

# Study Guide

## *Development to a Different Drummer: Anabaptist / Mennonite Experiences and Perspectives*

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### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

1. Why does development ultimately raise moral questions?

### **Chapter 2: Mainstream Development: Competing Perspectives**

1. This chapter examines three questions: (a) what is development, (b) how is development measured, and (c) how do we get there. How would you answer each of these questions, and how do your answers compare with those in the book?
2. What makes a country or area "more developed" or "less developed"? What are examples of each?
3. The section "How Do We Get There?" asks why some countries are poor and how they become "unpoor"? What is your response to this question?
4. "How Do We Get There?" begins by stating that a fundamental issue in all models of development is that of (a) who or what is responsible for poverty, and (b) who or what has control over reducing poverty. How do you answer these two questions? In which quadrant of Exhibit 2 does your answer best fit? Why?

### **Chapter 3: Historical Overview of Mennonites in Development Work**

1. Why do the authors include the history of mission work in a book on development? What relevance does it provide?
2. What determines whether there are connections between missions and development, if any?
3. Why did MCC gradually move from predominantly a relief and material aid focus to include development? Does this mean that development is the final stage of all service agencies and actions? Why or why not?

4. MCC evolved into a multifaceted program including, most recently, peace building and conflict transformation. Why did this happen and what relation does this have to development?
5. Robert Kreider suggests there are certain distinctives for MCC work. What are they and how did they contribute to its involvement in development work?
6. MCC, through its various activities, including PAX, at a certain point spawned MEDA. What were the major causes or reasons? Does this mean a denomination needs more than one organization to do development? Why or why not?
7. How do MEDA and MCC differ in their respective approaches to development work? Why does this difference exist? Is one "better" than another?
8. MEDA has undergone an interesting transformation in goals and procedures so far in its career. What were the dynamics for these changes? How does this process help understand development?
9. From the ways missions, MCC, and MEDA became involved in development, do they suggest that development is a specific system and practice, or can it express itself in many ways?

## **Chapter 4: Grassroots Perspectives**

1. Jan Jenner commented on her young adult years, "'Service' was the keyword; 'Development'....was not part of my vocabulary." How do Jenner, Hershberger, and Classen view the relationship between service and development?
2. The three grassroots writers each responded differently to the question, "What difference did you make?" As you compare their responses, why do you think that they all found that question difficult to answer?
3. When the writers in this section talked about the future, they all said something about the issue of power. Why do you think power was an issue for them as they thought about the future and their involvement with development?
4. How have time and experience affected how the three writers in this section approach development?

## Chapter 5: Middle Ground Perspectives

1. Vernon Jantzi suggests that the question "Did I make a difference?" should be restated "Did we live a difference?" Why would he say this? What development philosophy or ethic does his statement reflect?
2. Luann Martin struggled with the "results oriented" approach of much development practice. What are her arguments against this approach? How does the agency for which one works help determine one's philosophy, in this case, including Luann's concern with the "results orientation"?
3. How does Allan Sauder decide how successful his work has been? Do you have any concerns with his perspective? Allan emphasizes the importance of enlightened and strong leadership in development. What does this imply regarding his philosophy of development?
4. As you compare the three practitioners in this section, how did the differences in their backgrounds and experience affect their perceptions of what they accomplished and what they see as "problems?"

## Chapter 6: Large-Scale Public Policy Perspectives

1. What events occurred that led Martin, Kuttab, and Yoder to do public policy work with large-scale organizations instead of grassroots or middle ground organizations? Discuss the commonalities and differences.
2. Many of the development practitioners working in large-scale public policy projects work for or with governments. What are some strengths and weaknesses in doing public policy work in this way? What compromises become necessary to work at this level and are they different from compromises made in working with other organizations?
3. Ray Martin argues that people of faith should contribute their convictions and experiences in development through working with governments or with big international development institutions, and that they should be wrestling with the problems and issues that face entire nations and the global community. To what extent do you agree with this? What is the best way to make this contribution—through faith-based agencies, large secular agencies, people's movements?
4. Gender bias and inequality of power are two issues faced regularly by Beth Heisy Kuttab in her development work. How does she deal with these issues? Would you do it differently? Explain.

5. Richard Yoder believes that there is a compelling need for voices of justice, peace, and sustainability at the public policy level where, in addition to "ambulance driving" (relief and curative work), we become part of the process of creating systems and structures that reduce the need for ambulance driving. To what extent do you agree with this? Why?

