted deeply, from the inside but having concrete, visible, specific indicators of change and transformation on the outside. This by necessity includes our own ongoing conversion and transformation, too, as individuals and as an organization. Our vision for transformation touches all the areas of life, for that is what radical transformation is like.

\textsuperscript{14} Myers, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 50.  
\textsuperscript{16} See Samaritana Vision and Mission Statements in the Appendix.
Development as Incarnational

The primary movement of the gospel is downward, following the example of Jesus “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8)!” Jesus is in fact our Immanuel, God With Us. The good news of the gospel is that we know the extent of God’s love for us in the incarnation. God did not send an email or a text message to show us love; God came and pitched tent among us.

Incarnation is vital for development and transformation to happen. We must be with people before we can be for them. Being for people comes out of our strength; being with people comes out of our weakness. The fundamental movement of God was making Himself known in the person of Christ in a particular place and time. The most effective ministry is in a particular place with a particular people during a particular time.

Part of what we in Samaritana have learned with regards to incarnating the Gospel for women in prostitution has to do with the ministry of presence. Presence is not giving assistance or advice. It may include spoken words, but it is much more than conversation. I still remember the night Samaritana staff, volunteers, and women gathered in a small church sanctuary to be with one of our women friends who was mourning the loss of her baby son. There was really not much we could do or say, but that wasn’t really important. What was important to her was that we were there with her. Presence speaks of solidarity, shared journey, mutuality, attentiveness, and full engagement. Presence, too, can have a redemptive impact. Bakke outlines a theology of presence based on the story of Abraham’s pleading with God for Sodom (Genesis 18:16:33).
The implication of the story is that the presence of a few righteous persons can have a redemptive impact on a particular people and place.17

The ministry of presence in Samaritana means in practical terms that we go to where the women are – to the streets and bars. What exactly do I mean by a “ministry of presence?” Sometimes that means Samaritana staff and volunteers sit in a dark, smoke-filled bar with loud music playing, leaning over the table to try to hear what the girl sitting across from us is saying. Sometimes it means giving a word of caution, a suggestion, or some short counsel; many times it may not be saying anything at all. Sometimes it means walking around the street looking for a particular girl but not finding her. Other times it means talking to a group of loud and obnoxious women on the street corner while commuters and passers-by stare and frown slightly. Once our ministry of presence led two of our staff to be caught in a police round up. Always, though, whether we pray for a woman or not, whether we speak the gospel message or not, whether our plans work out of the unexpected catches us unprepared, we believe we are bringing the light and life of Christ to a place and to a people that need it badly. A ministry of presence means we reinterpret Cubao’s dark alleys as our parish for ministry, and our presence there is needed.18

**Development as Journey**

Development is not an event. Development cannot happen in a project lifespan. In fact, the process of development never really ends. Development by its very nature is a process, and may be best described as a journey. This is why it is helpful to understand development as an intersection, or convergence, of stories: that of the poor and that of the development workers, all

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17 Bakke, pp. 38-46.
18 Nambu, pp. 33-34.
fitting in the larger *meta narrative*, or larger story, of God’s action in human history.  

And God’s activity in the world can be characterized as the long “slow march of God.”  

There is nothing we can do to rush God or hurry God up. Our job is to be pilgrims, not timekeepers.

The Exodus story in the Old Testament can be a helpful paradigm for us as we consider the transformational development process as a journey. The people of Israel were delivered from Egypt in a one-time event, but their deliverance was also a process of following, fighting, grumbling, confession, renewal, organizational development, social re-construction, and liturgical worship that took forty years. A preacher noted that it was easier for God to get them out of Egypt than it was for God to get Egypt out of them. We should expect that the process of transformational development, particularly among the severely oppressed, wounded, and abused, will also be a long and difficult journey.

One of the first women befriended by Samaritana workers was “Paula”. Paula was a street prostitute who picked up men along Quezon Avenue, and she was also involved in drugs. Samaritana staff befriended her and volunteers, made a decision of faith, joined Bible studies, began to make noticeable improvements, and then disappeared. We later learned that she was back on the streets and back in drugs. Paula repeated this cycle numerous times over the next eight or nine years, bouncing from one service provider to another, weeping in sorrow one day and fighting another woman at knifepoint the next week. The cycle she was in was not a meaningless, karmic cycle; there was movement and growth happening, but there was also falling, struggling, and running. Today Paula is still not done, but she is a completely different woman than she was ten years ago, or even one year ago.

