

### **Definition of poverty and implications for poverty alleviation**

Throughout our course, we've learned that poverty is multi-faceted and has no 'one' objective definition. We've often defined poverty as a material and spiritual (relational) problem.

Throughout the book, the idea of poverty being strictly a material issue is prominent and loud.

The book has concentrated the definition of poverty down to a simple, "immoral maldistribution of wealth, high levels of unemployment, dilapidated housing, decrepit schools, inadequate health care, unavailable child care, shattered familial, and communal bonds." Although this definition of poverty focuses on the material lack of things, it also mentions the lack of good relationships between families and the community. In our course, we've learned that material poverty is only the surface of all the problems, however, behind all this is the lack of spiritual relationships.

Throughout the book, spiritual poverty is never addressed as a possible reason behind the extensive poverty in the ghetto. Through the perspective of LeAlan, we see that his reasoning leads him to misunderstand poverty as the reason for their circumstance, not poverty as a symptom of lacking an intimate relationship with God.

Throughout our course, we've discussed various methods that are well suited for alleviating poverty in communities such as the Ida.B Wells Development. We've learned that there is no one objective blueprint method that works for all communities, rather, a poverty alleviating program is custom crafted for different communities. Throughout the book, the circumstances in the Wells community if often traced backed to racial problems that have been carried on since the times of the segregation. Poverty alleviation in the eyes of this community is often looked at as a situation they were forced into, which is most of the truth, but not all of it. From the book, we can derive that many of the people believe that they are not the problem and that everything they face is just a problem carried on from previous generations.

### **Role of the state in poverty alleviation and its implications**

When dealing with the role of the state in poverty alleviation, two major ideas we discussed in the course come to mind, the kuyperian approach, and the principle pluralism approach. The role of the state in poverty alleviation can be broken down to two primary functions, to promote General Welfare, and Enforce Justice. Via the eyes of LeAlan, we learn that the state plays a non-existent role in the development of Wells. All the state does for the people of Wells is a noninclusive approach of unemployment paychecks. This has to change. The state should look to promote the welfare of the people of Wells, by playing a bigger role that is more inclusive and impactful.

The ever-increasing gang violence and drug-related transactions only occur due to low employment rates in the community. A simple step such as opening a factory of some sort would allow the people of Wells to get off the street and get into jobs, reducing overall crime rates. The reducing crime rates would allow the state to fulfill its role by increasing community welfare and promoting justice.

### **Role of the church in poverty alleviation and its implications**

Just like the role of the state, the church has limitations in what they are able to perform for the community, appropriate and inappropriate actions. In the book, we see that the church plays no role in this community and that most of the characters we meet, tend to stray away from the church and God. However, we do see God being constantly brought up and people 'praying' for the betterment of the community. From this, we can conclude that just like many of us, people in this community are Evangelical Gnostics, only reaching out to God in times of need.

The church has the opportunity to play a big role in the lives of these people and the best approach to it would be to follow the Ministry Design Principles. Since a majority of the people in this community seem to have false gods, such as violence, drugs, and money, Christian poverty alleviation ministries would be able to help these people conquer their false gods and conform to a non-erroneous story of change, allowing them to narrate God's story of change throughout their lives. Implementation of supportive, gospel-centered groups would allow the community to hear the true gospel and rebuild a non-marred identity allowing them to recover from social isolation.

### **Receptivity in the development process**

The Receptiveness of a community during the development process is the most important part that has to be played by the community. It is a crucial role that cannot be forced upon a community by the state of the church and is responsible for any changes that need to occur in order for positive development. Increased receptivity in a community allows for changes that are set apart from traditional thought and new ideas.

Although we don't get a lot of information about the receptivity of the Wells from LeAlan, we can read between the lines in order to get this information. The inclusion of the high rise buildings in the Wells such as the 383 and the quick deterioration of it, tells us that the community is not very receptive to change. We hear from Mrs. Helen Finner that the Wells was once the 'prettiest' place she's ever seen and was quick to compare it to 'heaven.' She goes on to say, that the community once had hotels and resorts nearby which were quickly abandoned due to the changing social climate. This leads us to believe that the community was once receptive to change, allowing the state to bring in jobs allowing men to move away from the streets, which was rapidly destroyed by the gang wars.

### **Role of participation of poor people in their poverty alleviation**

During our time with Dr. Fikkert, we were able to discuss the role of poor people and the community itself participating in order to alleviate poverty. By looking at Mark Gornik and his work in Sandtown as an example, it's important for the ministry workers to look at the poor as people and not just as criminals. From the view of LeAlan, we see that the majority of the community is reliant on the state's monthly unemployment handouts. We can see and understand from this that many people in the community don't even want to build something for themselves or even help themselves. We see from Gornik that everyone in a community such as the Wells has strengths in various different aspects of life, and the community needs to look deeper into this reservoir of resources in order to use themselves to build a better life.

Community Organizing is required from the people in order to bring out what the community believes are the necessary actions required in order to help alleviate poverty. In Wells, we can see that the rate of violence increases from 93' to 96' and there are many steps the state can take here in order to reduce this, such as increased patrol and increased punishment by the juvenile detention center in order to set kids to the right path. A simple change such as this would allow the community to become overall safer, allowing the people to feel safer in these communities, which would allow people to leave their homes without the danger of being killed. This would allow the community to better their communal relations, which would allow employment rates to rise.