## Chapter 7: Common Assumptions, Themes, and Patterns

1. Drawing from the three previous chapters, what commonalities and differences do you find as you review the accounts of how the nine development practitioners became interested in the field? Are there differences from one category to another as you compare grassroots, middle ground, and public policy practitioners?
2. Compare your findings in the previous question with how you developed or are developing your personal vocational interests or choices?
3. Read carefully what each practitioner says about the question, "What would I have done differently, given the chance?" What commonalities and differences do you see?
4. Describe the assumptions about development held by grassroots, middle ground, and large-scale public policy practitioners. How did they differ? How were they similar? How does this fit with your understanding?
5. Each practitioner talks about future challenges faced by development efforts. Describe where you would agree and what challenges you believe were not addressed.
6. Do most of the practitioners in this book seem to share a common "development model"? If so, briefly describe its main components.
7. All three types of development practitioners emphasize the importance of religious and spiritual values in development. How are these values expressed? Do those values help or hurt the development process in your opinion?
8. It has been said that religion is the missing dimension in development (and diplomacy more broadly) as practiced by mainstream development agencies. Do you agree with this? Why?
9. Grassroots workers tend to emphasize personal relationships while public policy workers tend to emphasize results. The authors feel that both are important. How do you think balance can be achieved?

## **Chapter 8: Toward an Anabaptist/Mennonite Ethic of Development**

### **“Ethics and Ethical Frameworks: A Brief Definition”**

1. If you were to make two lists of what you think are the values and ethics of development practitioners, one for practitioners who claim a faith-based orientation and one for those who do not, how would they compare?
2. Make a list of the principal values that guide your life. How do they compare with the values the authors identify as the core of a Mennonite development ethic? How would you explain the similarities or differences?

### **“Elements of an Anabaptist Ethic of Development”**

1. As you read through the practitioner cases, identify values and ways of working that you find but that have not been included by the authors as part of the development ethic.
2. The authors state, “...development ethics can be defined as ethical reflection on the ends and means of development.” With this in mind, review the cases in this section and state what you believe the various practitioners would have identified as the “ends” of development. Do they agree across the three categories?
3. Can you identify values that you believe are important for development practitioners that were not expressed or exemplified in the practitioners’ stories? If so, briefly state why you think they are important.

### **“Summary of an Anabaptist Theology and Ethic”**

1. This section suggests there “are five major principles which form a broad framework for Anabaptist theology.” What are these principles? Regardless of your religious orientation, how would you argue either for or against this proposition?
2. How do the practitioners’ stories in “Elements” support or contradict the five principles the authors propose as the basis for an Anabaptist development ethic?
3. From your knowledge of Anabaptism, or from the stories of the practitioners, is the Anabaptist faith, as practiced by the Mennonite community and expressed by the practitioners, an adequate source for a model and motivation for development practice? What are its weaknesses?
4. What are the assumptions about human nature in Anabaptist theology as indicated in the “Elements” section or in this chapter? Are these assumptions realistic regarding development as defined in chapter 2?

## **“Convergences and Divergences Between Anabaptist Theology and Ethics; An Anabaptist Development Ethic”**

Do you believe that it is possible to practice Anabaptist values such as people-centeredness, mutuality, service, integrity, servant leadership, peace, and justice in the hard-core world of development, especially with large-scale bilateral and multilateral development institutions such as USAID and the World Bank? Explain.

Many of the development practitioners in Part II do not feel comfortable with the traditional two-kingdom theology and feel that it is not helpful in dealing with the challenges of doing development work. Do you agree? Why or why not?

When you reflect on your life, where do you fall on the “quietism - activism” or “separatist - engagement” continuum? How does this compare with the position advocated in chapter 8?

A major argument of Chapter 8 is that faith-based people with ethics like those presented in Exhibit 8 ought to be involved in public policy work. What is the rationale for this type of call? To what extent do you agree with it? Explain.

## **Chapter 9: What Kind of World? Realities, Visions, Dilemmas, and Opportunities**

### **“Realities”**

1. What evidence do you find that would support or question the claim that the “realities” affecting the world described in this chapter apply equally to North America?
2. Explain why you agree or disagree with the authors about the phenomenon of civil religion in North America.
3. After reflecting on the realities and issues described in this section, identify one or two additional realities or issues that you think are important but were not presented in this section. Explain why you think your realities or issues are important.
4. How do you feel about joining social movements and participating in political advocacy for more just social policies? Explain why you believe that people of faith should or should not participate in this type of advocacy.