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20 Ringma uses this phrase to describe the journey of faith engaging in *Misseo Dei*, the mission of God (pp. 3-18).
Au writes that “the metaphor of a journey captures well what most adults come sooner or later to realize about spiritual and psychological growth: it is a never-ending series of changes and struggles. In a word, it is a hard road to travel.” He goes on to remind us of the proverb of the Chinese sage Lao-Tze, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” It is helpful for us as we are realistic about the length of and challenges along the journey to be encouraged to take small, sure steps together towards Jesus. Moreover, these steps we take on the journey are sometimes more sure than others. Some of the steps along the journey towards development, transformation, and change are really not more than “trial and error” as we simply strike out without certainty or paved paths to walk on. We will in fact make mistakes, and there is nothing wrong with that. “Even great saints like Augustine of Hippo and Ignatius of Loyola learned how not to make mistakes by making many.” The journey is difficult, long, and challenging, but it is not overwhelming. Our journey ought to be entered with the freedom to discover, learn from mistakes, and explore. Change, growth, and transformation sometimes begin to happen in miraculous events, but they are also a series of choices that really never ends.

**Development as Participatory**

Spiritual director Margaret Guenther says, “Good ministry, like spiritual friendship, is mutual; it is a dance, a drama, a story, a partnership.” More particularly, we may say that transformational development must be mutual, shared, and participatory. That is, it must be empowering. Individuals and communities should be encouraged and accompanied into and through a process of being empowered to define what they understand their problems and needs to be, and what the appropriate actions and responses ought to be.

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21 Au, p. 191.
It is very interesting to read the story of Jesus and the invalid by the poolside (John 5:1-15). Jesus asked the man, “Do you want to get well?” When the man made some weak response that sounded like self-pity and excuses, Jesus commanded him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” Jesus asked the man what he really wanted, to find out the level of longing and commitment the man had. But Jesus also wouldn’t let the man off the hook; Jesus required the man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years to stand up, pick up his mat, and walk. The man who had been a helpless beggar-recipient for almost longer than Jesus had lived had to be a full participant in his own miraculous healing. This is what distinguishes a developmental work from one of charity or relief. In development work we are in fact looking for partners and collaborators, rather than recipients and beneficiaries. We want for everyone to have the freedom and the space to be active partners in the whole process, from planning to implementation and evaluation. We hear from and value what each one says, for as the Quakers say, “Everybody has a piece of the truth.” As Paulo Freire writes (although I add a phrase to make his otherwise wonderful statement more inclusive and gender-sensitive),

At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as men (and women) engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human… To achieve this praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason.24

In reality, the process of involving all the community in the process of their own transformation and liberation is not so easy. There is often hesitation, reluctance, and even resistance from the community to take greater responsibility in the process. This may be due to, among other factors, a traditional perception of what leadership means, low self-esteem, an overwhelming sense of deference to authority figures and powerful figures, and a sense of

24 Freire, pp. 52-53.
powerlessness.\textsuperscript{25} The process of inviting participation, building a healthier sense of self-esteem, and empowering people to take responsibility for themselves and others, will be a long process and will require not only patience and graciousness, but also skills in understanding and working with people, listening, and facilitating.\textsuperscript{26}

When “Sophia” was hospitalized recently during a difficult childbirth, she and her husband expected Samaritana staff to come to the rescue and do everything for her. She was surprised, disappointed, and irritated initially when “Cherry” and “Maribel”, two of the other Samaritana women trainees were the ones to stay with her at the hospital and assist her, coaching her how to apply for public assistance discounts in their hospital bill and urging her and her husband to do things for themselves. This was a learning experience for Sophia and her husband as well as for Cherry and Maribel (and a healthy reminder for the Samaritana team, too!), as they all learned the important lesson that Samaritana funds and Samaritana staff did not grow on trees, and that there was much that they could do for themselves.

