

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 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
 - <http://www.urbansermons.org/f/ministry-inventory-guide-assess-your-churchs-ministry-capacity-and-identity>
- c. *Guidelines for Benevolence*, Diaconal Ministries Canada
 - <http://diaconalministries.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Guidelines-for-Benevolence-1.pdf>

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
- b. *Cross-Cultural Partnerships*, Mary Lederleitner
 - <http://www.amazon.com/Cross-Cultural-Partnerships-Navigating-Complexities-Mission/dp/0830837477>
- c. *Checklists for Building Strategic Relationships*, Daniel Rickett
 - <http://www.stemintl.org/publications/order/product/mr37>