DEVELOPMENT AS TRANSFORMATION: A CASE STUDY OF CANADIAN BAPTIST
MINISTRIES' HOLISTIC APPROACH TO FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE
USULUTÁN REGION OF EL SALVADOR


by


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*Dedicated to Mom and Dad*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES

# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the use of a faith-based holistic approach to community development. The concept of transformation development will be explored through a case study of the community development work of Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) in the Usulután region of El Salvador – specifically sustainable agricultural production, provision of clean water, provision of safe housing, leadership training and Christian education. Transformational development attempts to partner religious mission and development in a holistic framework for practical application. Within this framework, the following study attempts to address the gap between theory and practice surrounding holistic approaches to faith-based development.

This research project explores the role of religion in development; the evolution of perspectives on evangelism and social action; the emergence of transformational development and integral mission; and finally, a study of the impact and effectiveness of a holistic and transformational approach shown through the work of CBM.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

| | |
|---|---|
| ACOPRORED DE RL | Asociación Cooperativa de Ahorro, Crédito, Comercialización, Producción Agropecuaria y Vivienda Red de Productores y Productoras de Responsabilidad Limitada |
| ADECSILEMP | Asociación para la defensa de la Cuenca del Río San Simón y Lempa |
| ARENA | Alianza Republicana Nacionalista |
| CASAE | Canadian Society for Adult Education |
| CASID | Canadian Society for International Development |
| CBF | Canadian Baptist Federation |
| CBM | Canadian Baptist Ministries |
| CBIM | Canadian Baptist International Ministries |
| CLAI | Convention of Latin American Churches |
| FEBES | Baptist Federation of El Salvador |
| FMLN | Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional |
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| IBE | Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| STEP | Serving, Training, Energizing Partnerships |
| UN | United Nations |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION

## 1.1.  INTRODUCTION

The field of development has reached a point in its history where it must take "religion both

seriously and critically" (Samson, 2005, p. 4). For many years, secularism has been prominent in

development theory and practice resulting in a lack of attention to religious development

discourse (Clarke & Jennings, 2008). Scholars have argued that development has a strong

religious foundation (Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Ellis & Ter Haar, 2006; Lunn, 2009; Marshall,

2001), and that religion and spirituality are intrinsically linked to everyday life, particularly

throughout the developing world (Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Holenstein, 2005). It is difficult to

deny that religion and development are intertwined in a significant relationship. Therefore, the

following research suggests that the role of religion must be further explored as a meaningful

part of the development process, and this thesis aims to fill some of the existing research gaps

related to theory and practice, specifically through the exploration of a holistic approach to

faith-based community development.

Religious institutions and missionaries have been at the forefront of poverty relief and social

justice initiatives for centuries. Faith-based organizations have played a significant role in the

field of development since its emergence post-World War II. Though religious institutions and

organizations have long been actively involved in development, research on the theoretical

underpinnings of faith-based development policy and programming is only recently gaining

prominence in development literature.  It is positive to see growing academic interest in the role

of religion in development; however, a search through the recent literature reveals that limited

research exists on the use and impact of faith-based frameworks for development.

The researcher acknowledges the spectrum of religious diversity within the realm of faith-based organizations; however, in order to complete a thorough analysis within the timeframe and parameters of a Masters Thesis, this research focuses solely on a Christian approach to community development. Though there are a number of well-established Christian organizations in the field of international development (World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Tearfund, etc.), the aforementioned lack of research surrounding faith-based frameworks for community development indicates a gap between theory and practice. One framework that has emerged through research on the role of religion in development is *transformational development*. Before expanding on the particulars of this framework from a faith-based perspective it is important to highlight the growing interest in transformation in mainstream development.

The theme of transformation, although not often linked to religion, is currently a popular topic in mainstream development research and policy. The United Nations (UN) report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has a strong focus on transformation, highlighting the need for "five, big transformative shifts" (2013, p.7). In June 2013 the Director of the Coady International Institute, Dr. John Gaventa, spoke on the theme of transformation in development at a joint conference of the Canadian Society for Adult Education (CASAE) and the Canadian Society for International Development (CASID). He expressed the need to shift focus from quantitative change through human development indicators to "…qualitative change of the systems behind the indicators themselves" (2013, p.5).

A recent discussion paper by Dr. Axel Dorscht (2013) responds and adds further reflection to Gaventa's remarks on transformation. Dorscht believes, "…the issue no longer is quantitative development, but qualitative transformation. Improving not just the quantity, but the quality of

life and existence, in both the South and the North" (2013, p.1). He argues that it is contradictory to the holistic nature of our existence and the world around us to separate physical behaviour and actions from understanding and what takes place in the mind.

Although the UN's Post-2015 Development Agenda, and the remarks made by Gaventa and Dorscht, do not specifically address spiritual dimensions within the process of transformation, they do express sentiments that are also found in holistic approaches to faith-based community development. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine a Christian model of holistic transformation and consider its implications for faith-based community development and potentially the development field as a whole.

## 1.2. TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STUDY OF FAITH-BASED APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Thus far, the most comprehensive work on transformational development comes from Dr. Bryant Myers in his book *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (1999 and 2011 Revised Edition). Myers is a former Senior Manager with World Vision and a current professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. Chapter Two will focus on an in-depth exploration of Myers' work and other relevant literature; however, following is a brief explanation of the principles of transformational development.

Transformational development attempts to partner religious mission and development in a holistic framework for practical application. It encourages a Christian perspective of development, believing that Jesus' mission is a holistic mission to the poor (Myers, 2011). Transformational development claims that the challenge of Christian holism in development is

to release the Biblical narrative[1] to speak to all phases of the process of human transformation

(Myers, 2011).

The use of the Biblical narrative to address all aspects of human development is considered an

alternative to modern development approaches, which have historically eliminated any focus on

spiritual dimensions of development, placing economic growth and technological progress at

the forefront of development (Nederveen-Pieterse, 1999). As Marshall (2001) argues, there is a

need to move beyond the technical and economic framing of issues. The development process

should be involved on all levels in human society: supporting freedom from all forms of

oppression; treatment of physical, psychological and spiritual afflictions; opportunity for

intellectual, material and cultural development; and ability to enjoy life in its fullness (Wallace,

2002). Deneulin and Bano argue that religion needs to be included in this shift beyond

traditional ways of development thinking, as an "intrinsic component of people's well-being"

(2009, p.44). Holistic thinking means that the work is "integrated from the outset" (Nederveen-

Pieterse, 1999, p. 91).

Transformational development is a process that aims to heal and restore body, mind, spirit and

community (Myers, 2011). The process of transformation takes place through action of

communities and community institutions – with a twofold mission to create good and counter

evil (Sugden, 2003). In *Walking With the Poor* (2011), Myers also highlights further

characteristics of transformational development: affirming the agency of human beings; seeking

truth, justice and righteousness; seeking beauty, art and celebration; and sustainability –

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[1] Myers describes the Biblical narrative as follows: "The Biblical story explains how every community's story began and why their stories are full of pain, injustice, and struggle at the same time that they are full of joy, loving relationships and hope. The Biblical story provides the answer to how the stories of the community and the development promoter may need to reorient themselves to the story intended by their Creator and describes, in the metaphor of the kingdom of God, what the best human story is like" (2011, p. 14).

physical, mental, social and spiritual sustainability. The process of transformation must not be

dependent on the development practitioner; instead, there is a "…need to articulate the better

future the community decides it wishes to pursue" (Myers, 2011, p. 175).

In an effort to address the gap between theory and practice surrounding holistic approaches to

faith-based development, the researcher has completed a case study of the community

development work of Canadian Baptist Ministries in the Usulután region of El Salvador. This case

study will be used to examine a holistic approach used by one particular organization and will

attempt to determine its impact and effectiveness. It is understood that every context is unique

when it comes to community development work in any part of the world, faith-based or

otherwise. Various contextual factors related to Canadian Baptist Ministries and El Salvador will

be identified throughout the case study, highlighting the ways in which they inhibit or contribute

to the effectiveness of a holistic approach to community development. It is hoped that an

analysis of these factors will also highlight the importance of creating development frameworks

that can be practically and effectively applied within any cultural context.

There are numerous strands of theology and practice within the Christian church, and a similar

reality exists within Christian community development. As with Christian denominations, certain

strands within the theory and practice of Christian community development are considered to

be almost identical, perhaps with a few nuances, and others are categorized at opposite ends of

the spectrum. The terms holistic, integral and transformation appear throughout the literature

on Christian approaches to community development, but they vary somewhat in their definition

and application. Canadian Baptist Ministries "…embraces the concept of holistic transformation

as the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel" (2011, p.2) and this is embodied through

their practice of integral mission – an integration of word and deed, evangelism and social action.

This research will also explore the concept of integral mission as it relates to transformational development and its strong influence on Canadian Baptist Ministries' work in El Salvador. However, as one of the most comprehensively developed Christian frameworks in recent years, transformational development is a logical starting point for the exploration of a holistic approach to community development.  The principles and practices of transformational development and integral mission are considered to be quite similar; and in fact, the phrases were used interchangeably during some conversations and interviews conducted for this research project. This research will address the similarities between these concepts and their effectiveness as they relate to the work of Canadian Baptist Ministries, with an overall focus on the concept of holistic transformation.

Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) was officially established in 1995 as a merger of Canadian Baptist International Ministries (CBIM) and the Canadian Baptist Federation (CBF). CBM exists as a movement of churches who "…represent one of the largest networks of faith in the Protestant world" (CBM, 2012).[2] Their official mission is to encourage "…passionate discipleship for local and global mission" (CBM, 2012). *The Sharing Way*, the CBM's relief and development arm*, works to bring social, economic and spiritual transformation through partnership and the ministry of the local church. CBM works with partners in India, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East through the following core programs: Children and Youth at Risk, Food Security and Community Development, Leadership Formation, AIDS and Health, Peace and Justice, and Christian Witness (CBM, 2013).

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[2] CBM represents over 1,000 churches and 150,000 Canadians (CBM, 2013).

This research focuses on CBM's work in the Usulután region of El Salvador, specifically in terms of its support for sustainable agricultural production, provision of clean water, provision of safe housing, leadership training and Christian education.[3] Through a partnership with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE) – Emmanuel Baptist Church – located in the capital city of San Salvador, CBM has sought to "…establish a healthy relationship from a holistic perspective, affirming physical, spiritual, social, emotional and intellectual growth and formation" (CBM, 2010).

## 1.3.   PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this research is to explore the use of a faith-based holistic approach to community development. The concept of holistic transformation will be explored through a case study of the community development work of Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) in the Usulután region of El Salvador. This research project explores the role of religion in development; the evolution of perspectives on evangelism and social action; the emergence of transformational development and integral mission; and finally, a study of the impact and effectiveness of a holistic and transformational approach shown through the work of CBM – a Christian organization "…seeking a ministry that is both spiritual and social in its dynamic" (CBM, 2012).

Poverty and inequality often impact multiple aspects of an individual's life, and therefore it is worthwhile to conduct a critical analysis of holistic ways to address these issues within community development. Beyond this, the growth of religion in the Global South – and also its decline in the Global North - indicates the need for further exploration of faith-based approaches to development. Religion is seen by some as a human invention or something that

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[3] Community Development is one of CBM's four Strategic Drivers. The other three are Leadership Development, Joint Pioneer Outreach and Global Discipleship.

will eventually fade away (Lunn, 2009); however, Deneulin and Bano (2009) argue that considering religion as irrelevant can be detrimental to the development process. The tendency to treat religion and development as separate or even incompatible can lead to individuals being offended or alienated, undermining the effectiveness of development efforts (Gardner, 2009). Failure to acknowledge and explore both the historical and contemporary impact of religion – positive and negative aspects – can also hinder ongoing attempts to achieve greater progress in international development.

As previously noted, there are numerous faith-based organizations working in the field of development; however, research surrounding faith-based frameworks for development is limited. This thesis aims to address the existing gap between theory and practice in Christian community development. It explores Christian roots in development theory and practice, specifically in North and Latin America, and aims to provide a critical analysis of a holistic and transformational approach to development.

Field research for this thesis was based in the Usulután region of El Salvador. Although CBM works in multiple countries, the scope of the study will be limited to their community development work within the context of El Salvador. Deneulin & Bano indicate that the use of a case study can be useful in illustrating "…the complex interplay between religion and development" (2009, p. 2). It is hoped that a micro-level investigation of CBM's work in the Usulután region will highlight the need for analytical approaches to understanding and conceptualizing faith-based frameworks for development at a macro level (Deneulin & Bano, 2009).

This research project was born out of a desire to see holistic development in practice. The goal is to gain an understanding of transformation as a holistic process and a vision for its role in faith-

based community development. As an outcome of this study, the researcher aims to add to the existing literature about transformational development and faith-based community development. It is also hoped that the case study will provide a constructive analysis of CBM's holistic approach to community development in El Salvador.

## 1.4.    PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The focus of this research project is holistic transformation and faith-based community development, specifically explored through the work of Canadian Baptist Ministries in El Salvador. The objective is to conduct a clear and concise study of this particular topic, based on the following research questions.

### 1.4.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question:

- Has there been evidence of holistic transformation through Canadian Baptist Ministries' community development work in El Salvador, and does the framework of transformational development offer an effective approach to holistic faith-based community development?

The supporting questions are:

- How have perspectives on faith-based community development developed over time?
- What are the similarities between transformational development and integral mission? And what does holistic transformation look like from a faith-based community development perspective?
- Has the work of CBM in El Salvador been transformational in nature, according to the principles determined by transformational development and integral mission?

- Is transformational development an effective framework for faith-based community development?

### 1.4.2. METHODOLOGY

In order to present a well-developed research project, the approach was split into two qualitatively focused components – a review of literature surrounding religion in development and faith-based approaches to community development, and a case study of CBM's work in El Salvador. As previously mentioned, religion in development is recently becoming a more prominent topic in development research (Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Bradley, 2007; Ellis & Ter Haar, 2006); however, there is still a limited body of literature about faith-based frameworks for community development. It has also been previously noted that the terms transformation, integral and holistic are used in both similar and different ways throughout faith-based theory and practice. Therefore, the completion of the first component of this research project required time, patience and resourcefulness in the search for relevant literature.

To complete the second component of this research project, the researcher spent two and a half months in the Usulután region of El Salvador conducting interviews and engaging in participant observation in order to investigate the community development work of CBM and their Salvadoran partner – Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE). This study is categorized as a multiple-case study, examining multiple programs within a single site and within a bounded system (specific time and place) (Creswell et al., 2007). In order to conduct an in-depth investigation within this particular context the researcher employed multiple types of data collection. Chapters Two, Three and Four explore specific themes identified through a critical analysis of primary data, semi-structured interviews and field notes, along with secondary data, organizational documents and records. Finally, the case study concludes with an outline of

lessons learned, observations and recommendations for the field of study (Creswell et al., 2007), in this case, international development.

Twenty-six interviews were conducted during the research process. Two interviews were conducted with current CBM staff members, two with current IBE staff members and two with previous IBE staff members. The remaining twenty interviews were conducted with individuals who live in the Usulután region and have participated in the community development work of CBM.

Participants were recruited with support from the church (IBE) and also through the support of other participants, using the process referred to as snowball or network sampling. The sampling technique resulted in a range of adult participants, both males and females with different levels of involvement in their communities. A combination of written and oral consent was gathered for all interviews. Community members who participated in the interview process will remain anonymous and are identified using pseudonyms. The real names of current and former staff members are used with their permission.

It is the researcher's responsibility to engage with interview participants in an honest and ethical manner (Creswell and Miller, 2000). As a Canadian entering into the Salvadoran context, the researcher was aware that some participants might be hesitant to disclose personal information. Every attempt was made to establish a sense of trust and a comfortable environment for each interview. Participants were made aware that they could choose not to answer certain questions or to end the interview process at any time.

The researcher has conversational understanding of the Spanish language; however, for the sake of clarity and accuracy all interviews were conducted with the support of an interpreter. All interviews were recorded and transcription was completed by the researcher.

## 1.5. CHAPTER SET-UP

The remainder of this thesis attempts to answer the research questions laid out in Chapter One. Chapter Two provides a review of relevant literature surrounding the evolution of perspectives on evangelism and social action in North and Latin America. Although it will touch on the influence of Catholic Social Teaching and Liberation Theology, the focus is primarily on the evolution of these perspectives within the Evangelical Protestant – specifically Baptist – church. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the historical emergence of transformational development and integral mission, as they are main concepts that are used in the case study of CBM's community development work in El Salvador.

Chapter Three will focus on a recent history of El Salvador, primarily since the Civil War that took place from 1980 to 1992. It will also explore the history and formation of Canadian Baptist Ministries as a faith-based organization and its introduction to work in El Salvador and partnership with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE) in San Salvador. It is important to understand the context from which this case study has emerged and so Chapter Three also provides a description of the Usulután region in El Salvador and provides a brief description of the past and present reality in the communities where CBM has worked. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the principles, practices and goals of transformational development and integral mission as identified by interview participants – current and former staff members involved in the CBM/IBE partnership and individuals who have been involved in community development projects in Usulután.

Chapter Four analyzes the data collected during the interview process. The chapter is split into two sections, successes and challenges related to CBM's holistic faith-based approach to community development in Usulután. During the interview process, most individuals described

success in regards to a specific community or program. Therefore the first section of Chapter

Four is categorized by references to geographical areas and specific programs. When challenges

were discussed during the interview process, many individuals addressed challenges that have a

more widespread impact on communities and programs. Therefore, the second section of

Chapter Four is categorized according to the challenges that were identified as the most

significant over all areas and programs.

Chapter Five provides a critical analysis of the case study of CBM, along with recommendations

and implications for faith-based community development. The analysis draws on themes from

Chapters Three and Four, addressing the key lessons that emerged from the case study. Finally,

Chapter Five provides a conclusion to the research project, offering thoughts on moving forward

and the implications for faith-based community development that have emerged from this

particular case study.

# CHAPTER TWO  REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1. RELIGION IN DEVELOPMENT – SINCE THE MID-20TH CENTURY

In order to provide appropriate context for the case study of CBM's community development work in El Salvador, the following literature review will focus on the relationship between religion and development over time and the evolution of North American Evangelical Baptist perspectives on evangelism and social action. It will also explore shifting perspectives of Latin American Evangelical Baptists and the influence of Catholic Social Teaching and Liberation Theology. Finally, it will explore a framework for transformational development and the concept of integral mission.

In practice, policy and research, development practitioners and agencies have been exploring alternative approaches to development for many years. Since the 1970s there has been growing recognition that the field of development needs to break away from its focus on economic development as a singular approach to addressing poverty (Selinger, 2004). Gardner writes that development thinking has begun, "…to acknowledge the importance of social capital along with economic development, particularly as a strong driver for economic development" (2003, p.11). However, throughout the 1980s and 90s, the language and policy of development were still focused on economic growth as both the means and end.  In his 1999 book *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen made the argument that human well-being should be the goal of development, not just a side effect of economic growth. Sen argued that development should be concerned with expanding freedom – from poverty, inequality, and many other oppressive structures that limit human potential.

Sen's notion of development as freedom, along with Robert Chambers' sustainable livelihoods

approach, paved the way for new approaches to development that address issues such as equity

and the need to enhance individual capabilities within social, political and cultural spheres as

well as in the marketplace. These approaches have gained traction over the last decade and

many have applauded initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals for showcasing a

more multi-dimensional, human-centred approach to development. Deneulin and Bano (2009)

note that the human development and capability approach brought values back to the centre of

development. However, Gaventa cautions development practitioners not to allow signs of

progress to distract from the challenges that still exist in the field of development:

> While the social, economic and human development gap, as traditionally
> measured, shrinks, perhaps more significant systemic crises that will affect the
> quality of our lives seem to be on the rise, not only in so-called developing
> countries, but in the so-called developed ones as well (2013, p.4).