Recently we have been in the process of designing and developing a new way of teaching, training, and discipling our women friends. It is a three-part modular approach using non-formal adult education methods.\textsuperscript{27} This has been an attempt to recognize that our women friends will learn most effectively, and be most empowered, as they are active participants in the learning process. We have also used \textit{Appreciative Inquiry} and Focused Group Discussions (FGD’s) as methods of involving the staff team in making decisions regarding the ministry’s

\textsuperscript{25} Felix, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{26} There is a wealth of resources available to those who would like to engage in a more participatory style of leadership, development work, or ministry. One may want to look at Felix’s \textit{Leading with the People: A Handbook on Community-Based Leadership}, Kaner’s \textit{Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making}, and Hope and Timmel’s four-volume \textit{Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers} for principles, suggested activities, and further ideas.
\textsuperscript{27} One of our staff is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Non-Formal Adult Education at the University of the Philippines.
direction, and involving women in visioning, planning, and evaluating various programs and activities.  

One of the challenges of a commitment to participatory processes is to learn what are the valid and necessary places and ways for us as development workers to participate in and contribute to the process. One inherent weakness, for example, in the appreciative inquiry method of visioning, planning, and evaluating is that not all of what is knowable or needful is within any one group at any one time. There are always new bits of information, experiences, wisdom and creative ideas outside of a group, not available to its members without bringing in outside ideas or hearing from outside people. If we adopt appreciative inquiry woodenly and legalistically, we may help a group to feel empowered, while at the same time depriving them of important outside lessons, experiences, and resources that would have further aided them in their transformation. One community development educator has said that we must do “facipulation”, mixing facilitation and manipulation. This recognizes the fact that no one has pure motives and no one is completely without an agenda. To what extent is it honest for us to say that we completely release and devolve the process of development, even as we remain actively present participants ourselves? What exactly is the appropriate level of involvement we may have without becoming manipulative? What are the areas where we may rightly give input and direction, or even exercise leadership and authority? These are areas where Samaritana has not yet arrived, and we are still learning.

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28 Another staff has gone through workshop training in using the *Appreciative Inquiry* methodology. For more information on Appreciative Inquiry and how it is used in planning and evaluating projects, see Hammond’s *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* and Chapter 5, “Using Appreciative Inquiry to Build Capacity” in CRWRC’s *Partnering to Build and Measure Organizational Capacity*. 
Development as Holistic

Development of women, men, and children takes into account the wonderful mystery and complexity of humanity, and has all of the concerns of humanity in mind. Western culture has promoted a false and unhealthy dualism and compartmentalization of life, prioritizing private over public, spiritual over physical, work over Sabbath, personal evil over structural evil, prayer over politics. God, however, is concerned with and involved in all of life, and as God’s people we need to nurture that same concern and involvement. Our development work needs to be integrative rather than compartmentalized, whole rather than segmented. This is not merely a call to an eastern or southern cultural dynamic; it is an invitation to reclaim a more Biblical perspective on the redemptive work of God.

As John Perkins declares,

The Gospel, rightly understood, is wholistic. It responds to people as whole people; it doesn’t single out just spiritual or just physical needs and speak to those. Christian community development begins with people transformed by the love of God, who then respond to God’s call to share the gospel with others through evangelism, social action, economic development, and justice.

The best way to describe what we mean by holism is by using the Biblical concept of shalom. Shalom is a concept of right relationships on all levels and in all areas of life:

relationships with God, self, others, and all of creation. Shalom is a sense of “human welfare,

29 It has been rightly pointed out that the relatively recent emphasis on holism has been needed in the West to serve as a corrective to the dichotomized, dualistic worldview that has captivated, or at least influenced, the Church in the West to a great degree. It is too simplistic, however, to brush this off as a Western problem. Western missions and theological education has had a huge impact on the shaping of the theology and ecclesiology of the church in the east and south. Moreover, with modernity and globalization, technology and communications, many aspects of dualistic, dichotomized thinking and living have been absorbed into non-western cultures, such that I believe it is now helpful to highlight the need for holism even among Christians in non-western contexts.

