Session 1: Redefining Poverty

I. Intro

II. What is Poverty?
   a. Creation: Four Key Relationships

   b. Fall: Broken Relationships

   c. Definition of Poverty Alleviation

   d. Immediate Implications

III. Small Group Discussion Questions:
   a. Reflect on your relationships with God, self, others, and the rest of creation. List specific things that you would like to improve in the four key relationships.

   b. Think about the approach of your church or organization to materially poor people. Is there any evidence of a God complex?

   c. To what degree do you have a “material definition of poverty?” How has this influenced the way that you have approached ministry to the poor? What harm might this have done?

   d. To what degree might you be an “evangelical gnostic?” What are some areas in your life that you are struggling to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?
Session 2: Foundational Principles of Poverty Alleviation

I. Principles and Issues in Holistic Ministry
   a. Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development
   b. Asset-Based vs. Needs-Based Development
   c. Blueprint vs. Participatory Development

II. Application to Short-Term Missions
   For more information, see Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. www.chalmers.org/stm

III. Small Group Questions
   a. Think about the materially poor people in your area whom your church or ministry is trying to help. Do these people primarily need relief, rehabilitation, or development?
   b. To what degree is your church or ministry pursuing the right strategy for these people?
   c. Are you, your church, or your ministry focusing on the assets of the people with whom you are ministering or only their needs?
   d. What actions could you begin taking to improve your church’s short-term missions program?
Session 3: Walking with Low-Income People in North America

I. Two Principles to Begin
   a. Foster Triggers for Human Change

   b. Start with People Most Receptive to Change

II. Process: Intake and Action Plan
   For more information, see Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. www.chalmers.org/benevolence

III. Resources
   a. Faith & Finances and Work Life: Start a financial education or jobs-preparedness ministry at your church
      • www.chalmers.org/train
   b. Ministry Inventory Guide, Heidi Unruh
   c. Guidelines for Benevolence, Diaconal Ministries Canada

IV. Small Group Discussion Questions
   a. Does your church or ministry have “first-encounter” policies to use with individuals/households who come to you for help? Do you use action plans?

   b. If so, are there ways you could see them improved and/or utilized more?

   c. What are 2 action steps you could take in the next 2 months to promote these changes or to begin using action plans? (Consider drawing on the above listed resources.)
Session 4: Partnering for Development at Home and Abroad

I. Process for Working at the Household Level

II. Promoting Development at the Community Level

III. Exploring Partnerships

IV. Small Group Questions
   a. Write down a 1-3 sentence definition of how your church or organization explicitly or implicitly defines “partnership.” Share your answers with your group.

   b. Do your ministry partners in materially poor communities really want what you are providing to them? How do you know?

   c. Write a list of 2-4 things you will do in the next 2 months to move toward more asset-based, participatory development in your partnerships with ministries or churches working in materially poor communities at home or abroad.
V. Resources
   a. *From Dependence to Dignity: How to Alleviate Poverty through Church-Centered Microfinance*, Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett
      • [www.chalmers.org/d-to-d](http://www.chalmers.org/d-to-d)
   b. *Cross-Cultural Partnerships*, Mary Lederleitner
   c. *Checklists for Building Strategic Relationships*, Daniel Rickett