In the midst of this shift towards a more human-centred approach to development, religion has

been conspicuously absent from the picture. Until recently, religion has been a taboo subject in

the study of development, receiving limited attention in the realm of secular academia.

However, "…there is an emerging consensus that religion's developmental potential has long

been under-utilised" (Haynes, 2007, p.7). The literature provides an array of explanations for the

historically limited inclusion of religion in development policy and research. Ver Beek (2000)

believes that those involved in development discourse have consciously avoided the topic for

fear of creating conflict and because of a known misuse of religion in development. For some,

religion represents a long history of questionable influence and harmful practices throughout

the world (Haynes, 2007). A great deal of research has been published which highlights the long

history of religious efforts that resulted in conquest and power through injustice, colonialism

and imperialism; however, there is also a comparable history of service, justice, love and

compassion (Woolnough, 2011) that has not necessarily received the same attention. Deneulin and Bano argue that:

> Religion is not to be considered only as a significant force in development…but has to be engaged with in its entirety and not only to the extent that it is conducive or detrimental to pre-defined development goals. For its adherents, religion infuses all aspects (and decisions) of their lives (2009, p. 6).

As Holenstein notes, "…it would be a disastrous misunderstanding to conclude that because of their potential for dangerous instrumentalisation, religion and spirituality should be cut out from the discourse and practice of development co-operation" (2005, p.11). Further dialogue surrounding religion's role in development can provide opportunities to address many of these historical wrongdoings and consider ways to unlearn and avoid repeating harmful behaviours of the past.

The prevailing influence of modernity is mentioned frequently throughout the literature as a reason for the notable absence of religion in development over the last half-century (Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Ellis & Ter Haar, 2006; Haynes, 2007; Hiebert, 2008; Holenstein, 2005; Kaplan, 2009; Lunn, 2009; Myers, 2011). Since the Enlightenment, a dominant belief has emerged that faith should be individual and private (Haynes, 2007; Hiebert, 2008; Ver Beek, 2000). As an extension of this belief, religion has been viewed primarily as unrelated or irrelevant to development. Some saw it as an impediment to development, as it was associated with the 'traditional' aspects of culture that modernity would replace. The separation of religion from all other spheres of life is now a well-established way of thinking and living in the Global North; however, elsewhere this is not the case. Throughout the rest of the world the spiritual and secular are often intertwined (Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Hiebert, 2008).

Hiebert (2008) argues that the emergence of modernity led to the creation of a dualistic

worldview – one that separates spiritual and material realms. This worldview was

predominantly adopted in the Western world – also referred to as the Global North – while,

Hiebert explains, many societies in the Global South maintained their traditional worldview of

the spiritual and material realms as a seamless whole. Following in the footsteps of Hiebert's

work on traditional versus modern worldviews, Myers (2011) argues that the modern dualistic

perspective has been embedded in both development and religious practices in the Global

North. Most governments, development institutions and churches alike have long accepted the

notion that religion and development must remain separate because they deal with separate

realms (Myers, 2011). However, throughout the rest of the world, societies place great

importance on the role of spirits, miracles and other aspects of the unseen world in everyday

life. The tendency to intentionally separate, or even ignore, this reality in the Global South has

had a significant impact on modern development efforts. Myers explains:

> The inability of the modern to deal with signs and miracles makes it very difficult
> for carriers of modernity, such as development practitioners, to carry out
> meaningful conversations with people who hold a traditional worldview. The
> development practitioner thinks people are sick because of germs and dirty
> water, while the people believe they are sick because of curses of witchcraft
> (2001, p.10).

Even though religion remains a definitive element of culture (Selinger, 2004) – impacting

political, economic and social arenas throughout the world – it is a topic that many development

scholars and practitioners still seem hesitant to address.  For the purpose of this study, it is

important to acknowledge that use of the term *religion* can conjure many images and definitions

in the reader's mind. It is a contested term, and will be defined here only so far as to set the

context for this particular study. Haynes aptly states that, "…religion can affect the world in two

basic ways: by what it *says* and what it *does*" (2007, p.14). He outlines the following as defining points of religion:

> A system of beliefs and practices – often relating to an ultimate being or beings – involving that which is sacred in a society…Religion can also be seen as providing a theology and ethical code through a type of formal organization (church) or a social group (faith-based organizations) (2007, p.14).

Religious belief, be it Christian, Hindu, Muslim or other, offers a framework and guidelines for living life. Culture typically determines how religious beliefs and values are played out in everyday life and in many cultures religion is considered to be the moral foundation of thought and action in a person's life. As Bano and Deneulin write, religion is "…intertwined with the socio-economic and political context in which it is lived" (2009, p. 22). Around the world, many participants in community development, along with development practitioners, are motivated and sustained by their faith and religious beliefs. Since religion is intrinsically connected to all aspects of life – including political, economic and social - it is important to consider development as practiced through a faith-based lens.

A 2010 demographic study conducted by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life estimated that there are 5.8 billion religiously affiliated adults and children in the world. In the developing world, religion "…continues to exert a powerful influence on how individuals and communities…interact with each other and with their governments" (Kaplan, 2009, p.24). Faith networks are often the hub of rural communities, more actively involved than the state in social issues and supporting the poor (Kaplan, 2009). There is a need to link religious belief and practice to development issues in order to further understand human behaviour, particularly in relation to poverty, and to re-adjust policy and practice to consider a spiritual dimension to these issues (Bradley, 2007).

As the door of development dialogue slowly opens for religion, the conversation must go further

than attempting a multi-dimensional approach or simply acknowledging that religion can be part

of the development process. There is a need to explore faith-based approaches to development

and consider their implications in addressing the "significant systemic crises" (Gaventa, 2013, p.

4) facing the field of development. Although economic, social and political progress has been

made in the quest for global development, a lack of sustainable change is still evident in many

places around the world. Along with inequality, issues like climate change, violence – particularly

against women – and food security provide a more difficult perspective on our global 'progress'.

Many scholars agree that there needs to be a new vision for development (Gaventa, 2013; Ver

Beek, 2000; Holenstein, 2005; Myers, 2011). However the creation of a new vision should not

simply include an acknowledgement of religion in development, but must include a critical

analysis of its influence – both positive and negative – and should consider the potential

implications for future development theory and practice. A recent workshop facilitated by the

Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID) focused on the

relationship between religion and development. Following is an excerpt from the workshop

outline:

> For that reason, a development paradigm that does not provide room and respect for
> religion and the spiritual dimension of human well-being cannot be considered a fully
> satisfactory basis for genuine human development. Furthermore, people's full range of
> resources should provide the foundation for any development strategy and among
> these are people's religious and spiritual resources (CASID, 2013, para. 6).

The ability of a church or faith community to connect individuals, provide support and

education, and disseminate positive moral influence has been shown time and again throughout

history. An approach to development that does not consider the religious beliefs and values of a

community is truly at a loss to engage meaningful and lasting change. The religious traditions in

19

a family or community often provide a foundation - or at least a strong influence on - social, political and economic decisions. For too long, mainstream development has failed to address humans as material *and* spiritual beings.  These concepts have remained in separate realms – the material being the most significant part of the development process and the spiritual considered either a positive or negative side note, depending on the particular perspective (or faith bias) of the person conducting the analysis.  Myers (2000) argues that imposing the separated view of the material and spiritual realms to the poor in the Global South through normative development practices is a form of neocolonialism. A different approach must be considered, an approach that addresses all aspects of human life and experience. As Gaventa (2013) suggests, maybe the question is not about development, but about transformation.

Thus far, the discussion has focused on a broad view of religion, or the lack of religion, in development. It is important to start from this vantage point in order to understand the broader context in which faith-based community development is practiced and to consider what may be ahead on the horizon. The rest of this thesis will focus specifically on Christian approaches to community development and all references to religion will be in this context unless otherwise specified. The following section will explore the historical relationship between Christian evangelism and social action – specifically within the North American Evangelical Christian church.

## 2.2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL ACTION – SINCE THE MID-20TH CENTURY

Over the last 60 years, a dualistic view of the material and spiritual realms has not only guided secular development thinking; it has also been a pervasive force within churches and faith-based organizations (Harries, 2008; Myers, 2011). In Christianity, this separation between material and

spiritual aspects of life has been seen through the relationship between evangelism and social

action. Since the end of the 19th century the purpose and priorities of Christian mission,

specifically evangelism and social action, have been a source of great discussion and debate

within the North American evangelical community (Buenting, 2008; CBM, 2012; Tinker, 1999).

'The Great Reversal', a term coined by historian Timothy L. Smith (1924-1997), referred to the

turn "…many evangelicals made from a sense of deep social concern for others to an

individualistic focus on personal and private salvation" (CBM, 2012, p.24). Fearing the growing

influence of liberal-based theology in North America, evangelicals began distancing themselves

from social causes in order to hold tight to the basic tenets of Christian theology – faith in Jesus

Christ and evangelization. The argument was essentially modernism versus fundamentalism,

and the gap between evangelical priorities and social action began to grow.

In his 1949 inaugural speech, U.S. President Truman championed the introduction of

development aid to 'underdeveloped' countries (Holenstein, 2005). Suddenly international

development was a growing field and modernization was its foundation. During this time, the

Christian mission field was also growing – at home and abroad. In North America, evangelical

preachers held fast to the gospel message of salvation in the face of immigration, urbanization,

industrialization and growing economic disparity (Buenting, 2008) – issues that some were

calling for the church to address. Overseas, evangelical missionaries – including a great number

of Canadian Baptists – were acting out the gospel message through humanitarian efforts:

> …nurses and doctors opened mission hospitals and teachers set up schools and
> literacy programs. Leprosy was treated. Millions of people learned to read and
> write. Christian agronomists developed new techniques and improved
> agriculture. Land reform acts were implemented, such as in Bolivia where
> Canadian Baptist missionaries championed the rights of local farmhands to own
> the land they worked (CBM, 2012).

Both sides were challenging the other to address their lack of commitment to either evangelism or social action. Evangelicals were accused of avoiding a practical engagement with society to address crucial issues, and proponents of the social gospel were accused of neglecting to preach the Word of God (CBM, 2012).

Following along the same lines as the creation of the World Council of Churches, initially a fellowship of over 100 predominantly Protestant churches that was established in 1948 ("History", 2013, para. 5), a group of North American evangelicals decided there was a need for productive dialogue in place of a divisive debate. This decision set in motion a number of significant meetings that have shaped the evangelical response to this issue. Three key events that took place as a result of this shift in thinking were the 1974 Lausanne Congress of World Evangelism, the 1983 Wheaton Consultation, and the creation of The Micah Network and the 2001 Micah Declaration.

The Lausanne Covenant was drafted by Evangelical leader John Stott (1921-2011) in consultation with other evangelical leaders at the Lausanne Congress of World Evangelism in 1974.  This document articulated a new stance on a growing acknowledgement of the interconnected relationship between evangelism and social action:

> Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty (Lausanne Covenant, Section Five).

This was a significant move towards integrating opposing perspectives and the Lausanne Covenant stood to impact faith-based development for the next few decades. A commitment was made by many Christians to work intentionally for the purpose of both evangelism and

social action. However there was a lack of understanding on how to really put the new vision into practice.

The Lausanne Congress was seen as major progress for many faith-based relief and development organizations that wanted to continue the dialogue about the practical application of gospel principles to relief and development work without being accused of abandoning support for evangelism. Faith- based organizations like World Vision, Samaritan's Purse and Compassion International had been created to support a Christian approach to international development and justice; however, they still faced dualistic tendencies when it came to practically applying these principles on the ground (CBM, 2012). At the base of this was the question: "What makes a Christian development organization Christian" (CBM, 2012)? If social action and preaching the Gospel were to remain separate in practice, then the work of a faith-based organization was inherently no different than the work of secular NGOs such as Oxfam or the Red Cross.

In 1983, the Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need met at Wheaton College in Illinois as part of a larger conference of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The aim of this meeting was not to repeat the message that had emerged from Lausanne, but instead to further explore what the integration of social action and evangelism should look like for churches and Christian development agencies. The resulting publication, "Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need" addressed what the role of the church and Christian development agencies should look like, not just in theory, but specifically in practice:

> The mission of the church includes both the proclamations of the Gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation (1983, Section Five).

As the North American debate and discussion continued transforming faith-based development, the Catholic Church, and to a smaller degree, the Protestant church, in Latin America was exposed to the growing influence of liberation theology. In response to negative effects of post-colonial development efforts, Latin Americans began crying out in the struggle for a more equitable social order (Jones, 2009). The Catholic Church began to embrace a somewhat more liberal perspective in order to address these social issues. Priests witnessed firsthand the poverty and oppression that their parishioners faced and many began to communicate a desire for their liberation from these struggles.

As the social temperature was rising in many Latin American countries, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Jon Sobrino and other Latin American Christian theologians and scholars spoke out against the oppression and injustice in their own countries and called for the uniting of theology and socio-political concerns (CBM, 2012). They believed that faith-based development did not simply include economic or structural change accompanied by an encouraging word of Scripture. Instead, it meant a Biblical mandate to fight for the liberation of the individual from all systems of oppression. Gutiérrez, a Peruvian priest, made the claim that there must be a new method of using theology in the face of real life situations (Liberation Theology, 2011). It must become a contextual theology.

Catholic Social Teaching is also based on a commitment to the poor and oppressed. During the 1960s and 70s, the Catholic Church spoke boldly about the need for liberation and justice around the world. This aspect of Catholic Social Teaching was greatly influenced by Latin American Bishops Council who promoted the concept of *the preferential option for the poor* (Coote, 1989). Due to their increasing awareness, or some would say acknowledgement, of the underdevelopment, exploitation and poverty of many of their parishioners, the Bishops

expressed a desire for the church to claim solidarity with the poor and oppressed and to

advocate for their liberation from these evils. In 1975, Pope Paul's "Evangelization in the

Modern World":

> ….endorsed the basic thesis of justice and liberation as part of the Gospel
> message, of liberation as central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, and of
> the links between evangelization and human development (Coote, 1989, p.152).

As the call for the church – Catholic and Protestant – to take social action grew stronger

in Latin America, the conversation about evangelism and social action was continuing in

North America. The Micah Network began in 1999 as a task group of leaders in

evangelical relief and development and within two years grew to become a coalition of

evangelical churches and agencies, representing 140 Christian organizations from 50

countries (Chester (Ed.), 2002). In 2001, the Network produced "The *Micah Declaration*

on Integral Mission" as a commitment to holistic or integral mission. Inspired by Micah

6:8: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you,

but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (New King James

Version), integral mission refers to the partnering of the spiritual and physical –

affirming they are inextricably linked (Chester, 2002). The Micah Declaration states:

> Integral mission…is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not
> simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each
> other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as
> we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social
> involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the
> transforming grace of Jesus Christ (The Micah Declaration, 2001, p.1)

Within this perspective, some individuals believe that social action is a consequence of

evangelism and others believe social action bridges the way to evangelism. Still others see the

relationship as an equal partnership (Thacker, 2009). However, in recent years there has

emerged a clearer understanding and agreement between Evangelical Christians that an

authentic witness is inherently made up of evangelism and social action, lived out

simultaneously as a result of faith in Jesus Christ.

For Christian development organizations, this translates to the need for a holistic understanding

of the gospel and its impact on community development work. Integral mission indicates that it

is not about development projects and/or evangelistic initiatives, but rather constitutes an

integrated approach that anticipates materially and spiritually transformed individuals and

communities. Shifting perspectives on evangelism, social action, and integral mission have had a

significant impact on faith-based community development work. This is especially evident in the

emergence of transformational development as a framework for holistic faith-based

development.

## 2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (WITH A TOUCH OF CRITICAL HOLISM)

The primary goal of this section is to conduct an in-depth exploration of the transformational

development framework as it has been defined by Bryant Myers. This will include further

explanation of the concept of integral mission and its connection to transformation

development. In order to broaden the understanding of holism as a concept that also exists

within mainstream development; this section will also briefly explore the theory of critical

holism, initially developed by Vincent Tucker and subsequently by Jan Nederveen-Pieterse.

Although it was not an unfamiliar phrase in Christian circles, the term *transformation* entered

the official vocabulary of many evangelical churches and faith-based organizations during the

1980s as they considered the goals and purposes of Christian development in response to

ongoing dialogue about evangelism and social action. World Vision was one faith-based

organization that sought a new approach to community development – one that integrated

instead of separated these aspects of Christian mission. The phrase 'transformational development' was coined in 1983 by Wayne Bragg, former Director of the Wheaton Hunger Centre (Myers, 2011), and years later Bryant Myers, drawing from over 20 years of work with World Vision, developed a framework for transformational development. In 1999 he published the seminal work on this topic, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. A revised and expanded edition was published in 2011, and most of the references in this thesis are taken from the newer version. In the book Myers defines transformational development as:

> …seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually…The goals for this journey of transformation are to recover our true identity as human beings created in the image of God and to discover our true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for the world and all the people in it (Myers, 2011, p.3-4).

In this context, the term transformational "…is used to remind us that human progress is not inevitable; it takes hard work" (Myers, 2011, p.3). Transformation is about community ownership and a mutual journey towards the goals of changed people and just and peaceful relationships, using an integrated physical-spiritual understanding of human beings (Byworth, 2003). Getu further simplifies the definition of transformation as being concerned with two things: having and being (2002).

Integration is the core principle of another concept that emerged around the same time as transformational development. Integral mission has been adopted by churches and individual Christians, as well as faith-based organizations, as a holistic concept of mission and development that declares that evangelism and social action must not be separated from one another. Integral mission is about "…not only *saying*, but *being* and *doing* the witness to Jesus Christ" (Chester (Ed.), 2002, p.60). This term emerged from the Spanish

'misión integral', which is used to describe 'holistic ministry', 'Christian development' or 'transformation' (Chester (Ed.), 2002). The similarity between the language and principles of transformational development and integral mission is notable, because both concepts emerged from the same stream of dialogue and change that has taken place in the North and Latin American Christian communities over the last half century. Both approaches emerged from a Christian perspective that upholds the belief that Jesus' mission is a holistic mission to the poor and that spirituality can be used as a tool for working in the real world to explore the roots of poverty and inequality, and to support the creation of effective development initiatives (Myers, 2011).

Transformational development and integral mission do not promote the concept that individuals will overcome every challenge and reach a utopian level of existence, but rather that their needs will be addressed holistically – spiritual and material. The aim is for individuals to be empowered through the transformation of their entire lives – to create their own solutions, grow in knowledge and faith, and to work as a community to better the lives of every individual (Myers, 2011).

As previously mentioned, transformation is currently a popular topic within mainstream development. The UN Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda calls for 'transformational shift', stating that, "We believe there is a need for a paradigm shift, a profound structural transformation that will overcome the obstacles to sustained prosperity" (UN, 2013). While there is an evident need for a transformation of many current socio-political structures, Myers would argue that this paradigm shift must first and foremost focus on addressing broken links in our relationships, with ourselves, each other, God

and with the environment. This kind of transformation addresses the need for abundant life, as Jesus refers to in John 10:10[4] – life that is full in every aspect of the human experience.

The challenge of Christian holism in development is to release the biblical narrative to speak to all phases of the process of human transformation (Myers, 2011). The framework for transformational development is designed to address material, social, and spiritual poverty that Myers (2000) argues is inherently caused by our fallen nature as human beings. **"**Poverty is a holistic idea that describes the breakdown of this constellation of relationships. Each form of broken or unjust relationship creates different expressions of poverty" (Myers, 2000, p.64).

In building this framework, Myers starts with a Biblical worldview, a holistic understanding of poverty and an exploration of traditional development thinking. He touches on perspectives that share similar principles with transformational development, such as Robert Chambers' description of poverty as entanglement, with various dimensions that create a complex trap for individuals, and his belief that the goal of development is responsible well-being, achieved through increasing individuals' livelihoods, security and capabilities (Myers, 2011). Myers also references Amartya Sen's proposal that freedom is both the means and end of development. The goal is to create an environment in which individuals can seek a better future, and this is accomplished through removing impediments, or 'unfreedoms' which stand in the way and empowering the poor to be the actors in this process (Myers, 2011).