30 Ron Sider’s fifth chapter, “Embracing the Fullness of God’s Salvation” in his Good News and Good Works (pp. 83-100) provides a helpful survey of Biblical words for salvation. He notes that “salvation” in the Bible: is the work of God; happens in history and is social, corporate, and communal; is linked inseparably with the Kingdom of God; includes physical healing; has right relationship with God at its center; has past, present, and future reference to the redemptive activity of God in Christ; and, has cosmic aspects. Father Ben Beltran, meanwhile, gives a helpful background to the truly holistic worldview of ancient Filipinos, the development of a dichotomized and dualistic world view in Greek and western philosophy and the development of the Church, and the impact of that often unconscious dualistic world view and theology upon Filipinos (and by extension, other evangelized and colonized developing nations) in his chapter, “Toward a Theology of Holistic Ministry” in Serving with the Urban Poor.
health and well-being, in both spiritual and material aspects.”\textsuperscript{32} Shalom is “shockingly materialistic”\textsuperscript{33}, and has to do with real, concrete, gritty life realities that we find ourselves in as inhabitants of planet earth. Shalom does not simply mean comprehensive programs, however. Pursuing holism in ministry among women in prostitution does not necessarily mean that we must have many various programs and activities – a program for spiritual, a program for psychological, a program for physical and a program for social. Instead, holism and shalom invite us to remember that all of life and all of ministry are created, sustained, and being redeemed by God. As Charles Ringma says, “All of life is under God’s watchful eyes and in God’s reshaping hands.”

Commitment to a God of holism, and to holistic methods and strategies, means that our development philosophy, strategies, and workers must reflect shalom, and invite people to life that is not simply comprehensive, but integrated and whole, healthy and reconciled. In our work at Samaritana, we have developed a vision for the women, which we believe communicates to the women (and reminds us) of the holistic nature and vision of our ministry with them. We call it our “PEPSSI Vision” (PEPSSI is an acronym for physical, emotional, political, spiritual, social, and intellectual).\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Development in the Context of Community}

People develop most fully and most richly in the context of a community. The process of lasting human development and transformation is not an individual experiment, but a process that happens in the context of relationships and community. Change is invited, tested, validated,

\textsuperscript{31} Perkins, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{32} Bradshaw, p. 17. Bradshaw’s book is actually a helpful attempt at encouraging a holistic approach to ministry using the theological framework of creation, redemption, and shalom.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 18.
and celebrated in community. “Discipleship is best done with others who are also disciples.”

Too often we have focused on one person at a time, at the expense of building communities. As Richard Rohr wrote, although we must work with individuals, yet too often “we are saving souls while God is creating a people.”

I still remember asking “Edna”, a woman we had worked with for years and then referred, along with her two children, to another Christian ministry, “So, Edna, who are your friends there in your new home and community?” I knew that Edna was an angry, bitter, proud Christian woman that easily exploded and had a hard time trusting anyone. “Oh”, she answered sweetly, “I don’t have any friends there. Its just me and the Lord.” Her spiritualized answer didn’t comfort me. Her false sense of a privatized, disconnected spirituality where she could make it through life praying to God but not relating with others around her was not real, was not what God desired for her. We are relational beings created in the image of a relational God (Genesis 1:26-27). We belong in community. The spiritualized platitudes that Edna was learning sounded and felt empty to those around her who experienced her as distant, aloof, proud and angry.

The tasks of development, moreover, need to be done in community. The work of transformational development needs to be done by women and men standing shoulder to shoulder - laughing, crying, dreaming, planning, praying, dancing, protesting, and waiting together. The story of God’s transformative work in history, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, is a story of changed people in community. In fact, “although personal relation to God is vital, according to Biblical thought God is more concerned with creating a

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34 See a copy of Samaritana’s PEPSSI Vision document in the Appendix, attached.
35 Gish, p. 46.
36 Rohr, p. 50.
people than with private religious experience.”\textsuperscript{37} A person attempting to engage in development work alone is a sad anomaly, an accident waiting to happen.

“Reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel.”\textsuperscript{38} Our communities need to be places where people are experiencing, offering, and celebrating reconciliation with God, self, others, and creation. This is what is meant by *shalom* – right relationships in all the spheres of life. This means our communities will need to be places where honesty is encouraged, trust built, forgiveness offered and received.

For almost two years, Samaritana experimented with a residential facility in Fairview, Quezon City. My wife and I lived in a large eight-bedroom rented house, along with several other staff, an intern, five women, and three children. This was a learning experience for all of us. After the first two days, our initial romanticized notions of what living in community would be like were deflated. We began to experience fights, intrigues, irritations, tears and misunderstandings. We also experienced rejoicing, reconciliation, and shared celebrations.\textsuperscript{39} Now, two years later, we no longer have a residential facility or program, after a decision made for a variety of reasons. Our challenge now is to learn how to create the space – physical, emotional, and programmatic – for community to grow and flourish, without physically living together. Particularly for the women we serve, who have gone through abuse, trauma, and psychological fragmentation, we must begin by building a safe place for them to enter, feel comfortable, begin to trust and remember and grieve, and re-collect themselves.\textsuperscript{40} How do we as a group that meets together four to five days a week in a center create that spirit of safety, and