## **“Raising Goats or Changing Systems? Bridging the Gap”**

1. This section begins by asking, “Is development best promoted by teaching people to raise goats (i.e., working at the village level) or by changing systems and structures (working at the national or international level)?” How do you answer this question? Answer the question again under the assumption that you are in a position to control the allocation of large sums of money.
2. Exhibit 10 and the surrounding discussion argue that more faith-based peace and justice people are needed at cell “F.” Here there is a melding of the twin interests of being effective and faithful, since the need for ambulance driving is reduced and the work is rooted in faith-based, life-giving values of peace, justice, and sustainability. Critique this.
3. Of the three options—prophetic, advocacy, and direct involvement—presented for influencing the dominant model of development currently in vogue, with which one do you believe that you can be most effective and faithful? Why?
4. Is it possible to work in secular large-scale public policy organizations without “selling your soul”? Explain.
5. Driedger and Kraybill write that a new generation of scholars pushed church-state relations to center stage during the 1950s. The authors of this book propose that perhaps a new generation of development practitioners in the new millennium is pushing Mennonites and other groups who have historically refrained from public involvement into seeing direct involvement in public policy and systems change as a legitimate and necessary way of engaging the powers of war, poverty, and injustice. To what extent do you agree with this? Explain.

## **“Living Well While Doing Good”**

1. Halteman states that [personal] consumption is the most serious blind spot contemporary Christians have in the exercise of their faith. Why is this? Do you agree? As a way of dealing with this blind spot, two models (Sider and Halteman) of living responsibly are presented. Do you know many people who live according to these kinds of models? Discuss.
2. Most religions in the world hold tithing or alms giving as important tenets of their teaching. This is often seen as a percentage of income or wealth. The authors state that the real issue is not how much you give away but how much you keep for yourself for personal consumption. What do they mean by this? Discuss the implications.

3. This section begins with the statement, "It's uncomfortable when you know that your weekly or monthly salary is more than your [low-income country] colleague's annual income—and many times that of the so-called 'beneficiaries' of development." The authors then state that this may be an ethically questionable state of affairs. Why might this be ethically questionable? Beyond what amount does income inequality become ethically questionable?
4. As a way of dealing with the income inequality issue, the authors suggest that any income received that is, for example, 10 times greater than the lowest paid employee, be used for "other oriented" activities. These activities, by definition, promote the values, means, and goals of the development ethic presented in the "Raising Goats" section. Do you agree with this? Is 10 times too much? Not enough? Or should "market forces" determine what is ethical and fair? How does your response change when you consider not just the North American context but the global context?

### **"Building On or Destroying Local Culture and Natural Resources?"**

1. Describe a case from your own experience or community in which you believe that it was good to "destroy" a particular element of local culture. Describe what you or others would consider to be the positive or negative consequences of that particular cultural loss?
2. The authors end this section with a list of six principles that could help guide our relationship to culture as we work for development or change. Identify the ones with which you agree and disagree. Explain why.

### **"Connect or Disconnect with the Missiological Thrust of Religious Organizations?"**

1. At various points in the book the authors note that development has a spiritual component. How do you see this relating to the issue of whether or not development work carried out by Christians should have an evangelistic thrust that calls people to conversion?
2. Explain why you agree or disagree with the authors' claim that at a foundational level there is almost a total overlap ideologically between development and missionary activity in that they are both part of a larger movement committed to foster change that is in keeping with Western globalization.
3. The authors end this section with seven principles that could help redefine development and missiology through a commitment to radical discipleship. Are there others that you would add? Which ones would you question? Explain your answers.
4. Explain how this section strengthens or weakens your resolve to make the church a more faithful institution?

## **“Power: Acknowledging, Using, and Misusing It”**

1. Development, by definition, is done in the context of unequal access to power. Do the authors adequately address the issue of power in development satisfactorily? If so, why? If not, explain the weaknesses in the Anabaptist view of power as you see it in the context of global oppression, terrorism, and injustice.
2. How does the authors' view of power speak to the possibilities of development in countries currently beset by violence and oppression? Identify one or two countries or regions and discuss your opinion.

## **“The Nature of Development, and Where Best to Situate Policy Formation Efforts”**

1. Why would you agree or disagree that the most effective way to affect public policy formation is to work for public policy organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United States Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, or their equivalents elsewhere?
2. The authors claim that development practitioners who work for public policy organizations may still fall short of addressing macro policy issues. How would this be possible? Why do you agree or disagree?

## **Afterward: “An Invitation to Come Together with a Faithful and Prophetic Development Ethic”**

1. What, if anything, is unique about the perspectives presented in the book? Do you agree that Mennonite development practitioners work to the beat of a different drummer? Explain.
2. Do you believe that the development ethic elicited in this book from Mennonite development practitioners is an ethic that people of faith from other traditions can also claim, value, embody, and further shape as they do development work? Why or why not?
3. Can the Anabaptist development ethic serve as a basis for promoting integral development from the grassroots to the global level? Explain your response.
4. What is the relationship between development and national or international security? What, if anything, can an Anabaptist ethic of development contribute to security concerns?
5. If a faithful and life-giving development ethic must be rooted in a moral community to have integrity, can it be relevant in the “real world”? Explain your response.