The goals of changed people and just and peaceful relationships are not simply referring to those living in poverty, but also to development practitioners and those Myers refers to as the

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[4] John 10:10b - I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (New King James Version)

'non-poor' (Myers, 2011). Individual transformation and fixing broken relationships is for

everyone:

> The poor suffer from marred identities and the belief that they have no
> meaningful vocation other than serving the powerful. The non-poor, and
> sometimes development facilitators, suffer from the temptation to play god in
> the lives of the poor, and believe that what they have in terms of money,
> knowledge, and position is the result of their own cleverness or the right of their
> group (Myers, 2011, p. 17).

These broken relationships must also be addressed not just between individuals, but also in the

greater sphere of social organization – between churches, governments, faith-based

organizations and NGOs.
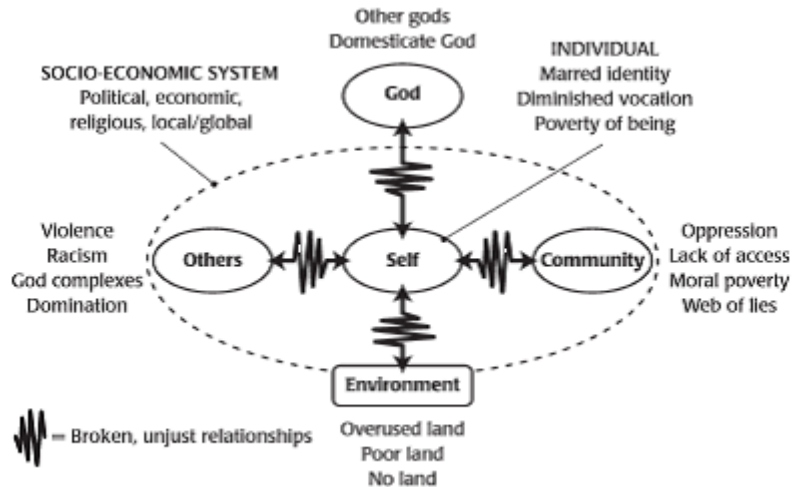


*Figure 1.* Depicts a relational understanding of poverty as developed by Bryant Myers (2000, p.64).

Many Christian community development organizations operate from the results-based

paradigm that has originated in mainstream development. Though they support and promote a

Biblical worldview, programs are built to address social, political and economic needs and are

often measured by tangible metrics. This approach is not necessarily negative, although Myers

would argue that it is incomplete. The understanding of poverty within mainstream

development is material and social, and so responses to this issue tend to focus on changing

only material and social structures (Myers, 2000). However, as previously noted, religion

remains a core aspect of culture, defining values and influencing behaviour in societies around the world. Hiebert & Hiebert-Crape (1995) insist that development which does not include and aim for religious change is only superficial and transitory.

The Church has much to offer community development. In many places, the local church is a key actor in community life, involved in material, social and spiritual transformative efforts (Myers, 2000). Local churches often provide support for those living in poverty, offering resources, opportunities and fellowship. As institutions that are equipped to address material, social and spiritual issues, churches can play a significant role in encouraging a community to stay committed to difficult processes and long-term change. Myers affirms local churches as "…critical and indispensable partners in the process of seeking sustainable change" (2011, p.17).

At this point, it is important to acknowledge that many churches exist that do not provide this kind of support for those living in poverty and that churches and faith-based organizations alike have used a dangerous distortion of the Biblical worldview to attract followers. In recent years this distortion has been evident in the promotion of the 'Prosperity Gospel' – promising material possessions, health and progress as an inevitable result of faith in Jesus Christ (Harries, 2008).

Transformation is meant to be a non-coercive process that respects human liberty – the objective is to engage individuals in a willing process of transformation, not to simply proselytize or add to church membership. The intended outcomes of this transformation are productive work, justice, sharing resources, reconciliation and caring for creation (Myers, 2000). In order to further understand Myers' concept of holistic transformation the following questions must be answered: what methods are used to achieve these outcomes? And how is transformation measured and evaluated?

First and foremost, this approach to holistic transformation is rooted in the Christian faith. It is:

> …largely a Christian concept of social, economic, and spiritual change that has its roots in Christian principles of faith, stewardship, and the transformational and transcendent power of the Good News. Faith must permeate the practices, activities, and doctrine of the organization claiming to be involved in transformational development as without these essential elements the concept cannot be present (Gorlorwulu & Rahschulte, 2010, p.203).

The work of transformation and integral mission, is based on "…a hermeneutic circle of reflection and action" (Chester (Ed.), 2002, p. 91), requiring churches and faith-based organizations to continually return to the Biblical narrative that is the foundation for their work. This kind of approach is not tied to a "…particular people of a particular culture and a particular economic and social class" (Harries, 2008, p. 263). The principles of transformation should be able to enter into any context to achieve the goals of changed people and just and peaceful relationships:

> Implementers working within cultures other than their own ought to be observant, sensitive, attentive and responsive to changing cultural dynamics and guard themselves from cultural ignorance that might complicate the facilitation of the transformation process (Mask & Trimiew, n.d., p.11 ).

There must be respect for the community's story and the acknowledgement that communities already have their own survival strategies along with a great deal of indigenous knowledge (Myers, 2011). At the core of this framework is the implication that transformational development is not simply a transition from having less to having more. Transformation requires a commitment to change material, social, psychological, and spiritual aspects of a person's life. It should be a holistic, ongoing, life-giving process.
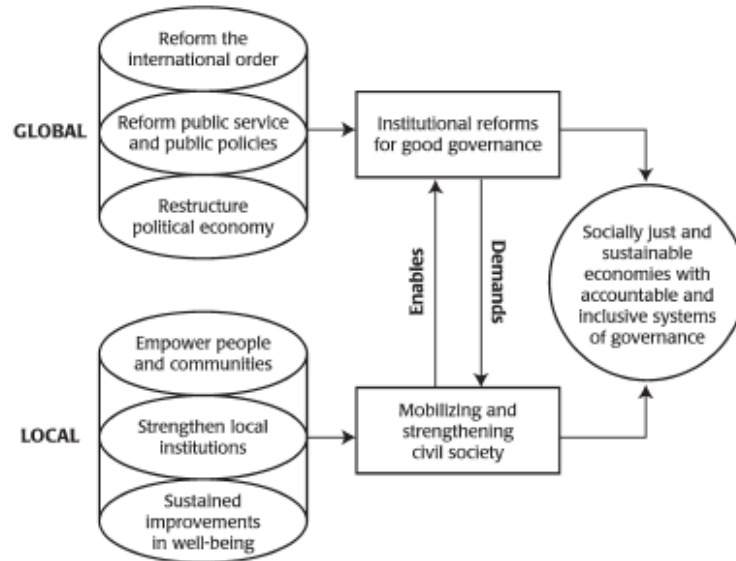
*Figure 2.* Depicts the expansion of social and political power of the poor (Myers, 2000, p.66).

Transformation is the product of both personal and structural change. It requires a

transformation of individual values, the empowerment of communities and co-operation in

wider issues of justice. Transformation emerges through the consistent actions of individuals

and communities for the betterment of their environment as a whole. There is a two-fold

purpose of personal and community development. From a holistic perspective, as one aspect of

an individual's being is transformed and one relationship is restored, that leads to further

transformation in other areas of life.

This approach requires critical reflection and action from individuals and communities

themselves. Transformation must be contextually determined through a process that moves

from participation to empowerment of individuals and communities.

> Participation is not an end in itself, and hence the quality of participation
> matters. When people change by becoming less passive and more the primary
> actors in their own development, participation has become empowerment
> (Myers, 2011, p. 18).

No methods should be established or handed down from program to program without first

establishing a meaningful relationship with the community and attempting to learn about their

reality, and understand the context in which issues have emerged. Though an organization may

offer valuable insight from a fresh and different perspective, at the same time the community

must identify their own needs and all those involved must willingly commit to the process of

transformation, however it will materialize. This is a crucial element to the framework because

without a unified identification of resources, needs and goals, community development

programs often prove to be unsustainable.

> The poor like everyone else bear the image of the Creator. They have
> knowledge, abilities and resources. Treating the poor with respect means
> enabling the poor to be the architects of change in their communities rather
> than imposing solutions upon them. Working with the poor involves building
> relationships that lead to mutual change (Micah Declaration, 2001, p. 2).

It is important for individuals and communities to imagine a better future and envision the steps

that must be taken to arrive there. The presence of hope can have a powerful impact on a

community and the dedication of its individuals to the development process. The hope of

holistic transformation is healed relationships and restored dignity, along with developments

such as clean water, increased income and better housing.

The local church is in a unique position within this process because of its 'presence among the

poor'. Therefore, transformational efforts should be centred on the local church's role as a

caring and inclusive community that helps in restoring dignity, enabling individuals and

communities to produce their own resources and to create solidarity networks (Micah

Declaration, 2001). Local churches are part of a global community that regularly employ aspects

of community-building, such as prayer, supporting others, addressing issues corporately and

discussion of personal issues, that are arguably as significant as political and social tools

(Wadkins, 2008). This focus is significant because:

> The dimension of spirituality and the spiritual formation of an individual serve as
> a core component to successful transformation because it moderates individual
> change, which in turn moderates societal change, which in turn can moderate
> global change (Gorlorwulu & Rahschulte, 2010, p.202).

Along with a commitment to personal faith and devotion, and a public application of Biblical

values in day-to-day life (Myers, 2000), churches and Christian organizations must be aware and

take ownership of their role as social institutions, advocating on behalf of the poor and

confronting unjust structures that allow people and organizations to play god in the lives of the

poor. The process of transformation is not simply focused on those living in poverty, but it also

must address "…broken relationships in which power and domination benefit the non-poor or

majority" (Parrill, 2011, p.3).

Transformational development calls for Christian development practitioners to make an equal

commitment to spiritual and social care (Myers, 2000). Faith-based organizations must also

strive to work in partnership with other churches, organizations and governments, upholding

their principles, but also respecting various approaches to community development. A

successful approach must include leaders that are well-equipped and prepared for a mutual

process of transformation (Gorlorwulu & Rahschulte, 2010). This approach must also be

prepared and willing to support a long-term commitment:

> Because culture and social norms change rather slowly and it takes time for
> trust to be built across cultures and community, the faith-based organization
> has to be capable of longevity and of making significant long-term commitments
> to communities – the 'well-being of all' (Gorlorwulu & Rahschulte, 2010, p.205).

Design, monitoring and evaluation are the core components of community development

programming. Myers strays from the traditional approach to programming by arguing that

"…the *process* by which a program is designed is often more important than creating the development *plan* itself" (2011, p. 239). Process-based planning uses the aforementioned tools of participation leading to empowerment through community organization and ownership. Myers (2011) argues that it is beneficial to focus on inputs and outputs only when the transformational process is already firmly in place. There also must be an understanding that inputs and outputs will change over the course of the transformation process.

A process-based focus for program design and monitoring means there must be a similar focus during evaluation. Methods of evaluation should not focus solely on measuring the success of an activity or task that has been completed, but also should consider indicators of transformed values and behaviours behind that action or task (Thacker, 2009).The short term purpose of developing these indicators is to measure transformation as it is happening in the lives of individuals; however, in the long term these indicators allow for renewed practices and changed focus that can improve programs and service delivery (Getu, 2002).

In terms of measurement and evaluation, transformation technically knows no end. It is an internal and external process that is always happening, whether individuals remain actively involved or not. Individuals and the social systems in which they exist are dynamic, constantly changing and responding to their environment. The aim is to guide and accelerate the process of transformation to bear positive outcomes (Getu, 2002). As Myers has noted:

> Human development is not a straight line. As agents of transformation we must
> be willing to lay down our worship of the well-planned and the timely in favour
> of what is really important – the discoveries and insights that will come when
> they will come (Myers, 2011, p.279).

Though this may create significant tension for a faith-based organization that must answer to donors and constituents, Myers stresses that the emphasis is less on goals and milestones

(except in the short term) and more on vision, values, and regular monitoring and evaluation"

(Myers, 2011, p. 19). He differentiates transformational development from traditional

development as an approach based on 'learning' more than 'planning':

> While keeping the program purpose – our vision of the better human future the
> people have articulated for themselves – as a lodestar on the horizon, we must
> relinquish our desire for control and manage the program…We have to "learn
> our way" into the future (Myers, 2011, p. 246).

Since it offers a comprehensive outline of holistic transformation through faith-based

community development, Bryant Myers' framework is a worthwhile starting point and reference

for the following case study. The work of Canadian Baptist Ministries in El Salvador has been

greatly influenced by the concept of integral mission and this thesis aims to incorporate this

approach along with the understanding of a faith-based approach to transformational

development provided by Myers.

It is also beneficial to consider the merits of another theory of holistic development, particularly

one that is not specifically attached to the Christian worldview. Vincent Tucker (1946-1991)

originally studied what he called 'critical holism' as the combination of the sociology of health

and critical development studies. The theory has been developed further by Jan Nederveen-

Pieterse to understand its broader implications within development:

> In a broad sense both criticism and holism then refer to modes of healing: from the
> point of view of completeness in a societal sense by way of emancipation and justice,
> and that of wholeness in a multidimensional sense (Nederveen-Pieterse, 1999, p. 79).

This identification with the 'whole' does not include a spiritual dimension, since it still follows an

integrated approach that expands beyond material aims and measurements to include non-

material aspects of the human experience (Nederveen-Pieterse, 1999).

Similar to Gaventa's (2013) desire to see a new space for ideas within development discourse, Nederveen-Pieterse (2000) believes that in order to enact change we need to think differently about the issues we face in mainstream development. Nederveen Pieterse offers further critique of development, arguing that "…the overall programme is one of resistance rather than transformation or emancipation" (2000). Critical holism allows holistic theory and practice to find a place in development discourse where they can at least be considered and approached as viable options (Nederveen-Pieterse, 1999). The benefit of critical holism is its ability to incorporate that which has been excluded from the status quo, and acknowledge paradox as a part of development reality. There are many dimensions of existence that coexist together, whether or not we have acknowledged them in the development process (Nederveen-Pieterse, 1999).  Similar to the concept of holistic transformation, the goal of critical holism is an integration of these dimensions.

Nederveen-Pieterse notes that holism should aim for an integrated vision of the whole that is balanced from the outset (1999). This is different from an attempt to create a vision of the whole made up of different approaches that have not been critically examined and revised. Though Tucker's theory does not have religious origins, the similarities to transformational development and integral mission are evident. The goal of critical holism could be described as 'secular conversion' – abandoning the negative, unhealthy aspects of human life to embrace the positive (Lockhard, 2003).

Although there may never be a definitive conclusion on concepts like development and transformation, we must continue to critically examine their current functions and how they evolve over time. This includes critical analysis of the systems and units of measurement upon which success and failure are based, the actors who are involved in the process – those who

lead and those who follow – and mechanisms for reflection and dialogue that may or may not be included in the development process.

Human development is a complex process and to narrow it down to one category or another is to abandon significant parts of the human experience. Individuals are economic, social, cultural, psychological, physical and spiritual beings. Therefore effective approaches to development should be holistic in nature. There is value in conducting a critical analysis of this approach to holistic transformation and consider the implications for faith-based community development and even mainstream development as a whole.

# CHAPTER THREE A CASE STUDY OF CBM'S WORK IN EL SALVADOR



*Figure 3. Map of El Salvador. (UN, 2013)*

## 3.1. A RECENT HISTORY OF EL SALVADOR

El Salvador – translated to mean "The Saviour" - is the smallest country in Central America,

nestled between Guatemala and Honduras and bordering the Pacific Ocean. It was once a

Spanish colony, gaining independence in 1821. Over the last century this small country, known

as the Land of Volcanoes, has seen a great deal of poverty, natural disasters, and a 12-year Civil

War that killed approximately 75,000 people (CIA, 2013).

Although it is the smallest country in Central America, El Salvador is the most densely populated.

It has a population of over 6.2 million people (UN, 2013). At least 20% of El Salvador's

population lives abroad – mainly in the United States, Canada and neighbouring Central

American countries – and remittances sent home from abroad account for almost 20% of the

country's gross domestic product (GDP) (CIA, 2013). Many Salvadorans fled the country during

the Civil War (1980 - 1992), and emigration continued in the 1990s and 2000s due to natural

disasters, a poor economic climate and a growing desire for Salvadorans to be reunited with

family members already abroad (Del Castillo, 2001). The World Food Programme states that, "In

the past ten years, the country has suffered eight major disasters which resulted in the death of

1,984 people and economic losses of US$3.2 billion" (2013).

A study of faith-based development in El Salvador is not complete without at least a basic

understanding of Salvadoran history and culture. In fact, Bradley writes that "…the very

definition of religion requires the inclusion of culture" (2007, p.6). It is impossible to examine

the state of life in El Salvador today without considering the immense impact of the Civil War

and the long history of economic and political oppression beforehand.

Since the 16th century, the Salvadoran government and Church – the strongest powers in the

country – legitimized hierarchical power structures, even in the midst of growing oppression

against the poor (Wadkins, 2008). During the 19th century, rich landholders began appropriating

peasant land for coffee cultivation. Violence became the government's method of silencing

protests against land confiscation and as El Salvador entered the 20th century the gulf was

widening between rich and poor. As hostilities between the landless and aristocracy deepened,

violence and oppression against the Salvadoran poor continued and eventually culminated in a

brutal Civil War from 1980 to 1992 (Wadkins, 2008).

Following a 1979 coup d'état, the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)

guerrilla movement was formed in late 1980 in opposition to the military junta. Leading up to

and during the war, civil society leaders – including priests and nuns - were the target of death

squads and extreme violence. In March 1980, Monsignor Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of El

Salvador, was shot and killed while performing the Eucharist. Romero had boldly denounced the

violence and oppression and his assassination was yet another shocking sign of the horrendous

violence that was to come.

By January 1981, military offensives had killed hundreds of people. The Salvadoran military

began waging indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population, particularly in rural areas, as a

means of attack against the guerrillas. Massacres took place at the Sumpul River, the Lempa

River, and El Mozote, killing over 1500 civilians (UN, 1993). In 1982, the Alianza Republicana

Nacional (ARENA) party took power and the American government gave six billion dollars in

military aid to the government, supporting the horrendous violence that caused 300,000

Salvadorans to flee the country (CBM, n.d.).

In November 1989, at the height of the war, the FMLN staged a large offensive in the capital city

of San Salvador, and soon after six Jesuit priests were assassinated in the capital by killers widely

believed to be members of the military (Del Castillo, 2001). The 1993 Report of the Commission

on the Truth for El Salvador paints a picture of the harsh reality at that time:

> Violence was a fire which swept over the fields of El Salvador; it burst into
> villages, cut off roads and destroyed highways and bridges, energy sources and
> transmission lines; it reached the cities and entered families, sacred areas and
> educational centres; it struck at justice and filled the public administration with
> victims; and it singled out as an enemy anyone who was not on the list of
> friends (UN, 1993, p. 3).

After two years of negotiations, Peace Accords were signed in 1992 and the deal included a

land-transfer plan to be administered in the coming years. Though the war officially ended over

20 years ago, El Salvador is still a country marked by struggle. Although people in rural

communities were resolved to rebuild and grow stronger after the war, many lacked income and

resources to provide for their basic needs. As Del Castillo writes, the challenge of post-conflict

development is "…to confront the normal challenge of socioeconomic development while

accommodating, at the same time, the additional burden of reconstruction and peace

consolidation…" (Del Castillo, 2001, p.1967). This has not been an easy process for El Salvador.