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{38} Perkins, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{39} Nambu, pp. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{40} Both Judith Herman in her *Trauma and Recovery* and Diane Langberg in *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* stress the utmost importance of creating safety for abuse and trauma victims, as the necessary first step in their recovery and healing.
make spaces of safety within ourselves\textsuperscript{41} for one another and for God, in ways that build a healthy, healing community? How do we enter fully into the mystery that community is a gift that we receive, as well as a responsibility that we nurture and struggle to maintain? This will be a process of learning and struggling, one that we have already begun but are certainly still on.

**Development’s Impact on Structures**

While I was working on this paper, a Philippine Daily Inquirer article featured a news item about a Manila Hotel that was raided. Manila Police officials were quoted as explaining that one of their “assets masqueraded as a customer” and selected a woman, then somehow “sent a signal” that he and the woman were already engaging in sex to the policemen who were waiting outside. Upon forcing their way into the building and into the room where this man and woman were, they were indeed “found in a compromising position”. The young woman was arrested and will be charged with prostitution. A number of other women were rounded up that day, but the owners and managers were not to be found. Is it right for a man to pretend to be a customer, select a woman, and then engage in sex with her in order to conduct a raid on an establishment fronting for prostitution? Entrapment is another level of violation, compounding the victimization of the women involved. It remains, though, a common method of police in trying to find and catch women in prostitution. What about the fact that women are commonly rounded up but customers, pimps, recruiters, and owners are usually not found, taken into custody, charged and convicted? If prostitution is illegal in the Philippines according to the Revised Penal Code, why are all women employees of discos, bars, saunas, and similar

\textsuperscript{41} Guenther, in the chapter, “Welcoming the Stranger” in her *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*, writes of the necessity of creating a safe space for those we listen to and minister to. This safe space is not only physical, having to do with a room, decorations, and furniture layout, but is also personal, psychological, relational and
establishments required to report regularly to the local social hygiene clinic to have a pap smear and check for sexually transmitted diseases? These are examples of structural injustices, flaws in the system that contribute to the system of prostitution, and contribute to the oppression of women. Samaritana is just realizing in new ways that we must begin to be involved in addressing macro issues and structural injustices that affect our women friends. We are just beginning to be involved in advocacy work.

What is Advocacy? Advocacy, or advocate, comes from the Latin word, advocare, or avocare, which has to do with “to call”, “to call out”, “to speak”, or “to speak on behalf”. Therefore, advocating has something to do with (1) speaking for, acting for, or defending someone or something before someone else, or, (2) proposing, promoting, or suggesting something to someone. Advocacy has to do with helping give a voice to the voiceless. It is worth noting with caution, however, that whenever we advocate for someone else, or on their behalf, we can take away their voice and actually dis-empower them further than they already may be. Especially as we work with the poor and marginalized, we must take care not to further oppress them by taking away their voice. There are times when we must speak on behalf of another, but we must be aware of the power dynamic involved, and always seek to move toward speaking with others, and not simply for them.

Some Biblical examples of advocating include Abraham advocating to God on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:16-33); Moses advocating to the Pharaoh on behalf of the nation of Hebrews (Exodus 7-11); Nehemiah advocating to the nobles and officials on behalf of the poor and overtaxed oppressed (Nehemiah 5); Jesus advocating for the woman caught in emotional. We must be committed to being centered ourselves in order to offer a safe space within ourselves to others, providing inward hospitality.
adultery before the lynching mob (John 8:1-11); Jesus advocating for us before the heavenly Father (I John 2:1).

What is the motivation for us as Christians as we do advocacy? What drives us? First, the heart of God for the weak, the vulnerable, the forgotten, the disadvantaged (see Genesis 4 regarding Cain and Abel). All of Scripture tells us the narrative of a God who cares for the whole world, but especially for those who otherwise have no one to care for them. Secondly, we are not driven by a passion for fairness, but a commitment to justice and righteousness. Compare the rich young ruler in Luke 18 and Zaccaeus in Luke 19. The expectations on each of them were not fair in comparison, but based on a call to justice and righteousness.

Recently Samaritana’s team decided to involve ourselves more intentionally in the work of advocacy, both on the local community level as well as joining in legislative advocacy already being done by other groups, related to issues relevant to prostitution and the sexual exploitation of women and children. A staff is working full time on this initiative, gathering information, raising awareness among women and churches, catalyzing the involvement of prostituted women, building networking relationships, organizing a team, and strategizing. Specifically, we are working, along with other NGO’s and women’s groups, to help push for the passage of two proposed bills in congress: the Anti-Trafficking Bill (which recently passed in the House of Representatives) and the Anti-Prostitution Bill (which has been re-submitted for review in the Senate by Senator Pangilinan). Our task in ministry among women in prostitution is not complete if we only help rescue women one by one through intervention strategies, but do not address at all the system of prostitution and the structural evils that promote this system. As

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42 We have learned some things about strategizing for and involving in advocacy work from Tear Fund’s Footsteps, No. 45, December 2000. This issue of their “quarterly newsletter linking development workers around the world” dealt specifically with Advocacy, including articles outlining the “advocacy cycle”, ideas for practical campaigning, case studies in advocacy efforts among development projects, Biblical reflection on advocacy, and additional
stated so clearly in the fifth paragraph of the Lausanne Covenant, “evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty” (italics added).43

**Development as Dying**

I still remember as a hyperventilating, perspiring, exhausted teenager reeling from the pain of body-punishing workouts with my teammates on the high school wrestling team hearing the coach repeat over and over, “No pain, no gain.” Or, as Winston Churchill said, “We have fought them (the Nazis) with our blood, sweat, and tears.” The principle is the same: goals are often realized through sacrifice and difficulty. Filipino theologian David Lim has said, “Nothing good will happen on earth unless someone suffers for it.”

Christians will recognize this as the principle of the cross, the invitation to sacrifice, and indeed, death. John 12:24 reminds us that in both in the agricultural planting-harvesting cycle, as well as in God’s economy, death is required for new life to emerge, and for fruit to be borne. “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” Not everyone is called to literal martyrdom like Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, but all of us are invited to walk the way of the cross, and to embrace what forms our own death will take. For some, the decision to give a preferential option to the poor is a form of dying. Some may understand their death to be giving more sacrificially. Some may feel called to incarnate the love of God by moving into an urban poor community. Some will die to their own culture, their preferred ways of thinking and living, as Volf writes “the practice of embrace… is for Christians possible only if, in the name of God’s crucified Messiah, we distance ourselves from ourselves and our cultures in order to create a space for the other.”44

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43 The Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 5.
44 Volf, p. 30.
For many, the death we are called to is not externally dramatic, nor publicly heroic, but rather an everyday commitment to live a life of many small deaths in the seemingly mundane routines and hidden ordinariness of our families, work, and other involvements and endeavors. Embracing death is in effect embracing smallness, weakness, vulnerability, and powerlessness — all things we naturally recoil from because they are foolishness to the world and to our flesh (I Corinthians 1:18-29).

Specifically, in any transformational development endeavor, there is a crucifixion involved. Maggay eloquently writes of incarnation requiring crucifixion, involvement requiring *kenosis* (self-emptying), and solidarity requiring surrender. Our surrender and obedience to death opens our hearts and the hearts of those we are standing together with further to the transformative work of God’s Spirit, and opens the way for new possibilities and new options. Our effectivity and fruitfulness as transformational development workers depends most not on our monitoring and evaluation, or on intervention strategies, or the percentage of loan repayments, but on our willingness to lay down the things most precious to us — even those things that give us life — on behalf of our brothers and sisters. To the extent that we do this, new life will emerge.

Our commitment to let go and live a lifestyle of death that leads to life is something that we also model to those with whose lives we are intertwined. We willingly embrace death not only because it makes our work more effective, but also because it makes us more human, and we want to model this to our colleagues, brothers and sisters. Wilkie Au quotes Judith Viorst, who is writing about losses from a psychoanalytic background, “The road to human

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45 In his *The Path of Power*, Nouwen posits that it is in releasing power, and embracing weakness, vulnerability, smallness, and poverty that we are ultimately empowered.

46 Maggay, pp. 73-80.
development… is paved with renunciation. Throughout our life we grow by giving up.”47 Au adds, however, that the good news of the gospel tells us that God intervenes bringing new life, so that we are not merely left with the existential reality of our losses, but with the hope of new life and the heightened longing for God.48 Moreover, the very present Suffering God, who chose death in order to redeem and bring new life, accompanies us the whole while. Nonetheless, we are called to be communities that accept the reality of loss, desolation, and death, and embrace these realities of humanity gracefully.49 This not only makes our development task more fruitful, it makes our lives and our communities more real, healthier, and more fully human.