After the war, the FMLN disarmed and eventually became a legitimate political party, gaining

popular support in various parts of the country. In 2009, the FMLN were voted into power as the

ruling political party in El Salvador under the leadership of President Mauricio Funes. In recent

years, the political and economic climate of El Salvador has been described as "…mostly an

industrial republic funded by Salvadorian elites and transnational corporations, and fuelled by

neo-liberalism and the Central American Free Trade Agreement" (Wadkins, 2008, p.34-35).

There is still a great divide between rich and poor, and many in rural areas are being forced into

cities for reasons of employment and survival. Hundreds of Salvadorans trek to the U.S. border

each day, dreaming of opportunities and economic security for their family. Gang influence is

also a serious problem, especially in San Salvador, where young people are turning to violence

as a way of life (Wadkins, 2008).  Following is a field journal excerpt from time spent in San

Salvador:

> Josué was telling me that the prisons are full of gang members. In 2011, there
> were 15 assassinations per day. The people all feel effects of the violence. The
> gangs have signed a covenant of no violence and the media says now only six
> people are killed per day, but more are disappearing (Field Journal, October 10,
> 2012).

The Roman Catholic Church has maintained a strong influence in El Salvador over the years.

However, the Church, specifically the leadership base in San Salvador, has been seen by some as

an ally of political and economic corruption since colonial times, and there has been a growing

sense of disillusionment with the Catholic Church since the Civil War. This disillusionment has

been attributed by some to Protestant growth in El Salvador (Saravia & Soltero, 2003); however,

there has been a strong showing from both Catholic and Protestant churches, uniting in the

struggle against oppression and poverty. As Chapter Two notes, the 1960s brought a shift in

Catholic Social Teaching, and the Latin American laity began taking notice and advocating for the

rights of their poor parishioners (Wadkins, 2008). Priests became more involved in political

movements and began speaking out on behalf of the poor, which became known as *the*

*preferential option for the poor* (Wadkins, 2008) which was a key component of liberation

theology:

> These churchmen supported the emerging social analysis of liberation
> theologians, sanctioned and nurtured the grassroots movements known as the
> *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* (CEBs), and, often at the cost of their lives,
> became the foremost critics of state-sanctioned oppression of the poor.
> Nowhere was this kind of heroism more evident than in the leadership of the
> martyred Archbishop of San Salvador Oscar A. Romero (1980) and six Jesuit
> priests at the University of Central America (1989) (Wadkins, 2008, p. 35).

Before his death, Monsignor Romero promoted the uniting of Christians in El Salvador – Catholic

and Protestant fighting together against injustice. Pursuit of this ecumenical unity has been

carried on by churches such as CBM's partner in El Salvador, Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE) and

throughout this research project, many interview participants expressed their continued hope

for peace in El Salvador.

### 3.2. CANADIAN BAPTIST MINISTRIES (CBM) AND IGLESIA BAUTISTA EMMANUEL (IBE)

In its early days, CBM existed as two separate entities. The Canadian Baptist Federation (CBF)

was originally founded in 1944 to provide post-World War II relief efforts in Europe and

eventually became known as *The Sharing Way*, an international relief and development

department of CBM. The second entity was Canadian Baptist International Ministries (CBIM),

started in 1845 when missionaries were sent from Maritime Baptist churches to work in Burma.

CBIM's international presence grew over the next century, eventually sending over 100

missionaries to more than a dozen countries (CBM - History, 2013).

In 1992, CBIM and the CBF began to discuss merging the two organizations. The dialogue was

driven by their mutual commitment to increase effectiveness in their ministry within the context

of a changing global landscape and a realization on the part of Canadian Baptists that mission

work was not solely an overseas pursuit (CBM – History, 2013). In 1995, CBM was formed to

effectively and efficiently pursue mission in Canada and all over the world (CBM – History,

2013). Their ministry has evolved over the last two decades and is currently described as:

> …a holistic, incarnational ministry aimed at reproducing itself in a reconciled
> community. For this reason, CBM is committed to working in partnership both
> nationally and internationally. We believe that working together emerges from
> the very heart of God and is shaped by the way that Jesus lived among us (CBM,
> 2010, p.2).

CBM works with four Canadian Baptist denominations: the Canadian Baptists of Western

Canada; Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec; the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches;

and L'Union d'Églises Baptistes Françaises au Canada (CBM, 2011), along with Baptist Women's

Organizations in each of these regions. CBM represents over 1,000 churches and 150,000

Canadians (CBM, 2013). Their official mission is:

> …to unite, encourage and enable Canadian Baptist churches in their national
> and international endeavours to fulfill the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ,
> in the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the gospel and showing the love of
> God to all peoples (2011).

Over the past 10 years, influenced in particular by two faith-based organizations that have

dedicated their work to the practice of integral mission, the Micah Network and

TearFund, CBM began exploring the meaning and practice of integral mission. The Micah

Network in particular was established in 1999 as a global community of Christian

organizations and individuals who were passionate about equipping others to practice

integral mission (Micah Network, 2013). As previously noted, the primary focus of integral

mission is to pair word and deed, justice and mercy, and faith and action. For CBM,

integral mission provides the best description and vision for God's transforming work in

the world. As an organization, CBM aims to be consistent in both word and deed,

recognizing the fragmentation that often exists between evangelism and social action,

and the need for genuine integration. It is one thing to recognize the fragmentation

between evangelism and social action, but another to achieve a practical integration,

instead of simply a balancing act.

CBM believes that evangelism and social action are not separate goals and they

"…embrace the concept of holistic transformation as the proclamation and demonstration

of the gospel" (CBM – Beliefs and Practices, 2013, p.2). Until 2011, CBM had two program

departments – Partnerships and Initiatives and *The Sharing Way* (Relief and

Development). In 2011, following the commitment to integral mission and a holistic

approach to development, the departments were merged into one called International

Partnerships (Interview Notes, 2012). For this research project, interviews were

conducted with Shannon Brisco, CBM's Program Officer for Latin America and India, and

Dr. Terry Smith, Director of International Partnerships.

Drawing from over 20 years of work experience with CBM, Terry offered three lenses

through which to understand CBM's journey towards holistic mission and development.

The first lens is theological, an understanding of the Bible as divine revelation from God

throughout history. Through this understanding of scripture, CBM believes that God is

actively pursuing His purpose for the church in the world and through His Kingdom[5]. This

theological perspective presents all living things and every aspect of life as something that

is lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The second lens is missiological. CBM grew out of the modern Protestant missionary

movement, the history of which is not entirely positive. Following on the heels of

colonialism and imperialism, missionaries were often sent with misguided notions of

evangelism, or were supported directly by those who were exploiting the people the

missionaries aimed to serve. As the North American church evolved over the last 150

years in different places and different contexts with different understandings of faith and

culture, there developed two main Protestant perspectives. As explored in Chapter Two,

some believed that the role of the Church was solely based on evangelism – saving people

from perdition. Others held a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the

Church as an influence in society, shaping cultural values, which led to greater

involvement in the fight for social justice and human rights. Terry explains how CBM's

integrated vision emerged out of these two prominent movements in the North American

Church:

> We felt that the church, that we as Canadian Baptists, could not prioritize one
> aspect of faith over the other. We became increasingly committed to combining
> the word and the deed. And we saw integral mission as being the avenue that
> would allow effective transformation to happen, through both the witness of the
> church in its words – sharing its hope in Christ – but also in its deeds – by being
> instruments of redemptive causes in civilization and culture. Speaking out against
> injustice, fighting for the poor and the oppressed, serving humanity, helping to
> build better societies.

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[5] According to Biblical teaching, Christians believe "…the kingdom of God arrived on earth with the coming of Christ and was inaugurated with Christ's death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. But the coming of the kingdom of God in its fullness awaits the second coming of Christ at the end of history. So the kingdom of God both is, and is coming" (Myers, 2011, p.88).

The third lens is historical. Canadian Baptists have historically embraced the traditional

North American evangelical movement and also various mainline church movements,

more commonly associated with social action for peace and justice. CBM was influenced

by the emergence of integral mission from Protestant churches in Latin America who had

been influenced by Liberation Theology. Terry explains:

> They loved the questions, but they didn't accept the answers that Liberation
> Theologians were giving. This historic lens associated us with many prominent
> Protestants in the South who said, 'There must be a middle ground between
> these two.'

Although CBM does not specifically adhere to the framework and practices of transformational

development, a review of their Vision, Mission and Guiding Practices reveals a strong correlation

between their principles and practice of integral mission and the principles and practice of

transformational development outlined by Bryant Myers (1999, 2011). The term "integral

mission" is one of many that has been used to describe the effort to combine both mission and

justice or holistic transformation. Other terms include holistic development, holistic mission and

Christian development. Following in the footsteps of The Micah Network and The Micah

Declaration on Integral Mission (2001), CBM adopted the phrase and model of integral mission

to be a driving force behind their community development work.  An excerpt from CBM's

Manual of Beliefs and Practices reads:

> At CBM, we embrace the concept of holistic transformation as the proclamation
> and demonstration of the gospel. As affirmed by the Micah Declaration, "…in
> integral mission, our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to
> love and repentance in all areas of life. Our social involvement has evangelistic
> consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ."
> Our commitment to peace building and reconciliation between people(s), to
> relief and development and ministries to the poor are as important as our
> endeavours involving evangelism, disciple making, leadership development and
> church planting.

> In every setting we strive for full integration of these ministries, believing that the example of our Lord and the teaching of Scripture gives us a mandate and a responsibility to minister to every kind of human need, so that the love of God may be expressed in its fullness (CBM, 2011, p. 2).

CBM was chosen as the object of study for this research project because of its desire to partner material and spiritual change in all aspects of their work in Canada and around the world. Throughout the study, terms such as integral mission, holistic development and transformation are all used in reference to a community development approach that aims to meet the needs of the whole person – spiritually and materially – characterized specifically by the theory of transformational development.

CBM's core programs aim to address issues at a grassroots level, with six areas of focus: Children and Youth at Risk; Food Security and Community Development; Leadership Formation; AIDS and Health; Peace and Justice; Christian Witness. In all projects, CBM attempts to find solutions based on the commitment of local groups "…to participate in identifying their needs and partaking in an appropriate response" (CBM, 2013). This research project focused solely on the work of CBM in the Usulután region of El Salvador and their corresponding partnership with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE) in San Salvador.

IBE was established as a church almost 50 years ago and has grown to approximately 100 members (IBE, 2013). The church is a member of the Baptist Federation of El Salvador (FEBES) and the Convention of Latin American Churches (CLAI). At the end of the 1970s and into the Civil War, IBE began to recognize the urgent need to speak out against injustice and oppression in El Salvador.

IBE realized the need for a Latin American vision of the gospel, interpreted from within the context of their history. They chose to focus on three main aspects of ministry: studying and

reflecting on the gospel, walking with poor communities, and ecumenical dialogue – particularly

with the Catholic Church. This called for a review of theological teaching that had been coming

mainly from the United States. In an interview, Pastor Miguel Castro explains that the Church

had to go through their inherited theology and determine what remained true to the Gospel

within the Latin American context:

> There was a time the church was going through of searching and seeking who
> they should be. We became more clear about IBE's option to have solidarity
> with the poor communities. But also the effort to have the people wake up and
> take a look at their own situation or analyze their reality. We were studying in
> the context or from the vision of a Latin American or Salvadoran viewpoint.

IBE preached a message of peace and advocated for the liberation of the Salvadoran people

from all forms of oppression. They began to focus on mission and community development in

rural parts of El Salvador. Pastor Miguel explains that since the beginning of their work in rural

communities, IBE has intended to come alongside and assist in community development

through building programs with community leaders and members. The Church has developed a

spirit of solidarity through their work, with a focus on peace and justice. In the years after the

war, IBE's involvement slowly expanded to include further work in San Salvador, Cuscutlán and

Usulután, and the Church works with a number of international and national partners, including

CBM. Their community development projects focus on access to clean water, food security,

secure housing and organizing and training local leaders, with a special focus on programs for

women and youth.

As they focus on the holistic mission of the church, IBE aims to "…abandon those

positions based on invasion and conquest, and in turn focus on the demands of today's

reality" (2012, p.2). The Church's work has emerged from decades of struggle against

violence and oppression. It is evident that the influence of Salvadoran Church leaders,

like Romero, and a desire for holistic approaches to peace and justice have encouraged

leaders and members of IBE to embrace ecumenical teachings and to intentionally

engage in dialogue with the Catholic Church in El Salvador, instead of trying to remain a

separate entity. Influenced by both Liberation Theology and Evangelical Christian

teachings, all of their programs are centred on a holistic mission that aims to create a

lasting culture of peace in El Salvador.

A holistic approach to mission and development requires both the teaching and practice

of values including, justice, peace, love, solidarity and hope. Further principles upheld by

IBE as they pursue this mission include:

- Claiming the value of human dignity of each sister and brother in the

  mission communities

- Healing mind, body and spirit through eliminating inequality and injustice

  that causes physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain

- Pursuit of freedom that is defined by nothing or no one preventing an

  individual from being dignified and free from economic, political, religious,

  cultural and spiritual oppression   (IBE, 2013, p.3-4)

In the 1970s and 1980s, Latin America saw an increase in North American Evangelical mission

and development work. During the Reagan era, these movements were often associated with

American foreign policy and the fight against communist influence thought to be spreading

during the Civil War (Wadkins, 2008). Today, many solidarity and revivalist groups continue to

establish mission and development programs in El Salvador.

Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) began their work with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE)

– Emmanuel Baptist Church – at the end of the Civil War. During the war, Pastor Miguel

was kidnapped and held by military forces for his connection to the Church and his advocacy work on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Upon his release, he fled to Canada for safety and there made contacts with members of the Canadian Baptist Federation (CBF). Although he continued to receive threats against his life and was advised by many of his colleagues to remain in Canada, Pastor Miguel went back to El Salvador before the war was over and has since continued his work with the Church.

After the war ended in 1992, much of the international support disappeared and IBE had to reconsider how to maintain their work in rural areas. Pastor Miguel reflects on this period, "I guess people become interested to serve those in that situation of conflict, but when the time of peace comes, and to build peace, 'Hey - where are our friends?'" At this point, IBE was able to connect with representatives from the CBF (which eventually became CBM) who were providing hurricane disaster relief in El Salvador and supporting the resettlement of Salvadorans who had been living in Mesa Grande, a Honduran refugee camp, during the war.

Through the initial support of the CBF, and subsequently the continued support of the newly merged CBM, the church started working on community development projects in two regions of El Salvador: Cuscutlán and Usulután. This included purchasing land, building houses and supporting agricultural production. CBM also developed a program called STEP – Serving, Training, Energizing Partnerships – that became part of their work in El Salvador. The STEP program gives Canadian Baptist churches the opportunity to become engaged as active partners with CBM and an international church partner, such as IBE. The partnerships "…go beyond financial giving and into an opportunity to build deep, multi-faceted relationships with one church partner" (CBM, 2013). This program

paved the way for supportive, mutually beneficial relationships between Canadian

Baptists and Salvadorans.

The partnership between IBE and CBM has been a dynamic one over the last two decades.

In 2010, CBM and IBE agreed to re-focus their partnership entirely on the region of

Usulután. Both parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the time

period of January 2010 until December 2012. Work was designated to the following areas:

- Agricultural (producers network, addressing food security, business and cooperative

   training)

- Water supply

- Micro-enterprise for the producer's network and community capacity-building

   (community associations, workshops on technical and managerial topics, dialogue with

   municipal government, formation of community groups, and formation and growth of

   youth groups for rural youth)

- Short-term mission housing program

- Mission (bible study, vacation bible school – focus on children and youth, community

   celebrations for special holidays) (CBM, n.d.)

According to the MOU, both parties also agreed to follow an Integral Mission Plan, to

participate in quarterly Skype/phone meetings to gauge progress and give feedback, and

to submit annual audited financial statements of the programs (CBM, 2010). This

agreement included the sharing of annual planning documents, quarterly narrative

reports and monthly financial reports.

Field research for this project took place between October 9 and December 15, 2012. As

per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), CBM and IBE agreed to re-evaluate at

the end of 2012 to determine the next steps for their partnership. As a result of this re-

evaluation, the partnership was terminated at the end of December, 2012, shortly after

field research was completed. The termination of the partnership is a significant event

and will be explored further in Chapters Four and Five. However, the partnership was

still in place during the entire span of field research for this thesis; therefore, the

following analysis refers primarily to the partnership in its previous existence.

The final MOU between CBM and IBE describes the goals and objectives of the

partnership, some of which were upheld over the last few years, and others that fell

short. It is a benchmark used to measure the process of transformation for both IBE,

CBM and the communities in Usulután. The MOU stated:

> We seek to establish a healthy relationship from a holistic perspective, affirming
> physical, spiritual, social, emotional and intellectual growth and formation. The
> goal of our cooperation is to facilitate and support holistic, church-based
> mission in the region of Usulután. Participation in integral ministry among the
> poor in Usulután with a primary focus on global discipleship opportunities which
> engage church-based sustainable community development, living with the poor
> and addressing the causes and structures of sin in a broken world (CBM, 2010,
> p.3).

The following case study outlines the most recent work of CBM and IBE in Usulután and

draws on experiences of CBM staff, current and former IBE staff, and most importantly,

community members who participated in CBM and IBE programs. The case study was

completed at the tail-end of the partnership agreement, and during field research it was

assumed that CBM and IBE would re-evaluate and continue their partnership in the

coming years. As field research progressed it was evident that there were a number of

complex issues to be addressed between CBM and IBE. These issues related to the

structure of the partnership, communications practices and implementation of

programs on the ground in Usulután. Although these issues led to the deterioration of a

once vibrant partnership, the story of transformation in Usulután is still a remarkable

one.  Salvadorans are a resilient people and in the midst of the complex nature of

'development', there is an ongoing tale of transformed individuals and communities,

overcoming challenges great and small.

## 3.3. CBM's WORK IN THE USULUTÁN REGION – A CASE STUDY

As previously mentioned, CBM and IBE's work has been solely based in Usulután since 2010, so

this case study concentrates on community development in this region. Twenty-six interviews

were completed for this research project. Two interviews were conducted with CBM staff in

Canada, four interviews were conducted with IBE staff or former staff who are based in San

Salvador, and 20 interviews were conducted with community members and leaders who have

been involved in community development and mission work through the partnership of CBM

and IBE. Six interview participants were women and eighteen were men.

Interview participants represented the following communities in Usulután: Mercedes Umaña,

Alegría, Río Los Bueyes, Altos de Guadalupe, Las Américas, San Simón, Los Cruces, Los

Talpetates, El Progreso and Nueva Granada. Interviews were conducted with participants in

agriculture co-operatives, housing projects, leadership and mission training, and water projects.

### 3.3.1. HISTORY & PROGRAMS

CBM/IBE's work in Usulután has been focused on community development – meeting basic

human needs through an integrated approach and strengthening community capacity-building

(CBM, n.d.). The goal has been "…to contribute to the reduction in poverty by increasing community capacity for self-determining sustainable development" (CBM, n.d.).

There has been a focus placed on sustainability and community involvement throughout CBM's work in Usulután. A regional report from 2005 highlights the importance of participation, "Something essential in our work is the participation of the people, as they are the actors of development, but even this requires active participation to achieve the goals that we have set" (IBE, 2005).

In 2009, staff in both Canada and El Salvador began to develop an Integral Mission plan to guide CBM-IBE programming in Usulután. The objectives were to form an integrated assessment team; to assess development needs along with spiritual needs; analyze the assessment data; ask questions about end results, resources and methods of evaluation. CBM and IBE agreed upon mutual commitment and effort toward the following:

- Support for agricultural production and diversification

- Economic initiatives for women entrepreneurs

- Grants and advocacy for potable water

- Construction of homes

- Encouraging cooperatives and administrative grant-seeking

- Building community through the connecting thread of faith

The water projects have supported the communities of Mercedes Umaña, Nueva Grenada, San Simón and Berlín. Mission churches and programs have been started in Alegría (Las Américas), Mercedes Umaña, Río los Bueyes, Los Talpetates and Las Cruces.