**Development and Spirituality**

Development workers are usually activists. Not all of us march in the streets, make press releases, wave placards, and go on hunger strikes, but most of us are doers and actors, women and men who get things done and make things happen. We are people of action. A part of us thrives on giving, speaking, going, writing, pushing, thinking. The extreme expression of this, of course, is a place of frenetic motion where life seems to go from crisis to crisis, one appointment seems to blend into the next appointment in a blur, and a voice inside us whispers, “Don’t slow down or stop, things may fall apart. What will life be, what will you be, if you stop now?”

There are enough gifted and committed friends and colleagues around us who have reached the point of complete exhaustion, emptiness, breakdown and burnout to remind us that, if we haven’t reached that point yet ourselves, the danger is there and it is very real. We need to develop and nurture a spirituality that will sustain us in our development work. As Merton warns us, “He

47 Au, p. 188.
48 Ibid., p. 190.
who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others… There is nothing more tragic in the modern world than the misuse of power and action to which men are driven by their own Faustian misunderstandings and misapprehensions.\textsuperscript{50}

But I believe the importance of a sustaining spirituality in our development action is more than simply a self-protective exercise to try to ward off burnout. Our development, to be distinctively transformational and Christian, needs to be informed by, shaped by, nurtured by, and transformed by the streams of a vibrant spirituality, an inner reservoir that is cool, deep, and rich enough to refresh us in the times of dryness, tiredness, aloneness, and disappointment that are part of the change process. The people we are in community with, and the people we serve in the transformation process need taste in our work, our words, and our lives, the waters of life that come from lives that are being sustained and changed inwardly.

I suggest here that a spirituality that may serve us as development workers is a contemplative spirituality. We need silence to give power and meaning to our words, solitude to help us create safe space within ourselves for community, reflection to help us make sense out of what happens in our action. The contemplative spirituality I am suggesting here is not the caricaturized desert father motif, of one escaping people and the world to become an eccentric and isolated hermit. I am proposing a spirituality that integrates silence and word, solitude and community, action and reflection, prayer and work into a healthy rhythm of life and ministry.

True contemplatives, in fact, do not isolate themselves in order to avoid people, but to connect more deeply with people. That is why Thomas Merton could say, “… the only

\textsuperscript{49} Mitch Albom writes about “dying well”, although not particularly from a Christian perspective, as he recounts the true story of his interactions with a dying former professor, Morrie, in his international bestseller,\textit{Tuesdays with Morrie}.

\textsuperscript{50} Merton,\textit{ Contemplation in a World of Action}, pp. 178-179.
justification for a life of deliberate solitude is the conviction that it will help you to love not only God but also other men... Go into the desert not to escape other men but in order to find them in God.”

Kenneth Leech writes,

The contemplative and the active are necessary for each other. Contemplation must be involved, a clear seeing into the reality of human life and human suffering, not an evasion of that reality... In such contemplative spirituality lie the resources for resistance to injustice. For resistance can only grow out of improved knowledge and deepened insight (Philippians 1:9).

Edwina Gately, Catholic laywoman who founded the Volunteer Missionary Movement and has helped women in prostitution in Chicago through the Genesis House, which she began, says,

Justice is inseparable from spiritual development. I think one of the mistakes we’ve made in our history is parsing things out and separating them. We pretend you can be a holy person and have nothing to do with the poor or the disenfranchised, that you can be involved in justice and not have anything to do with spirituality. But if we want to be whole, justice brings back upon our own spirituality... It doesn’t mean that we can cop out and become passive. The real act of faith and the move toward the deepest spirituality is when we admit we don’t know, anymore, whether we’re really making a difference. We do know that we must keep on doing what we believe in, what we’re called to do right now... We can’t save the world, but we can work toward it.

In Samaritana, we are just recently discovering, experiencing, and exploring further the gift of contemplative spirituality as we engage in transformational development work among women in prostitution. The staff and volunteer team meets once a month for quiet reflection together, often using the *lectio divina*, centering prayer, and extended times of silent reflection together. We are beginning together to practice a form of the Ignatian exercises. With the women, my wife who serves as Coordinator of Counseling and Spiritual Nurture (and who is

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52 Leech, p. 192.
herself receiving spiritual direction and training to give spiritual direction), has introduced a form of group spiritual accompaniment. This is planting the seeds of a contemplative experience and spirituality into the soil of the women’s hearts as they have group liturgies, extended silence, and even Taize chants together. These compliment the more exuberant praise songs during Samaritana’s worship times, and have been appreciated and enjoyed by the women. These practices are creating a safe place for the women with one another, with Thelma, and for God, allowing women who live in noise, chaos and confusion to find moments of rest for their souls.

**Conclusion**

I appreciate the opportunity for me to think critically about my understanding of development, particularly from the context of our ministry in Samaritana. This exercise has forced me in ways I may not have otherwise to reflect and articulate the lessons I am learning and attempt to integrate theory and practice, action and reflection, being and doing.

Although I am concluding this paper, I realize that the articulation of a philosophy of development is itself developmental. That is to say, while I share these themes freely now, based on action, reflection, and study, I also hold my thoughts and ideas loosely and with humility, knowing that this is not the final word. The lessons I will learn with my colleagues and friends will not end, just as the process of development will never really end. There will always be new insights, new changes and adjustments, new experiments and revisions, new problems and solutions. But that is part of the excitement and wonder of a journey. How we will travel this transformational journey is just as important as what the destination will be like.
SAMARITANA’S VISION

We envision women’s lives being transformed spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually, relationally, and socially, in ways that they are growing in both being and doing. We envision women gaining competence in new skills, confidence in themselves, excitement in their dreams and goals, love and reconciliation in their relationships, and hope and faith in God. We envision women leaving prostitution and turning instead to relationships and work that are creative, healthy, productive, and godly. We envision women who are growing in their awareness of and response to their calling in the world and in God’s kingdom.

We envision churches and communities of Christian faith that are growing in awareness of the problem of prostitution. We envision churches that are missional caring communities, reaching out to the marginalized, broken, and poor, and providing a safe, nurturing, healing community for wounded persons, particularly the sexually broken.

We envision a society that is not tolerant of sexual abuse, exploitation, and prostitution.

SAMARITANA’S MISSION

To restore Filipino women involved in prostitution to their God-given worth and dignity by offering them alternatives for spiritual and economic transition in partnership with the body of Christ so that the love of Christ and the power of the gospel are made real among the least of society

September 2001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICAL</td>
<td>* seldom gets sick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long life and healthy bodies</td>
<td>* eats balanced, regular, nourishing meals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* observes maternal and child care (breast-feeding, vaccinations, de-worming, well baby care)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* proper prenatal consultations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* no abortions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* proper waste disposal and drainage at home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* good hygiene and grooming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* proper use and care of strength</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* reproductive health</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* not using drugs or abusing alcohol, not getting drunk or smoking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* clean and orderly home</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC</td>
<td>* work that has dignity, appropriate salary, and more opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fullness of life through livelihood</td>
<td>* debt-free, aside from loans for business that are being paid back</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* proper spending habits</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* using skills learned in livelihood</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* uses funds for important needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* shares compassionately for others in need</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLITICAL</td>
<td>* registered and active voter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement in political processes</td>
<td>* understands human rights and fights for these</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* gets involved in civic and community work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* experiences and shares a vision for justice and righteousness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* knows about and accesses services and resources in the community (for example at the barangay hall and health center)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
At peace and has good relationships at home, with friends, and at work
* links with community leaders and becomes a community leader, sharing the vision for good citizenry
* not battered and is not battering
* not a fighter or a gossiper
* has a growing circle of good friends
* others approach her for counsel just as she approaches others for counsel
* gets along with parents, relatives, and those she formerly fought with
* knows how to care for and discipline her children
* has a right and good understanding regarding sex

SPIRITUAL
Growing in knowing God
* loves others as children of God
* making right decisions in life
* showing eagerness in spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, quiet time, prayer, etc.
* is fellowshipping with other Christians
* has received Christ
* character growth and fruit of the Spirit
* desire to share the love of God to others
* good self image because of identity in Christ
* praying for others
* no live-in relationship
* serving others in compassionate ministry

INTELLECTUAL
Gives importance to study and enjoys learning
* wants to study and grow in knowledge
* makes plans for returning to study
* puts to use what she is learning
* her understanding in life is growing
* makes time for reading
* prioritizes the studies of her children
Bibliography


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