There were eight houses built in 2011 with the involvement of short-term mission teams in Alegría and the surrounding area. Five houses were built in 2012, all in the community of Altos de Guadalupe. A total of 85 houses have been built, directly benefiting 510 people (IBE, 2012).

Agricultural co-operatives, including micro-credit programs, have impacted over 20 communities, including Talpetates, Río Los Bueyes, San Simón, Mercedes Umaña, Las Cruces, Guallinac, Las Américas and Altos de Guadalupe. In 2012 there were 276 producers involved in three agricultural co-operatives: Asociación para la defensa de la Cuenca del Río San Simón y Lempa (ADECSILEMP), Asociación Cooperativa de Ahorro, Crédito, Comercialización, Producción Agropecuaria y Vivienda Red de Productores y Productoras de Responsabilidad Limitada (ACOPRORED DE RL), and RED ZONA BAJA. Production includes corn, beans and minor-scale cultivation of non-traditional food – plantains, melons and other foods.

There have been mixed reports on the breakdown of the community development team in Usulután. During the interview process, some participants stated that the team leaders – Oscar Rodríguez and Sabas Claros – were fired and others insisted they quit. Regardless of the details, the team was officially disbanded in early 2012, leaving the projects unattended and CBM without reliable contacts in Usulután. Manuel Mendoza was hired in Spring 2012 by IBE to facilitate the community development work in Usulután on a short-term (two month) basis. Manuel's contract was extended until the end of December, 2012, and he became the main point of contact for this field research and assisted with interpretation during interviews with community members. Attempts were made to secure interpretation services elsewhere; however, this proved extremely difficult due to the rural environment in which most of the field research took place. For interviews conducted with current and former IBE staff based in San Salvador, other translation services were successfully procured.

The months leading up to this field research had been for IBE a time of step-by-step

relationship-building in each community since the former team was no longer present in the

communities. Misinformation, corruption and distrust are ongoing challenges faced by anyone

from the outside attempting to enter some of these isolated rural communities, many of which

were targets of violence and destruction during the Civil War. The previous team leaders, Oscar

and Sabas, maintained contact with many individuals and continued visiting communities in an

attempt to continue their work and maintain relationships, though they remained separate and

had no contact with IBE. This added another dimension to the field research as some community

members were still quite connected to the previous staff members and others had primarily

maintained connection with IBE and Manuel in his temporary position.

This is the context in which the research was conducted for this case study. Interviews were

conducted with individuals who had varying levels of involvement in the work of CBM and IBE.

For the most part, community members who participated in interviews were unaware of the

structural issues that existed within the partnership because the impact was not immediately

evident at the grassroots level. Other individuals who were interviewed had participated in

various projects supported by IBE and CBM; however, they were not actively aware of the two

organizations, more specifically CBM. They often identified issues that had developed in relation

to the projects, but cause was attributed to local disorganization, corruption, and sometimes

IBE. Interviews conducted with Church leadership, CBM staff and some community leaders were

more focused on the negative aspects of the partnership and the breakdown that was in

progress. Many different perspectives were offered about the partnership between CBM and

IBE and every effort has been made to present the research findings in a clear and concise

fashion, capturing the complex relationship between the two organizations and the

communities in which they have worked faithfully for many years.

### 3.3.2. PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE IN USULUTÁN



*Figure 4. A community road in Usulután, El Salvador.*

When asked to describe their lives before getting involved with the work of CBM and IBE, many

participants described similar situations. The effects of the Civil War have been long-lasting,

especially in rural communities in eastern El Salvador where a lot of the fighting took place.

Multiple individuals described their homes and communities as defined by poverty – inadequate

shelter, no access to clean water, and limited employment opportunities.

There is also a history of broken promises from politicians in these communities. Poverty, lack of

education, violence, particularly against women and girls, are concerns expressed by

interviewees. Matthew explains that young people who are affected by extreme poverty have

few opportunities to break the cycle. "The poorest do not have the opportunity for work or

school. There is some violence, and there are assassinations. Young girls being attacked. It's a problem."

For years, houses have been built with dirt walls, corrugated metal and plastic coverings, leaving residents unsafe and exposed to the elements. As Abigail recalls, the situation was "…bad, because the house was dirt walls and it shook a lot. And when it rained the water came inside the house. So it was a bad situation."

Nina has received a house through CBM and IBE, and she remembers what the situation was like before:

> The conditions were bad. I am organized and very clean but it wasn't enough. The house had dirt walls so I put plastic on the walls so the dirt wouldn't fall and there wouldn't be too much dust. My daughter always complained because she wanted to bring her friends home but she felt bad about the condition of the home. So she was asking and dreaming that we could have a better house. It was very hard because the house was at the end of this street and we had to walk up the hill to get there.

Evident social stigma is attached to those living in such poverty. Ophelia explains, "We used to live not far from here in a really small hut. It was me, my four children and my mother, and four other people. A priest came and said you live like animals here."

El Salvador is prone to natural disasters, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, and along with widespread violence and poverty, the country has been the focus of much international development activity over the years. Organizations like The Red Cross, USAID and Habitat for Humanity have also been involved with housing projects in Usulután. Salvadoran NGOs SHARE and SABES have worked respectively with agricultural cooperatives and water projects in the same communities as CBM. Community members indicated that various other development initiatives have been established in their region

over the years by organizations such as World Vision, UNICEF and Catholic Relief Services.

These initiatives have not been connected to the work of CBM and IBE.

The struggle for financial security is constant for many people in El Salvador. Abigail says:

> Everybody is working in the family, but even then they don't make enough to get the basics. Like for my daughter to go to university. She just finished high school. My son is working in the field, but it doesn't give us the margin to have our daughter go to university.

Caleb shares his experience:

> This year there are four young people from the church graduating high school, but they don't have any possibilities to continue to university even though they want. Within those four, I include my daughter. The closest university site is 50 km away in San Miguel, you spend five dollars a day in transportation to get there. It makes it difficult for us to provide for our kids to go to university. The parents make $4 a day in the farms.

In every community that was visited for this project, individuals expressed that many still need

access to clean water.  In 2008, it was estimated that rural families without access to water in El

Salvador spend approximately 8.5% of their productive time getting water from unprotected

sources, such as rivers and streams (Gehrig & Rogers, 2009).  The last decade has seen many

Salvadorans take a stand against issues such as water privatization and the negative

environmental impacts of mining.

> One of the sensitive issues is water, because even though a lot of communities now have water. There are still a lot of communities that don't have access to water. And it is a basic right – it is a human right. It is not a product to buy.  Water is a human right. For everyone (Matthew).

> I've been a part of a community that didn't have water before. And when we didn't have water, on the weekends we would use our time to go and get water from the spring or to wash our clothes in the river. We invested a lot of time trying to get water (Paul)

> We didn't have anything – houses or water – in San Simon or Talpatates. The majority had wells. The neighbours gave us water from their wells. We went to the Lempa River to wash our clothes, and do different things, but not to drink the water (Rachel)

The people in this community have taken on the fight themselves and are thankful that CBM and IBE started walking alongside them and supported the cause. They are aware of injustice and many people have spent a long time trying to fight for change and for the government to act on their promises. Many interviewees also expressed feeling like God had stopped helping them in their struggle. After this had been expressed by one interview participant, IBE staff member Manuel explained, "There is a common understanding here in El Salvador that all things that happen, especially bad things that we don't understand, are the will of God." One potential explanation for this sentiment is that it has emerged as a result of a long history of violence and natural disasters in this small country.

Ophelia had also lost hope that God would help them achieve their goals:

> Because we have been in this fight for over nine years. God was not helping and then the church came. And I'm very thankful to the church because they helped us to get houses. I used to live with my mom. After this I was selling garlic plants. That's how I brought in some income and I had to leave the town and go to places far away to sell plants. That's how I made some money to pay for school for my children. That's why I never got tired of going to those meetings because I thought one day God was going to help us and being homeless is not for me. I didn't do it for myself, I was doing it because when I die, it's for them [my children]. I used to work in restaurants and in small stores [haciendas] to make some money to help them finish school. Even if I was sick I had to go to work.

Although there were common experiences, each community member that was interviewed offered a unique, personal perspective on their reality before getting involved in the work of CBM and IBE. Unfortunately, this reality still exists for many in Usulután. Poverty is complex and it is difficult to sustain productive livelihoods in a

62

country still struggling with many systemic economic, political and social issues.

Nonetheless, there have been significant changes in the lives of every community

member who was interviewed. These changes are examples of ongoing transformation

that has been taking place in all aspects of individual and community life in Usulután.

### 3.4. *TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRAL MISSION – WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?*

The goals of transformational development are changed people and changed relationships,

specifically focused on God, self, others and creation (Myers, 2011). These changes manifest

themselves in countless ways, as individuals and communities willingly participate in

transformative programs and dialogue. Myers (2011) argues that there is no transformational

development apart from people who are being transformed themselves, and this process of

transformation can be identified in part by definitions that emerge as individuals consider what

transformation looks like in their own context.

For this research project participants were asked to describe or define what holistic

transformation looks like to them, specifically in relation to the partnership and work of CBM

and IBE. Many participants were not familiar with the term transformational development,

especially when translated into Spanish; however they were very familiar with the term integral

mission as it was originally translated from the Spanish phrase 'misión integral'. As previously

mentioned, 'misión integral', or integral mission, refers to the process of holistic transformation

that addresses material and spiritual aspects of life in an integrated fashion. Therefore the term

integral mission was used interchangeably with the term transformational development

throughout the interview process to refer to a holistic approach to community development

that addresses spiritual and material needs. Further analysis will discuss the nuances between

integral mission and transformational development, acknowledging that, although they are

similar frameworks, they are not unanimously considered identical amongst the faith-based development community.

Overall, responses focused on personal and community changes that have addressed material and spiritual needs through sustainable, community-driven approaches, mostly connected to the work of the local church. Characteristics of transformation include changed perspective, increased pride and dignity, mutual involvement, two-way communication, improved situation, renewed trust and hope, effective use of resources, empowerment, careful evaluation, a focus on the next generation and a framework centred on people, not programs.

Prior to exploring definitions of transformation from three different perspectives, CBM, IBE and community members, it is important to note a trend that emerged during field research. Many community members gave narrative descriptions of transformation that was taking place in their lives without giving any indication that they spend much time discussing the particulars of transformation within their individual lives or communities. These individuals are living their lives, aware of changes that are taking place; however, they are not necessarily focused on the theories associated with these changes. Interviews with CBM and IBE staff and former staff placed greater emphasis on the theoretical and theological underpinnings and principles of transformation, revealing that this dialogue is more commonplace in their everyday realities. It follows that CBM and IBE staff members and volunteers are evidently more accustomed to these kind of discussions, as much of their work centres around the implementation of holistic mission-based community development.  The combination of reflexive narratives, along with theoretical and theological observations, provides valuable insight into the theory and practice of CBM/IBE's work in El Salvador.

*3.4.1. PRINCIPLES*

According to CBM and IBE, transformation needs to be faith-based – inspired and informed by

Scripture and prayer. It requires a holistic approach, available for everyone and aiming to

address the needs of the whole being.  The local church, as heart and soul of community life, is

the centre of this integral mission and transformational work.

The partnership of body and soul, word and deed, must be defined and practiced within a

community setting, sensitive to specific contexts and cultural realities. This can be accomplished

through listening, investing in people and building relationships, instead of simply prescribing

tools and techniques of development that may not be appropriate within a particular context.

Integral mission and transformation require both qualitative and quantitative measurement to

understand the impact on individual lives and communities. The following descriptions of

integral mission and transformation are a culmination of thoughts, stories and examples from

CBM, IBE and community members.

First and foremost, this work has been born out of a faith-based perspective. A collective

agreement from most participants suggested that integral mission and transformation simply

cannot exist without a Biblical foundation – this is where the holistic approach begins. Miguel

Castro has been the Pastor of IBE in San Salvador for over 25 years. He reflects on their initial

foray into community development work in rural areas during the Civil War. Their work was a

faith-based response to the violence and poverty that they saw around them:

> Little by little we were gaining experience and organizing more initiatives. We had
> an emergency area, a health area, a production area - trying to develop a self-
> sufficient economy. Those ideas were a spiritual response coming through
> reflection, coming from a long period of prayers and discussion. The decisions
> were made with conviction.

A few decades later, IBE has only increased its focus on a faith-based approach to community development – serving Salvadorans through both word and deed. Integral mission and the process of transformation have become a way of life for the church. Manuel, an IBE staff member, shares:

> I think that even though integral mission sounds nice, it's redundant. How can we do mission from the Bible if it's not integral? The mission is one itself. It requires your whole being. I cannot separate the material things from the spiritual things. How I deal with integral mission here, it should respond to my reality and change the things that don't correspond to the values of the Kingdom of God.

In partnership with IBE, CBM's aim is to see transformed relationships, practices and values emerging through faith-based mission.  This is similar to Bryant Myers' definition of transformation as changing identity and restoring broken relationships (2011). Identity can change on many levels – individual, community, and organizationally. CBM has worked hard to integrate their focus on social action and evangelism over the last decade, and since then, they have needed to forge community development partnerships, in El Salvador and elsewhere, from a different angle. Shannon, a CBM staff member, explains that CBM was:

> …trying to adjust the historical thinking of assistance being financial, and thinking instead we could use somebody to teach English or someone could come and talk about integral mission and what it looks like in our communities. It's an ongoing process of course, but that was really exciting because there was a pretty critical shift that took place.

This shift has also been taking place in the communities where CBM and IBE have been working in El Salvador. The leader of a local church, also referred to as a mission, that was started by CBM and IBE, explained that they have been supporting community members by addressing their poverty and unemployment, but this work has been accompanied by preaching the Word

of God. He explains that transformation can only be complete when all areas of a person's life have been incorporated into the process.

During a group discussion about development work in Usulután, Sabas, a former IBE staff member, uses the example of a community member to highlight the integral approach they have adopted. Everyone around the circle nodded in agreement as Sabas pointed to his friend and shared:

> Take him – a part is spiritual and a part is material. The spiritual is not more important than the body and the body is not more important than the spiritual. They are one.

Víctor, a participant in one of the CBM/IBE agricultural projects, also shares what he has learned through the example of the community development team. He now sees that a holistic approach means addressing spiritual and material needs, but it also means that everyone is welcome to join the process:

> We saw them come and they work in the whole of our community, not just a section. They didn't care if they were from a different religion – Catholic or Protestant. They saw the needs of the people in general, not only the needs of certain people.

CBM and IBE are concerned not only with transformation in communities they serve, but also with the life of their staff and volunteers. This is also a component of Myers' framework for transformational development (2011). In order to facilitate holistic transformation, the practitioner must also apply the principles to his or her own life, embracing values like honesty, integrity, love, justice and peace. The implication is that one cannot facilitate transformational development without being open to the impetus of transformation in their own life. Sabas describes one of his priorities:

> It is a blessing from God to have a family, because the family is the fundamental part of our work. I share my dreams and my goals with my wife and family because then we can think together and have better ideas.

Joining with a community for the purpose of holistic transformation requires the commitment of those who are facilitating community development, and also the commitment of the local church. In fact, the local church is at the centre of CBM and IBE's model for transformation and integral mission. Terry, CBM's Director of International Partnerships, expresses his issue with community development that is disassociated with the local church. He explains:

> I'm not bemoaning the fact that people have access to credit or that they travel less distance to get water. But my driving motivation for transformational development is how is it strengthening the life and witness of local churches? Because I think that churches are agents of social integration. You can develop really remarkable community development programs. You can also run great community programs that actually disintegrate local communities. So I look at places like schools and churches as being social integrators – things that build community.

With the strength and support of the local church, plans for transformation and integral mission should emerge from within a community. Oscar, the former Director of Community Development for IBE, describes how they developed an approach to integral mission in Usulután over the years:

> Community development is the responsibility of distinct actors in the municipality. For us to just propose a project to CBM, you do not see the community. We would not do a project that does not respond to the reality and the needs of the community. We would not do it – it was a no go. We learned that all the prayer, reflection and proposals had to emerge from the church and community. When communities were participating in prayer, discussion and reflection on their problems and searching for the solution to their problems, they would do more. It made the journey much easier.

The previous and current community development team members agreed throughout the interview process that a top-down, hierarchical structure cannot easily facilitate transformation. Integral mission requires immersion in a community – both in the midst of the action and also on the periphery, with those people who are often left out of the picture. Manuel, an IBE staff member, explains that a holistic mission requires a great commitment of time and love; a willingness to give up your whole being to the community. He believes local leadership is the best way to facilitate this kind of mission:

> …we need to have people from the community as pastors and leaders. If they come from outside, they come with the stress of leaving their family, spending more time and money to travel, or other things. But if you have someone from a community, that person can give his life or her life to the community.

These sentiments echo back and forth between CBM, IBE and community members. It is clear that a great deal of time and energy has been poured into pursuing holistic transformation in Usulután. As CBM's Program Officer for Latin America since 2010, Shannon was able to witness the work of the previous Community Development team from IBE as they worked hard to pursue this mission and see it lived out in the communities of Usulután:

> They wouldn't just parachute in, but had invested time and gotten to know people. They had been pretty intentional about identifying the key leaders in the community. They would sit and meet and talk with the community and find out their needs. What was it that they were envisioning for their community to grow? What was it that they wanted to provide for their children? What were their dreams? It was very much this kind of appreciative inquiry – having conversations that involved a lot of listening. They really proved that they had a heart for these people and that they cared. So they gained the trust of these communities and it was just really healthy interaction.

Shannon goes on to highlight the deep sense of trust between community members and the team leaders at that time. The relationship was established first as a friendship and

69

brotherhood between individuals and only then did they begin trying to pursue change in the communities. The team became known for encouraging community members when they were discouraged, reminding them in a firm, yet gentle, way that they were capable of enacting political, social and spiritual change. They were focused on supporting communities through prioritizing issues, resource development, and the step-by-step building of programs to address those issues. Shannon sums up the supportive nature that has been foundational for the community development work in Usulután:

> If one is just overwhelmed with all there is to do and the dismay that they feel, they can never see through the clouds. I think that the team helped to come and clarify, push away some of the clouds through that two-way conversation. In terms of what I've been exposed to it was one of the clearest examples [of a holistic approach]. It was definitely a strength of the program.

Oscar, former Director of the Community Development team in Usulután, expressed his belief that this holistic approach to transformation must be defined within specific contexts, while staying rooted in a common understanding of God and the Bible. This is the lens through which he believes we can interpret social, political and economic challenges in the lives of individuals and communities. Oscar explains that integral mission is about actively participating in a community, building relationships and inviting everyone to join the process of transformation. Although this mission emerges out of a Christian belief system, it is not a forceful approach, nor should it be limited to only those with the same worldview. Oscar says:

> In the community there are brothers and sisters who are not necessarily going to the mission, but they are also suffering. They are sick, they are also hungry, they also don't have human rights, and they don't have water. And Jesus invites everyone. The transformation of the community isn't exclusively through a project. The transformation of the community is primarily from God and through walking together as a community.  This vision is about community empowerment.

> Then the local church becomes equipped for transformation, then the
> municipality and the country.

When transformation and integral mission are lived out in a faith-based, holistic, local and culturally relevant environment, the next step is evaluation. CBM and IBE attempt to measure their transformational community development work both quantitatively (the use of metrics) and qualitatively (narrative indicators). Results-based development has been one of the most common approaches in both secular and faith-based community development initiatives during the last decade. Metrics are used to measure progress and give evidence of transformation, for example, the number of people who have received housing or have been involved in agricultural projects. Tangible, measurable indicators exist of transformation. An ongoing challenge for CBM is defining and evaluating the qualitative side of transformation through their partnership with IBE. Terry adds to this:

> A lot of people can have fresh water, without their lives being directly
> transformed. I mean, their thirst has been transformed, but have their lives been
> necessarily transformed?

Similar to the challenges faced by other faith-based organizations and NGOs who have incorporated a more holistic approach to their work, it has been difficult for CBM to overcome the traditional approach to funding and evaluating development programs. Terry notes that CBM developed initiatives such as the STEP program – a trilateral partnership between Canadian churches, CBM and international partners – believing they could transform people, but without developing a model or evaluative tool for transformation. Shannon elaborates on this transition and the shift in thinking it required for CBM and also for their partners:

> They [the partner] would just get an amount of money and it was based on trust,
> and they would use it for anything that kind of fell under this MOU of our
> agreement. That has been challenging because I think there was this shock at

first. 'We've been your partner -why do we now have to start reporting this stuff? Don't we have this trust?'

Because of my education background and my experience, I think in terms of measurable indicators and results-based management. Looking at a project that's not quite so tangible and breaking this down, it's very much two-way learning. I've learned a lot and continue to learn from our partners. It takes a long time but it's exciting. You can definitely see big strides.

This transition has also proved challenging for IBE as they join CBM in dealing with the complexities of measuring and evaluating transformation – with both tangible and intangible results. Manuel reflects:

So how can we measure the impact? There are some things in faith that we cannot measure, but there are other things that we can measure. I think that we have to accept that the impact the gospel has on people, it doesn't have a timeframe. But our goal is to impact with values.

The foundation of transformation and integral mission for CBM and IBE has been built through experience and a desire to remain faith-based and locally powered. They have attempted to create programs that are culturally relevant and inclusive, while still rooted in a Biblical worldview. As the work continues, they are still trying to address the difficulty of measuring an ongoing, multi-faceted process that can be lived out in many different ways.

### 3.4.2. PRIORITIES

Throughout the interview process, transformation and integral mission were described in many different ways and through many different stories. Four themes emerged that can be defined as priorities of transformation and integral mission as identified by those who have participated in the community development work of CBM and IBE in various ways. The principles of this faith-based, local, holistic community development work are: solidarity, two-way communication, empowerment and capacity-building.

At the beginning of their relationship with IBE, Terry recalls that CBM staff were

influenced by the Salvadoran example of living out the Biblical call for peace and justice in

their own country. A key expression of IBE's growing commitment to integral mission was

solidarity between the Church and the people. As CBM explored what the concept of

integral mission meant for their organization, they were witnessing the practice of holistic

mission by their new partners in El Salvador. Terry explains the situation at that time:

> The context of El Salvador is one in which the church, essentially the Roman
> Catholic Church, but also many Protestant churches, they were living in a situation
> of oppression and of violence; of the misuse of power. Poverty marked the
> country in many different manners and there were unimaginable expressions of
> oppression.

Canadian Baptists witnessed the dualistic role of the Christian church in El Salvador – in

some cases as a complicit ally to these oppressive structures, but also churches like IBE

rising up and speaking out in solidarity with the poor. Baptist churches in Canada began

acting in solidarity with Salvadorans who were fighting for peace and justice, supporting

IBE with time, money, prayer and through building cross-cultural relationships.

This expression of solidarity witnessed by CBM was affirmed once again as they saw IBE

reach out beyond their own borders. The Church in San Salvador was facing poverty and

violence; however, in rural parts of El Salvador the situation had worsened significantly

after the war. Terry recalls that IBE showed great commitment through their initiatives in

rural areas, gathering resources from within a church community that was already facing

many challenges and using those resources to serve those outside of the city. Terry

explains more about this development:

> Integral mission led the leaders of IBE to reach out beyond the confines of their
> own immediate geographic community and work to help poor communities. The
> church became a huge instrument of relief reaching out beyond their borders. It

was transformational development or integral mission that was happening, from IBE out into poor communities. At one time between 75 and 80 Canadian Baptists would volunteer to go down to El Salvador each year to be part of building homes for the poor.

The history of poverty and violence is complex in El Salvador, and in order to address the resulting issues it has been important for CBM and IBE to understand from where they emerged and to communicate to community members that the poverty and violence they face are not the will of God. Matthew, a church leader, explains, "In the missions, we felt the need to not only preach but to have the sense that we understand the problems." For this and many other reasons within an international partnership, two-way communication is key.

The eventual dissolution of the partnership between CBM and IBE has been attributed in part to a lack of clear and consistent communication; however, two-way communication was a priority throughout the partnership. Shannon, CBM's Program Officer for Latin America, spent the last two years of the partnership attempting to maintain two-way communication with IBE. Shannon's job involves visiting partners for monitoring and evaluation; meeting with them to discuss and brainstorm future plans, and also to identify challenges. Overall, she explains that CBM has been working with all their staff and partners to reinforce the understanding that partnership is not only financially based. Partners can share resources, develop ideas and follow through on them together, and build a relationship based on two-way communication.

This approach to partnership should also include a commitment to accountability, where both sides are responsible to one another to follow up when goals are not being met, information is withheld, or other challenges arise. Two-way communication, or more specifically, two-way symmetrical communication, implies that both parties have the

freedom to share – positive and negative feedback – equally. Shannon also stresses the

importance of communicating with people who are involved in various aspects of the

partnership. Some partners have a more intensive system of hierarchy and, as was

evident throughout the interview process, perspectives can vary extremely from one

person to the next. Shannon explains that within each partnership, she needs to allow

herself time to learn more about the cultural and structural background before trying to

add to the conversation. She explains:

> When I talk to partners and say, 'Can you explain to me what you're thinking?' Or
> if I have it on paper, 'Integral mission is something that you've identified as being
> really important to you. That seems something that would be really hard to do
> when you have so many different levels. How do you connect with the women's
> group? How do you connect with the youth? What is something that you need,
> not financially, but just a tool, a resource that you need to do the current work
> that you're doing – to do it better?' I find that can oftentimes stimulate some
> pretty interesting conversations and that's a big key – that there's a safe space
> where you can really foster conversation. Iron sharpens iron, and you just get
> those things going and the possibilities are really exciting.

A third priority of transformation and integral mission in the work of CBM and IBE has been

empowerment. Although people were travelling from San Salvador, and then from Canada, to

support the work in rural communities, the focus remained on empowering community

members to use their existing resources and develop sustainable solutions through community

initiatives. It was important for everyone to know their role in partnership and to recognize the

need for equal commitment from everyone involved. Following the Biblical example of the

Church as the Body of Christ[6], CBM and IBE wanted to facilitate transformational programs that

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[6] 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14; 27 (New International Version)
Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For
we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and
we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many…Now
you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

would give individuals the freedom to claim their identities as valued members of their communities.

> I think people that lead a community should be from their own communities, because how can you know what's going on? You can be the most committed Pastor, but you need to be in that community (Manuel).

Capacity-building is the final priority of transformation and integral mission that emerged during the interview process. Building capacity within a community in many ways can be seen as an extension of empowerment. Oscar elaborates on the development of this priority:

> We said if we want to transform the local reality, the change has to come from within the communities. They are the leaders. If they did not make this commitment, the community would not become better. What we have always said is the best part is to build capacity in the community – to build up the skills and capacity.

This approach to partnership, focused on solidarity, two-way communication, empowerment and capacity-building, proved effective for CBM and IBE for many years. Many interview participants expressed similar thoughts about the need for a combined effort, everyone bringing what they can offer to the partnership in order to accomplish greater things.

### 3.4.3. GOALS

For CBM and IBE, the goals of transformation and integral mission in Usulután are participants and practitioners who have seen transformation in their relationships, practices and values; changed identities and a new perspective or vision. Again, this is similar to Myers' framework for Transformational Development, which works towards just and peaceful relationships and restored identities.

CBM and IBE have pursued many specific goals throughout their partnership, including

the successful implementation of housing, agricultural and water projects. Leadership

training and the creation of local missions have also played a significant role in achieving

the goals within their partnership. One particular strength of IBE's work has been to

address violence with young people in El Salvador. They are working to see transformed,

peaceful relationships, young people who are no longer seeking identity, security and

meaning in violence, and a new vision for El Salvador, built upon values like justice,

peace and integrity. Terry praises IBE's work:

> IBE serves a vital role in helping young people challenge the 'idol of violence'. El Salvador is, unfortunately like several Central American countries, a horrifically violent culture. They make the Wild West of the United States look pretty tame. There are violent gangs and violent movements in El Salvador. IBE has said 'We want to stand against the tide of violence' and they've started a movement called the Culture of Peace. It's essentially an educational program that is trying to re-shape the culture of young people, by addressing issues of violence.

As previously mentioned, every community member who was interviewed expressed

some level of transformation that had taken place in their lives. Interview questions were

focused on describing spiritual and material changes, along with individual and

community changes. Many people also expressed the transformation they are still hoping

to see in their own lives and communities. Víctor describes the transformation he has

seen in his town as, "…a change in our personalities – a change of thinking. And I hope the

people will keep working like they have been up until now." Though it can be difficult to

identify the transformation of values that has taken place as individuals have been

involved in IBE/CBM programs, transformed values are evident in the stories of

community members.

Matthew, a community leader who has been involved with the work of IBE for many years, describes the changes he has witnessed:

> And people no longer perceive a situation as fighting only for yourself. They think now we must also fight for the other partners. We are seeing how people have begun to change their mentality thinking that it's not enough to fight for your own self. But now you should have a place where you fight for the others, your friends. The other ones that are near – your neighbours.

He has seen these values take shape in his own community, and Matthew describes how his own perspective was also transformed through his work with the church:

> We always thought that everything that we were doing had a strong relationship with our faith because our God doesn't allow injustice.  We thought helping meant evangelizing, but after the war there was a need for food, water and medicine.  This was needed after the war, but the Word of God was also needed – Jesus helps us with His presence, His teaching, His transformation. I see that the healing of these communities had to do with not just some parts of life but our evangelization must include all of these areas.

Transformation and integral mission are evident in renewed relationships, practices and values. This renewal leads to transformed and empowered identities and is solidified in new perspectives and vision. William, a community member, describes the pursuit of these goals that has been evident through the work of CBM and IBE:

> The people have seen a real change because of them and because of God. It has been a real change because they have helped us to have a new perspective – to see things very differently. We understand that the house, even though it is important, it is not necessary for life. It is necessary to share in community with your brothers and sisters. They helped us to work in community, to look for the development of the community.

# CHAPTER FOUR TRANSFORMATION IN PROGRESS: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

## 4.1. A STORY OF SUCCESS

> We had in Usulután a new experience with integral mission, building
> communities through the housing projects, the production projects, with
> leaders, women, youth, and with the municipalities. Our focus was community
> development, and it is not the responsibility of just one institution.
> [Oscar - former Director of Community Development in Usulután for IBE and
> CBM]

The history of partnership between CBM and IBE is full of success stories. Though the

partnership eventually came to a difficult end, there were many previous years of collaborative,

life-giving community development work in El Salvador. The approach that CBM and IBE took in

their partnership was holistic, culturally defined and focused on helping individuals discover

their true identities in order to embrace a new perspective on life.

Since the focus of this project is the integration of material and spiritual dimensions of life

within community development work, it follows that the results are integrated. In some cases,

material transformation is much more evident than any kind of spiritual transformation;

however, they are often presented as two sides of the same coin. It is not solely a matter of the

indicators that can be measured upon completion of a project, but instead the recognition that

transformation is a holistic process that spreads to every aspect of human life – relationships,

practices and values.

This success can be attributed to the commitment of CBM and IBE to their principles and

priorities of holistic transformation and integral mission. As Oscar recalls, they had to

change their focus over time to recognize that the partnership did not exist simply to

provide assistance in community development:

> We wanted to build local capacity – in the community, with the leaders. For the
> mission was for sustainability for everyone – economic, social and spiritual.

The focus changed and they began working towards their goals, person by person,

community by community. Following are examples of the successful work that has been

accomplished through the partnership of CBM and IBE in Usulután.



*Figure 5. Map of Usulután region, El Salvador.*
*(http://alilorraine.blogspot.ca/2011/05/geographics.html)*

### 4.1.1. ALEGRÍA

Participants in the Municipality of Alegría have been involved in the partnership through a

housing project, mission (church), green-house initiative, and support for community

advocacy. The mission in Alegría has started programs for children and youth, which is

rare in rural communities. The programs in this community were described as stable, and

community leaders indicated there has been an aggressive approach to maintaining the

work over the past decade. With financial support from CBM, IBE and community

members began building houses in Las Américas and soon word spread that they might be

able to help other communities address similar issues. Nina remembers:

> We separated small pieces of land for houses and asked for the deed to the land.
> The Mayor was always lying to us saying that he would give us the documents and
> never did. So we were forced to organize to get some information about who
> really owned the land so that we could get the legal documents. We heard that
> IBE helped build houses in Las Americas, so we organized ourselves to see if we
> could get help to build houses in this neighbourhood, too. This project began very
> fast because it took only three months to begin to build the houses. That is how
> we got the first eight houses.

Within three months, houses were being built. One of the recipients of a new house was

Ophelia. During her interview, she explained that many people abandoned the project

after the municipal government kept breaking promises. However, Ophelia never gave up

on her dream of having a house. The housing project grew to include not only monetary

support from CBM, but also the assistance of short-term mission teams from IBE in San

Salvador and churches in Canada. Ophelia remembers the construction of her house:

> The brothers and sisters from Canada were all happy to work very hard with the
> people from IBE to help them fight and bring this housing project.  Initially we
> thought that if they give us at least a piece of land that will be great because even
> owning a piece of land that would be a good thing. But they helped us to get this
> house and money to live.

This is the example that CBM and IBE have set in establishing relationships in each community.

Individuals began coming together to address their problems, pooling resources, supporting one

another, addressing material and spiritual concerns. Ophelia shares this mentality:

> Doing activities by ourselves, that is not the church. Brothers and sisters put in
> what they can and we help the church. For example, when we built the
> church/community centre, all the brothers and sisters worked. There were some
> days that I couldn't help with the building, so I brought food to help the brothers
> and sisters who were working.

These efforts have not just succeeded in providing material needs, like secure housing, but have also transcended to provide a support system for families and their communities. Many things have grown out of these projects, like missions, study and reflection groups and entrepreneurial opportunities for women (IBE, 2012). Specifically through their involvement with the housing project in Las Américas and Altos de Guadalupe community members began to organize and address issues like electricity, clean drinking water, and property rights. Instead of remaining as mere recipients of support, participants in the project evolved into a joint search for solutions.

When asked to describe any material and spiritual changes she has seen in Alegría, Abigail explained that life has changed in many ways for her family and community. She describes a change for the better in the community overall, with improved relationships and communication between neighbours. The new house they received in partnership with CBM and IBE is much safer than their previous dwelling. They are safe from insects, water damage, and most importantly, they can now lock the door to keep their belongings safe when they leave the house. This has led to an even deeper transformation in their lives:

> Before we couldn't leave the house all of us. Now we have less family problems because in the past we had to discuss who was going to stay watching for the house. Even my family didn't bring my cousins to our house because there were so many insects. Now he stays with us because the house is cleaner. Before I couldn't invite my friends or people to my house because everything was covered by plastic. I felt ashamed to bring them. But now, it's clean and safe.

The greenhouse project has been a source of empowerment for many women in Alegría. It has provided basic needs, but also opportunities for women to become leaders in developing faith and skills for holistic development (IBE, 2012). Women, such as Abigail, have recruited others to join the greenhouse project, motivating each other to participate in training sessions and to apply for bank loans. The women plan to expand their greenhouse project and Abigail hopes

they can maintain momentum to continue addressing the need for safe housing and clean water in their area.

Bruno, a resident of Alegría, also hoped to live in a new home, but he believed that safe and permanent housing was a dream that would never come true. He credits the community for coming together, organizing themselves and setting goals to make changes. Also giving thanks to the church, Bruno says, "…if IBE wasn't involved in that process we would not have been able to accomplish what we have."

Ophelia's life has been transformed through the housing project. She used to move from place to place with her four children trying to find a safe and permanent home. As a recipient of a home through CBM and IBE, she now feels secure and happy that her children have a home:

> Now in this place, the only way I'm going to leave is when I die. We are safe now because we don't have to go looking every once in a while for a place to live. We have a place that we own and no one is going to throw us out. Now I have animals – chickens and pigs - and am sowing seedlings to sell with my sister.

As she has established a sense of security and peace in her life, Ophelia has also experienced a spiritual transformation in her relationships:

> In the past, if someone hurt me I would get back at them. I would want to take revenge. Things have changed so much in my life. We don't change overnight, we change gradually. Little by little from the things of God.

Nina's family got involved with the work of IBE and CBM through a local community organization. Beforehand, they lived in a dirt house, but now she is proud to welcome people into her new home. Through her involvement in the housing project, Nina got involved with the local mission. She expresses over and over how great the change has been in her life and community. When asked where she sees a specific transformation in community life, Nina answers:

Yes, it has changed considerably. It has helped to improve the relations with the neighbours. You can find different kinds of feelings. Some can be envious because you have a better home. But the majority of the people are glad to see your life conditions have changed and improved.

Overall, Alegría and the surrounding communities have witnessed a significant amount of transformation as a result of the community development partnership between CBM and IBE. A church leader in one of the local missions sums up the experience as follows:

There has been material and spiritual progress. People now live in dignified homes and through God the community has been unified. Not easy, but God has done it. Young people that had a lost life, they are now assuming responsibilities. Thanks be to God.

### 4.1.2. MERCEDES UMAÑA AND BERLÍN

CBM and IBE have worked in a few different communities within the Municipalities of Mercedes Umaña and Berlín. Missions are located in the town of Mercedes Umaña, along with Las Cruces, Guallinac and Río de los Bueyes. Agricultural programs have been established in San Simón and the MERLIN water project serves 500 homes between the two municipalities. MERLIN is a water project that was created with the support of CBM and IBE. It is run by a Board of Directors with representatives elected by each community involved in the project within Mercedes Umaña and Berlín. The title MERLIN is a combination of the names of the two municipalities.

MERLIN has provided water in many communities and it has had a great impact on people like Rachel, who proudly explains:

There has been a big change. We don't have to go to the river to wash our clothes. We don't have to pull water from the well. We don't have to look for someone to give us water. We can just turn on the tap and we get the water.

Río de los Bueyes was described by one participant as "a community in the middle of nowhere." To reach the small community, which is located 18 km from the main highway, it is necessary to traverse a river that runs across a dirt road. A visit to the community to conduct interviews was cut short due to impending rain, and community members explained that they periodically lose access to the outside world during the rainy season because the river creates an impasse.

CBM and IBE have supported Río de los Bueyes through the development of a producer's co-operative, micro-credit programs and a mission. For Deborah, the support of IBE and CBM has helped her family acquire land, micro-credit, housing and resources for their church. Her husband was seriously ill and she expresses thankfulness to God for providing healing, along with the support of these programs:

> Because they supported us with these walls and this house and now life here is more peaceful. If it were not for the credit they gave us we could not have the seeds and we might not have paid for the cornfield. Our resources were not enough and we didn't have fertilizer for our maize. Most people are working. Most of them are supported either by the church or by working. The church is involved virtually almost everywhere.

In San Simón, a community located on the banks of the Lempa River, there is now a successful producers' co-operative. The success of the past decade can be attributed to the hard work and intentional interaction of the IBE and CBM team with community members. The relationships were built upon mutual trust, sharing ideas and realistic approaches to alleviating poverty. Víctor describes his initial interactions with the IBE and CBM team in 2003, which led to the creation of a producers' co-operative:

> We started sharing ideas. We started to discuss work and build a friendship. We started working together and I invited my community. In the moment they visited my community and they saw the problems the people were having. We started

work on the land in order to change and produce different vegetables and we even cultivate fish.

Prior to partnering with CBM and IBE, the producers had taken out loans with the Bank of El Salvador and were facing high interest rates that, according to interview participants, were impossible for them to pay. The new partnership began with small micro-credit loans for producers, and today the co-operative consists of 70 people who are able to support their families and also contribute to a fund that provides materials and resources for their work.

Through training programs and education funded by CBM and IBE, the producer's co-operative has been teaching farmers to embrace non-traditional products in their crops. They have trained almost 100 farmers and are now planting a variety of new seeds, including tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce. The goal was to find a crop that could bring the most income, and Eric is proud to say they have reached their goal through cultivating plantains. The community meets together to discuss issues in the community centre. There have been Bible studies and fellowship incorporated into the co-operative programming, initiated by Pastor Miguel from IBE.

Eric proudly states that the organization has become a priority in his life, along with the friends he has made through the partnership. He shares more about his experience:

> The good thing that we have found is that organization is the base of development. The good thing is that since the Baptist church (IBE) came here, they have never stopped helping us and giving to us. And since the church came it gave us a form of economic resources that we have been using and giving back to our organization and then taking it and it's like a cycle. The church has supported a lot of farmers.

There was no implication from interview participants that they were required to commit their involvement to IBE and their local missions as a result of the support they received. Responses varied when interview participants were asked about their involvement in

the local church – some were actively involved in IBE missions, others attended the Catholic church, and others did not attend any church.

### 4.1.3. NUEVA GRANADA

The Municipality of Nueva Granada has also developed a successful producers' co-operative and a very successful water project in partnership with CBM, IBE and the local government. The water project began when community leaders expressed a need for running water. One participant got involved in 2004 through his work with the FMLN, which had just come into power locally. The FMLN wanted to run a different system of government in the community, building an agenda based on input from community members. This participant explains, "This is a project that has empowered the communities and leaders. The association works in service to the community."

As previously mentioned, the left-wing FMLN gained popular support after the Civil War as it transitioned from a guerrilla movement to a legitimate political party (Del Castillo, 2001). In 2009, the FMLN won the national election, taking over from the right-wing Alianza Republicana Nacional (ARENA), which had been in power since the beginning of the Civil War. Tensions between the parties are still evident in local communities where political allegiance runs strong. CBM and IBE have also received support from local FMLN representatives in other communities.

Another participant became involved in the water project in Nueva Granada through a local community development organization called ADESCO. These small organizations exist in many Salvadoran communities, addressing development issues and partnering in development programs. This participant has watched the water project grow to include a Board of Directors and staff members. The organization has an office that is open from

Monday to Saturday each week, managing water distribution for nine communities, payment plans and customer support. The organization has become financially self-sufficient, with periodic training and advocacy support coming from another Salvadoran NGO.

A few members from the agricultural cooperative in Nueva Granada shared the following story about a fellow member whom they helped together. William explains:

> He was a partner when the cooperative began and he got very sick with diabetes. It was difficult for him to work with us, so we as a community decided to help him with a collection. We gave him economic support and other things. So since then that is the mentality of the cooperative - if a friend gets sick we are willing to go and help.

In each community that was visited, there was evidence of community spirit that had been growing over the years and a desire for further training and resources to continue addressing important issues. The effort to survive can create a sense of community, but it is also an extremely stressful reality. However, there is a strong sense of Salvadoran compassion, especially in poor communities, where the majority of people will support their neighbours even in the midst of their own economic and social challenges.

### 4.1.4. COMMUNITY INITIATIVE AND INCLUSION

As previously mentioned, many community members have become involved in finding solutions to the issues facing their communities. IBE and CBM were able to offer resources and training to continue the journey towards these goals. Bruno explains the process he has been involved in through the work in Alegría:

> We meet regularly and work on the project. We begin to see what our options are, what we can submit for requests. In the beginning, IBE wasn't involved because we got together by ourselves and began to organize. But then, the

previous team got in touch with us and got involved and they began to assist and orientate us on how to go through the things that we wanted to accomplish.

There are key members of each community who have become involved in these projects and maintained commitment. As a whole, commitment varies from person to person. Caleb explains that a great number of people in Alegría have participated in projects with CBM and IBE:

> They have been involved in coordination. For example, the houses, volunteer with other projects, the road. People meet and they helped to build the community centre. It is also the church. They gather there to have assemblies. Not everyone participates, but the majority get involved.

Leadership training and formation has been a crucial part of CBM's work for many years. The organization believes that leadership is key in carrying out transformational work in "…parts of our world where poverty, disease, and civil violence create deep wounds in the lives of individuals and communities" (CBM, 2013). Eric describes evidence of this priority in San Simón:

> It's like a nest of leaders. Yes, there has been [training] in the past and it is still happening. The training we're doing now is how to apply for resources. Yesterday we were having training on how to design a profile of a project.

As a leader in his community, Eric has seen the process develop to ensure that the community is setting the agenda themselves: "We discuss with the community our needs and then what activities we can do to solve those needs. And in that process we define the topics that we need to learn to solve those needs."

One leader in Nueva Grenada noted a change in thinking among community members:

> People have begun to understand that they have rights and they can approach the leaders - the Mayor or any public official. They have begun to forget the idea that if you want to work and eat, the Mayor can do something against me and I'd better not say anything. Now they understand that they have rights too.

It is apparent that CBM and IBE have worked to support the strengthening of community identities and to instill a greater sense of community ownership. A significant aspect of their success has been their willingness, as a faith-based partnership, to include anyone who would like to participate in community development programming. During the interview process, community members were asked about their involvement in church, and answers varied greatly.

A number of participants are actively involved in the work of their community mission that was planted by CBM and IBE. Other participants expressed great respect for the church, but were clear in stating they had no involvement. Some community members who are involved with the Catholic Church in their communities expressed gratitude for CBM and IBE's willingness to work with anyone in the community, regardless of their religious affiliation. During an interview where this sentiment was expressed, Manuel noted that, "…it's interesting because in Latin America there is a tension between Catholics and Protestants. Being a beneficiary of a Protestant project says a lot about IBE addressing projects without that barrier."

It is encouraging to see a spirit of inclusion and the ability of people with different perspectives to work together. The interview process confirmed that CBM and IBE have been seen for many years as a stable partner in Usulután, committed to their ongoing work even in the midst of economic, politic and social challenges. Community members expressed an ability to see things differently now and respond more effectively to their problems. There was collective agreement that lives could be improved when individuals work together as a community.

The previous IBE and CBM community development team set a great example for community members in their ongoing commitment to transforming lives. A few participants expressed the encouragement it gave them to see Oscar and Sabas continuing their support of the work in Usulután even after they were no longer working for the church. One participant shares:

> Thanks to God that the community is gradually growing and more men are working. They [the team] have always been with us, asking who is in need, who needs the community. They are still here with us as friends, with the vision. For me, it's an example for us because they are serving and able to help doing what they can. It's an example for us.

## 4.2. THE CHALLENGES

Along with great success, there have also been many challenges associated with the community development work of CBM and IBE. During the final two years of the partnership, issues with communication and disorganization emerged as one team disintegrated and a replacement team was never properly trained and installed. As CBM and IBE faced these challenges that threatened the structure of their partnership, there was also a lack of sustainable local leadership among the communities in Usulután, which led to a difficulty in maintaining program consistency. The mission that had once been thriving, became difficult to define and each program essentially morphed into its own entity, trying to survive based on limited support and oftentimes confusing information coming from San Salvador or Canada.

In the midst of these challenges, a unified vision was lost and the partnership experienced a breakdown that necessitated dissolution. It was no longer practical, sustainable, and to some it even seemed undesirable, for CBM and IBE to continue their approach to community development work in its existing format. The desire for holistic transformation in Usulután is still very strong on the part of everyone involved; however, the challenges began to overcome the successes and it came time for those involved to stop, take a step back and re-evaluate.

*4.2.1. COMMUNICATION AND DISORGANIZATION*

Communication and disorganization have been challenges for CBM and IBE at the community

and organizational level. This has been due in part to corruption and lack of accountability

within local government and a lack of accountability between CBM/IBE and community

members involved in their programs. Within the partnership there has also been dishonesty,

suspicion, and a lack of information that have contributed to local disorganization. On an

organizational level there were breakdowns in communication, a lack of following through on

agreements made in the Memorandum of Understanding between CBM and IBE, the prevalence

of assumptions and the development of mistrust.

Problems with communication and organization in one community unfortunately stalled a

housing project. Nina, one of the participants in Alegría, explains:

> In the past we used to be called through letters by the neighbours for meetings
> to make decisions. But now the group is having problems staying together. They
> aren't calling anyone; they are only running by themselves.

Community members who participated in the housing project agreed to give $10 a month for

five years to contribute to a building fund for more housing. A Board of Directors, made up of

community members, was in charge of managing this fund locally. The Board decided not to give

the money to CBM and IBE, and instead began using it for other endeavours. This has led to

disorganization, distrust and a decline in the number of members, including Nina's husband who

left the organization because he didn't agree with the decisions about financial management.

During the interview process it was sometimes difficult to determine whether disorganization

existed solely at a community or organizational level, or at both levels. In regards to the housing

project, participant comments revealed that disorganization stemmed from community

members who were on the Board of Directors. It was unclear from participant descriptions

whether this community board was already in place before the project began, whether

members were elected as representatives or whether they were specifically chosen by CBM and

IBE.  However, although disorganization that emerges at a community level is not the fault of

CBM or IBE, it is evident that there was a failure at an organizational level to hold community

representatives accountable and address the impact of community disorganization on the

programs.

Many community members do not know specifically what happened, but they have heard

rumours about why the housing project seemed to stall in 2012. Nina says:

> I understand that IBE would not continue to work together with these community
> organizations because of the suspicious way they administrate. I heard that IBE
> had a commitment to continue building more houses in this neighbourhood, but
> has stopped the relationship. Sometimes leaders influence or affect projects that
> don't continue. I would like to see that they can continue building houses because
> there is still a lot of need.

Ophelia, another participant in Alegría, was once on the Board of Directors of the

community organization, but she left the Board because of frustration at the lack of

progress and lack of attendance at community meetings. The Mayor promised funding to

build a wall to protect houses from flooding at the base of a hill, but nothing has been

done. He promised funding to cut down trees that present a danger to houses in the area,

but nothing has been done. The community has a long list of broken promises and

disorganization and miscommunication are preventing them from advocating effectively

for their cause.

As in many countries where poverty is widespread and development projects have

become the norm for small, rural communities, there is also a culture of dependency that

has contributed to the lack of organization. Manuel shares a story from the beginning of his work with IBE:

> I visited a neighbourhood and where the water runs was full of dirt and mosquitoes. There were really bad conditions. I asked them, 'Why is this in this condition?' and they told me, 'Well, they haven't sent someone to clean it.' So I gathered the young people and told them, 'We cannot depend on foreigners or someone else from outside our neighbourhood to come and solve our problems. There are things that we can do. Why don't we clean it and put it nicely and begin to solve it by our own selves.' There are a lot of things that they can do, they don't have to be dependent on someone else to come and do it.

In less than a week, the streets were clean. Manuel explained this particular community has a reputation for expecting assistance, but doing little in return. Poverty is common all over the country, but levels of community organization and social 'concienca', or awareness, vary. Manuel continues to ask how communities can transition from being dependent on outside resources to organizing themselves, staying connected with a social conscience and taking initiative to improve their quality of life.

Manuel also refers to the culture of dependency as a 'culture of poverty'. Communities have been educated to believe that because they are poor, others are indebted to support them. While some people try to find employment or leave the country, others wait until individuals, churches and NGOs come to pay the debt. He explains, "There is a culture of, 'No we're poor – we cannot change this. The only option that we have is to wait for help and survive.'" Although many participants shared their desire to take charge and continue fighting for change in their communities, others did express the notion that without the support of CBM and IBE they were left without resources to continue pursuing their goals.

It has proven difficult for CBM and IBE to address disorganization at the community level, especially over the last two years, because of growing organizational challenges. Shannon describes the situation when she first began working with CBM in 2010:

> Initially I was told that there is some really good work going on there [El Salvador], but it's really hard to get information. Sometimes it was that it's hard to get information because we work through one church there and that particular church isn't able to have the focus that they need to channel us the information. Or that the team at that time were stretched too thin and that they didn't have the ability to stay on top of that because they were managing a lot for only being a few people at that time.

In order to address the lack of information-sharing, Shannon began initiating regular phone calls with Oscar, the Director of Community Development for IBE at that time. She found the conversations with Oscar to be exciting and it was difficult to understand where things were disconnected because the message being sent was that the projects were in good standing. When Shannon went to El Salvador she began to see a different picture:

> I went for my first time to El Salvador in March of last year [2011] and spent some time in Usulután visiting the projects. That really crystallized some things for me in terms of possible complications that were being dealt with on the partner side that would maybe exacerbate the challenges we were having with communication in Canada.

One of these complications, potentially posing the greatest threat to the work of CBM and IBE in Usulután, was the strong hold on leadership and decision-making by IBE in San Salvador, resulting in a lack of sustainable local leadership in Usulután.


### 4.2.2. LACK OF SUSTAINABLE LOCAL LEADERSHIP

The involvement of local leaders varies throughout CBM/IBE projects in Usulután. The water projects and agricultural projects supported by CBM/IBE have been sustained

through the training and empowerment of local leaders. Sustainability can also be attributed to the initiative taken by these local leaders to develop relationships with other NGOs and government agencies to apply for continued funding. In contrast, the housing and mission projects supported by CBM/IBE have faltered due to a lack of local leadership maintaining presence in the communities. Although the local missions are involved in the communities through spiritual teaching and support, they lack the resources and leadership to allow for community development programs to centre on the local church. Centralized leadership – based over two hours away in San Salvador – has meant that community members are not being empowered to take ownership of these initiatives.

In the past, CBM/IBE focused a great deal on leadership development, and this is still a large part of CBM's mission. However, as the centralized leadership team faced internal challenges it led to a greater focus on keeping power in San Salvador, limiting what was once a prominent focus on enabling local leaders to grow their own base of influence. Decisions were made in San Salvador; staff and volunteers came from San Salvador to Usulután to support projects; once the Community Development team disbanded, visits to communities in Usulután became less frequent and there was only a limited amount of time to focus on each project.

When the original team was no longer in place, a great deal of time was spent trying to re-establish relationships in each community. Direction had been coming from San Salvador and was attached to a select group of people. This was a setback for CBM, especially when the partnership shifted from IBE's national focus to work specifically in Usulután. Terry expands on this challenge:

96

The controls for the ministry, and the authority for the development of the work in Usulután, was still happening from San Salvador and not locally. We felt that grassroots leaders were not being trained and empowered. Local churches were not being created that could stand up independent of the mother church. And so you had a very top-down, hierarchical approach; which we thought was disempowering.

According to their previous priorities, CBM's goal was to empower local communities and Terry explains that there existed a conflict of understanding as the leadership of IBE decided to keep control of the programming in San Salvador. CBM became concerned that most of the monitoring and staffing of programs was happening remotely, making it very difficult for relationship-building and community empowerment. Travelling from San Salvador to the communities in Usulután takes at least two and a half hours, usually more when factoring in the poor state of many Salvadoran roads.

CBM compared this scenario in the small country of El Salvador to the distance travelled in larger countries where they have community development partnerships, such as Kenya, and there was a great disproportion. Terry explains that this was an indicator for CBM that there was a breakdown in program development and monitoring:

The best monitoring we can do is when our staff or our partner staff are living close to the programs of community development and they are seeing it happen locally. That's where transformational development takes place. It's harder to monitor transformation when you have to drive 150 km over very difficult roads, two or three times a week, to go and to be with the people there for a few hours. So we began challenging those types of things. We began to realize how much of the work of Usulután was being directed and driven from San Salvador. And we challenged that and I think that we rocked the boat.

The lack of local presence and leadership training meant that the local churches in Usulután, originally supposed to be the centre of CBM/IBE's transformational community development work, were not enabled to become autonomous faith communities. They

were under the leadership of the church in San Salvador, which limited their ability to grow and sustain the work in their communities on their own.

Río de los Bueyes is a good example of a community that needs an integrated approach to emerge and be sustained from within its own borders. Río de los Bueyes is very isolated and although CBM and IBE have invested a lot into agricultural and church programs, it has been difficult for them to provide stable support. This instability can be attributed to the physical demands and stress of being an outside party trying to serve in an isolated community. Manuel shares an observation from his work with IBE in Río de los Bueyes:

> It requires a lot of commitment. It's not the lack of love for the mission, but you get a lot of stress, you get a lot of physical demands and it's really hard to keep the commitment in those conditions. There is no electricity, there is no running water, and there is not a place where you can stay if you're a missionary. You would have to share a house with someone there or you would have to walk those 8km [from the next town] every day.

Although the interview process revealed that many individuals have been empowered and encouraged to step into positions of leadership, Deborah offers a different perspective in terms of community involvement in leading these projects. A resident of Río de Los Bueyes, she explains that the community is in charge of making their own choices, but that doesn't necessarily translate to greater involvement in leadership: "At the project level there are enough people involved, but in leadership there are few." Project involvement is a positive indicator. However, the reality is that, unless community involvement transcends to include ownership and implementation, programs will not be sustainable in the long-term.

Currently, all but one of the missions in Usulután are directed by individuals coming from outside the community. Though it shows commitment from CBM and IBE to send resources

from elsewhere, again this approach has not proved to be sustainable. Both the former and

current Community Development directors expressed a desire to see more local leaders,

indicating that the directive to keep control of programming in San Salvador is not supported by

everyone on the leadership team at IBE, although it still remains the ruling order. Another

sentiment exists that the leadership of IBE has lost its focus on authentic integral mission in its

community development approach. One former participant expressed it the following way,

"…sometimes we like to come in the name of an institution and not in the name of God." The

impression given from most interview participants was that what was once a unified approach

to partnership has developed into a fractured approach to transformation and integral mission.

### 4.2.3. A NEED TO (RE)DEFINE THE MISSION

The increase in disorganization, miscommunication and the centralized hold on leadership

in El Salvador has led to the next challenge – a need to clearly re-define what a holistic

approach looks like for CBM and IBE. Some participants expressed their desire to see the

partnership narrowed to focus on just a few initiatives, for example, working with women

and youth. However, before determining a new focus of a partnership, it is important to

review expectations to determine what stakeholders – CBM, IBE, community members,

donors, and volunteers – are currently focused on.

When assumptions replace reflection it is difficult to determine whether or not all

stakeholders are actually on the same page. Reflection needs to be followed by an

evaluation process, using tools and methods that have been developed to measure the

kind of transformation that CBM and IBE are seeking in El Salvador. Without a re-

definition of these core pieces of the program, the cycle of challenges will continue, which

is what led to the eventual dissolution of the partnership between CBM and IBE.

The mission of CBM/IBE is not to be a housing organization, nor an agricultural organization. The goals need to be clearly identified and communicated to those involved. Otherwise, everyone could be working towards something different and success and failure will always be measured in different ways. Manuel recalls that he has heard people in Usulután refer to IBE as the church that builds houses, a label which does not encompass their goal to address all aspects of human life and setting an example for holistic mission in the lives of community members. He elaborates:

> Our goal is not to provide a house just by itself; our goal is to influence that community that things can be done in partnership. That there is another way to relate to others and that everybody deserves a house that dignifies life. We can teach a lot of other things, but the housing cannot be our goal. We have to review, we are not the church that builds houses; we are the church that has understood that our mission is to influence the whole community.

### 4.2.4. BREAKDOWN OF THE PARTNERSHIP

As previously mentioned, miscommunication, community disorganization and a lack of sustainable local leadership led to the convolution of what was once a clear mission in El Salvador. These factors, along with further issues within the relationship, resulted in the greatest challenge faced by CBM and IBE over the last few years - the breakdown of their partnership.

The principles on which CBM/IBE built their partnership were once very clearly about solidarity with the poor, empowering local communities and pursuing social, economic, political and spiritual transformation in rural communities in El Salvador – all of this centred around the empowering work of the local church. These principles did not disappear, but instead various challenges began to overshadow the goals of the partnership and negatively affect the work in Usulután. The following are some of the

main issues that emerged within the relationship between CBM and IBE, as determined through the interview process and subsequent data analysis: assumptions and complacency; pride; cultural issues and lack of mutuality; and finally, the disbanding of the community development team in early 2012.

During the interview process, it was observed that many people were frustrated with the current state of the partnership and they seemed hesitant to comment on what might happen in the future. Many participants preferred to focus on the success of past initiatives, instead of the current challenges facing the partnership. On the surface, it seemed as though the partnership had reached a lull in what had been overall a successful pursuit of holistic transformation for many years. Churches were established, homes were built, clean water was delivered and agricultural production was flourishing. However, resources were drying up, promises were being broken, relationships were falling apart, and some individuals seemed to be pursuing separate results instead of staying focused on CBM and IBE's goals of transformation and integral mission.

Though this lull could be attributed in part to the inevitable life cycle of partnership, significant issues also contributed to the breakdown of this particular partnership. It is worthwhile to explore them further in an effort to understand the challenges that can be faced in faith-based community development efforts.

The disbanding of the IBE's Community Development team in 2012 was a significant factor in the eventual decline of the partnership between CBM and IBE. Canadian field staff had not been assigned to El Salvador since 2008, and therefore the community development team was the main point of contact for all aspects of the partnership on the ground.

From CBM's perspective, the breakdown emerged out of a growing sense of disconnect

between the organization and IBE, but also between IBE and the communities in

Usulután. As Development Officer for Latin America, Shannon was responsible for

gathering regular reports on the partnership, as per the MOU. By the end of 2011 it

became very difficult to get the reports and at the beginning of 2012 CBM was informed

that IBE – specifically Pastor Miguel – had fired the entire Community Development

team in Usulután. Shannon elaborates on the confusing reports that they were receiving

at that time:

> The wording would be a little different depending on who I spoke to - fired or told
> them not to come back until further notice. It was apparent that there was an
> image of the project that seemed to be projected by the church. It was really
> good work that had happened and they wanted it to keep going on; but in terms
> of who had ownership and who was really connected to the community, I think
> that that was projected in one way by the church. The Usulután project seemed
> to be more like this shiny thing that they show off to visitors or to possible donors
> as opposed to the church having a connection there themselves.

Unfortunately appropriate steps were not taken to move forward after the controversy

unfolded surrounding the community development team at IBE. Information was not

shared with CBM and church leadership took matters into their own hands in terms of the

next steps for work in Usulután. There were many dimensions of misinformation and

every attempt has been made to explore these issues sensitively within such a complex

situation.

During field research, there was very little communication taking place between CBM and

IBE. It was discovered through interviews with various staff, volunteers and participants in

the projects that the last year had seen the spreading of much misinformation. In

addition, assumptions were being made at each level of the partnership. In some cases, it

seemed that pride often stood in the way of addressing wrongs committed and

responsibilities that were abandoned. Following is an excerpt from a Field Journal entry

on November 11, 2012:

> Pride often leads to justification. It is rare in any conflict for each party to simply own up to their misdeeds and seek forgiveness to move on to a resolution. Humans are prideful creatures and we usually seek other options before conceding our failures. So, we attempt to justify our actions and shift the blame elsewhere – usually to the opposing party. Relationships and programs can end up stalled for a long time if the involved parties are unwilling to admit their mistakes, take responsibility and make an effort to fix the problem. It is much more effective to address your own wrongdoings before attempting to highlight the issues of another.

In other cases, there seemed to be a dimension of complacency which led some to believe

that the partnership was doing fine, focusing only on the positive aspects instead of

addressing the negative ones. Terry attributes this complacency to the dynamic of the

long-term partnership between CBM and IBE at that time:

> What happened in El Salvador between CBM and IBE is that we became just a little too familiar with one another. Instead of challenging some of the practices and presuppositions earlier on, we became a little too tolerant of certain behavioural patterns. Maybe they became too tolerant of some of the ways that CBM did things and, instead of challenging them, they just put up with it even if they didn't agree.

Shannon reflects on the relationship with IBE as a living interaction, instead of something

that has been set in stone. As in any relationship, things will change. Shannon explains the

steps that CBM tried to take as the relationship became increasingly strained:

> It's really important to try to pause. There's this phrase that one of the directors here has coined: 'The tyranny of the urgent'. To stop and say, 'What's happening here? We have the same values. We say that we have the same values. Let's talk and understand. Have our values changed? Our vision for the future, has that changed? What is it that we want to do together?' I think there were genuine efforts and attempts made, to do so.

Attempts to address ongoing issues fell flat. Although the work in Usulután was still

producing several transformed relationships, practices and values, they became

overshadowed by structural breakdowns that were not being properly addressed. It is

difficult to sustain transformative processes within an environment that grows

increasingly hostile and disorganized. Shannon elaborates:

> At a point in time where one party or both parties don't want to talk anymore, or
> are not willing to, I think it's pretty hard to keep going. It's pretty difficult when
> conversations aren't taking place anymore and there is no longer an ability to be
> candid and forthright.

Another factor in the breakdown of the partnership between CBM and IBE was a

combination of cultural issues. The interview process revealed many different

interpretations of the difficult situations that were taking place between 2010 and 2012.

There was a pattern of miscommunication between the Salvadoran and Canadian

structures, some of which perpetuated negative stereotypes about the power imbalance

in traditional donor-recipient relationships. Eventually this culminated in a lack of

communication between CBM and IBE, which created a vacuum of information and stress,

related especially to the financial logistics of the partnership. There was a need for

mutuality, for both voices to be heard at the table and to re-consider what was needed to

create a partnership of equals.

Following is an excerpt from a Field Journal entry from October 17, 2012:

> The culture here and the situation with the team at IBE - avoiding accountability
> and dealing with the same failures every year. We become our own enemy by
> not evaluating and changing. There is a need for humility and practicality.

As time went on, both sides of the partnership were unsure of the level of commitment

they were receiving from the other party. It ceased to be a partnership based on holistic

transformation, but instead became focused on the delivery of resources from donor to recipient. There was need to reaffirm an equal partnership and ensure that dignity was given to all those involved. Pastor Miguel explains how the transition was perceived over time by IBE:

> [On signing a MOU with CBM a few years earlier] We had this sense of belonging to one another. We have a common dream. Accepted and sharing the mission of proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, nurturing Christian discipleship from the members of our churches, and then affirming the commitment.
>
> Here is the issue - this is not only you helping me to do something. We have a common mission and we're trying to respond together. The idea is to learn and grow together. And then it's not only what are you going to do for us, but also what is possible for us to do.

Power imbalances can exist in both secular and faith-based development relationships between donor organizations and recipient groups. CBM and IBE worked hard for many years to maintain a partnership based on mutual participation and the Biblical principle of equality. When communication breaks down, feelings are hurt and assumptions start to creep in, and it is almost impossible to maintain this standard. Manuel echoes this as he explains why faith-based partnership must always maintain a Biblical perspective:

> That's why church is so important, because with the body – the body of Christ – we're all equal. And our opinions should be discussed, what is better, how can we accomplish things together, not just getting the money.

The goal of this case study was to explore a holistic approach to faith-based development. An in-depth study of the work of CBM/IBE revealed that holistic transformation is complex and that successes and challenges often exist simultaneously within community development. These results are not unique to faith-based development initiatives, but are in fact a well-known reality throughout mainstream

development. However, this case study provides a unique perspective on the process of individual, community and structural transformation and the need for a well-defined framework for this approach. The final chapter will identify key conclusions that can be drawn from this case study and the implications for the field of faith-based community development.

# CHAPTER FIVE   CONCLUSION

## 5.1. DATA ANALYSIS – OBSERVATIONS

The partnership between CBM and IBE in El Salvador tells a story that is somehow both unique

and familiar. Faith-based and secular organizations alike have experienced similar success and

faced similar challenges over the years. However, there are specific observations to be drawn

from this particular experience that took place in the context of El Salvador and at a significant

point in time during the partnership between CBM and IBE.

Data analysis revealed that there is a tendency to lose focus on holistic approaches during

challenging periods and to focus solely on mission or development. This further highlights the

complex nature of a holistic approach to development. The analysis also revealed the difficulty

in defining partnership and living it out, and the need for ongoing evaluation and reflection.

As explored previously, CBM and IBE, along with other faith-based organizations, spent a lot of

time over the last decade developing an integrated approach to their mission and community

development initiatives. What was evident in examining the breakdown of the relationship

between CBM and IBE was that the integrated focus can become very difficult to maintain in the

midst of serious challenges. In the case of El Salvador, it seemed as though the stakeholders

generally agreed on their mission in theory, but were divided, in some cases extremely divided,

in practice.

Secondly, it is important to consider the tension that exists within a faith-based approach to

holistic transformation. A balanced approach can be difficult to find within a community

development program that attempts to address body and soul, belief and action, and issues

related to the whole of human life. The struggle between pride and humility must be addressed

as practitioners and participants have to acknowledge that they do not control the outcomes of

the transformative process. They can influence outcomes and work within a well-defined

framework; however, the Christian approach to holistic transformation is founded on a vision

that has been surrendered to God and the collaborative effort of a community.

Wadkins describes the hope of transformational programs that is expressed by individuals in

various contexts. They desire:

> …an unmediated encounter with God, delivered in the cultural vernacular of
> their personal experience that would lift their economic despair, heal their
> infirmities, release them from guilt, and help them find meaning and a way to
> lead responsible and productive lives (2008, p.44).

This paints a beautiful image, and yet offers a difficult challenge to anyone involved in

the process of transformation. Shannon describes the complexity CBM faces when

addressing faith-based development holistically within a partnership:

> If we're looking to reach out and minister to a whole person and a whole
> organization there needs to be a tremendous amount of grace because an
> organization is made up of people. People are not perfect – how complex we are
> from person to person and then put those complex people together and you have
> a whole different situation. And then throw it into another culture – you don't
> speak the same language, you don't have the same culture, I mean there are just
> so many levels of complexity. It's really, really important to have grace, to have
> patience, and to pray that God will give clarity.

> It's very much about doing life together and so you have to bring all those
> components into play. You have to have a lot of conversations and understand
> the partner's context. It's really important to look at all the different components
> that make up an organization so that you can figure out how you can really
> complement each other.

The need for a balanced and whole approach is most evident at a community level.

Modern approaches to poverty alleviation focused on economic development and left out

all the other aspects of human life. This perspective has changed significantly over the last

few decades; however, it has still been difficult for FBOs (and NGOs) to develop

frameworks that address poverty within all dimensions of human life – material and

spiritual – creating solutions that impact each of these dimensions. Manuel elaborates on this:

> I think we have focused so much on that we are poor and dying from hunger and with the opportunities that we have lost the sensibility that humans are more than that. People that are really stressed from being poor – they still enjoy life. They still want to play poker, play football, and sing. And they still fall in love. They still dance. We haven't had the sensibility to see that humans have different components and that we have to address how can we enrich and change patterns of life and educate people through cultural and spiritual elements. Being poor is usually an economic definition, but that doesn't mean I'm an economic being.

Holistic transformation must address the political, social, cultural and material needs of an individual, along with initiating a change in values. If values aren't transformed along with other aspects of life, the change may be physically sustainable, although not mental, social or spiritually sustainable (Myers, 2011). If values do not change, the problems will grow right along with the programs.

The third observation is regarding the difficulty of defining partnership and living it out. There are many cultural differences and expectations to be addressed and explored within an international partnership. El Salvador is a post-conflict society, where disillusionment, corruption, violence and poverty have been prevalent. There is a tendency in Salvadoran culture to avoid confrontation and deal with issues quietly, conflicting with the Canadian tendency to be straightforward, identifying problem areas, and those responsible, directly. Along with expectations and assumptions on both sides, this cultural difference had an impact on relationship dynamics within the partnership and contributed to the eventual deterioration of the partnership.

At the community level, communities that have endured hardship and suffering for years were given the opportunity to partner with organizations that care about holistic change. However, if

the partnership is not defined clearly in both theory and practice, the idealistic view can overpower the reality of the situation, or dreams can overshadow the need to put vision to paper and keep feet on the ground.

Finally, ongoing reflection and evaluation are crucial on the journey towards transformation. It is important to stay grounded in reality while still hoping for the future. Sugden (2003) refers to transformation as a vision of society, something that is forward-looking.

It can be difficult to measure progress in a collaborative environment. The tension between a results-based program, organized and initiated by a faith-based organization, and the dynamic process of lives being transformed, can create sometimes insurmountable barriers. Time wasn't set aside to evaluate the partnership and address threats that had emerged. Had these issues been properly addressed, CBM and IBE may have realized sooner rather than later that their scope of work was no longer sustainable from within.


## 5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there are no current plans to re-establish the partnership between IBE and CBM, Terry hopes that moving forward CBM can "…forge new partnerships in Latin America that are committed to the witness of local churches as agents of change in a broken world through integral mission." Considering this, the following are recommendations for both parties as they move forward – in existing and future partnerships. First of all, the need for ongoing communication and acknowledgement of past mistakes. Secondly, sustainable local leadership is a necessary component of transformational development. Thirdly, a deeper exploration of the framework for culturally-relevant, community-

centred, faith-based partnership in mission. Finally, constant reflection, evaluation and adaptation have a crucial role to play in transformation and integral mission.

There is great value in acknowledging past mistakes. This is not to be mistaken for living in the past or unnecessarily drawing out conflicts. Instead, there is freedom in acknowledging past mistakes and moving on with proper reflection and adaptation. This entire process calls for ongoing communication, between stakeholders at every level.

Manuel expresses his desire to see the partnership renewed in a healthy way:

> We both have reasons to stop and redefine that relationship, redefine what we want to accomplish together. To be up front about the lessons – good or bad – that we have learned from this relationship. If not, we're going to be like those marriages that exist by inertia. We're in this together, but I neglect the other one, or I don't really care about the differences we have. We can end up in a relationship where we don't really mind each other, but we want to be in a relationship between CBM and IBE that is significant.

In regards to the future, Terry says:

> I don't know what our work in El Salvador will look like in the future. We are open to it. We would have to find a new way to re-engage Canadian Baptist churches in El Salvador. They became very disillusioned over time and we saw a huge drop in funding and in mobilization of volunteers for El Salvador over the last ten years. And there's lots of reasons for that, but it would require a new engagement on the part of Canadian Baptists. I think it's going to require some mending of fences, but I do think that we have other opportunities for transformation, mission or development in Central America.

Throughout the interview process, it was clear that local leadership is considered to be a key component of holistic transformation within a community. In this particular context, as communication broke down, there were a lot of unknowns that became barriers to transformation. Individuals were no longer encouraged to take ownership and identify their role in the creation, implementation and evaluation of transformative processes.

It is difficult to communicate effectively and stay focused on goals and objectives when there are feelings of confusion, abandonment and mistrust. The misconception that the same level of communication exists within and between each level of the partnership means that decisions can be altered, and resources wasted or used improperly. Communities can choose to pick up the pieces and continue in their own way, to abandon ship altogether, or to proceed as though everything is fine, hoping that the problems will work themselves out. These are experiences that were shared during the interview process.

Another recommendation is that local leadership must be a priority to ensure sustainable community transformation. Shannon explains CBM's desire to continue focusing on local leadership, specifically through local churches:

> We are continuing to look at ways in which we can bridge the gap that has existed between sustainable community development and church-based ministries and how we can bring in more of a connection with local churches and the local church partners for development projects. Then we can continue to strive for excellence and recognize that we're called to do our very best.

At the community level there needs to be a careful and meaningful approach to transformation. Gaventa discusses the negative impacts of participation that emerged from "Mapping the outcomes of citizen engagement" (2012), a study conducted over the past decade by Gaventa and Gregory Barrett:

> These include a sense of disempowerment arising from meaningless, tokenistic, or manipulated participation; the use of new skills and alliances for corrupt or questionable ends; and elite capture of the participatory process. A failed participatory process can set back its potentially empowering effects for years to come (Gaventa, 2013, p.11).

CBM and IBE also need to continue a deeper exploration of the model for culturally

appropriate, faith-based partnership in mission. Shannon also reflects on what might

happen in the future:

> I would hope that there are opportunities to work in the future. I think the model
> we have used in the past is in the past. We don't work through one church, that's
> not CBM's model. If there's an openness to look on a broader level – we work
> through denominations by invitation – at this transformational and integral
> mission and there's an interest to work alongside and partner with that then, the
> more the merrier really! The more organizations and people that are willing to
> come alongside and see how we can learn from each other, I think that's a very
> healthy approach. But I think if a partner, or if we, if anybody is looking to come
> along and take ownership of something as their own, I don't think that allows
> room for growth and for partnership. We don't have next steps at this point.

Terry adds to this sentiment:

> I think that the central element is that there's a life cycle to a partnership. I see it
> globally in my responsibilities here at CBM. All partnerships live through a life
> cycle. Healthy partnerships are born out of a careful needs assessments,
> engagement to a common cause, identification of clear outcomes, agreement
> around some of the parameters of the nature of partnering, agreement on the
> benchmarks, achievement of the task, some evaluation, and then either the
> decision to renew or to end it. Those are some of the general guidelines that
> create healthy partnerships.

Finally, it cannot be stressed enough that reflection, evaluation and adaptation are key to

the continuation of transformational development. These steps are necessary even if they

have not been clearly defined, because the implication is that as proper evaluation takes

place, the appropriate parameters can be defined and refined in the process. Shannon

observes:

> Any time that we have our hands wrapped so tightly around something that we
> don't want to give it up, I think we need to really step back and evaluate. We
> need to have our hands open and holding this before God to see what He wants
> to do with it. Maybe this is just as it was meant to be and now other partners are
> going to come around and God's going to use other people to continue this

113

ministry and take us in a different direction. I think it's very important to have hands open and hold it with care, but not be holding on tightly, like 'It's mine and God, you can't take this away.'

CBM and IBE's well-intentioned approach to transformation development and integral mission has left some communities with a vision and limited means of implementing their vision. Or vice versa – some communities have successfully built up resources over the last decade and but have not been empowered to create their own vision for the future. The work has not been completely misguided, but time has gone by without proper reflection and practical changes to ensure the program is addressing relevant needs and that community members remain engaged. Now the partnership has ended and it is hard to tell whether or not the issues will ever be properly addressed.

Data analysis has shown that, as Byworth (2003) explains, focusing primarily on results, accountability and impact can present both threats and opportunities. There is pressure to create programs that influence a lot of people and provide tangible results within a short time frame. The prevailing tendency is to provide funding to programs that impact more people – focused on efficiency more than effectiveness. While it is a worthwhile goal to have greater impact, this can produce a culture of dishonesty as people may lie or re-shape the truth in order to maintain support for a program. Community members can pay lip service to remain part of the program. Churches or organizations that are receiving funding can spin the numbers to give the impression that the program is thriving. Organizations can do the same to convince donors that their work is effective. This betrays the principle that people matter more than programs.

Another downside to this result-based programming is that more resources go into planning programs than evaluating and learning from programs (Byworth, 2003). It is important for programs to be effective and the desire remains to help as many people as possible, but holistic

transformation is a long process that requires constant reflection and evaluation, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements. There needs to be a focus on the quality of programming being offered and the ways that these investments are impacting lives in a less tangible, but still very significant way.

This is not a traditional results-based approach, because instead of using a specific instrument to measure progress, change is often uncovered and measured through story-telling. Participants and practitioners can relay the changes they have seen and all involved reflect on evidence of change and what that means for the individual, community and organization. Walking with a community is crucial – holistic transformation cannot take place in isolation from the very people who are the aim of transformational goals and objectives.

Woolnough (2008) encourages a participatory method of evaluation, seeking insight into the process and the values behind the work, with an emphasis on improvement instead of proving points or perspectives.  As individuals and communities are empowered to examine their own reality, they can identify and build on existing resources, leading the way for each side of the partnership to determine their role within a shared vision (Byworth, 2003). The focus is to equip individuals with a framework for community-based, sustainable, transformational development. A framework that results in effective policy, practice and evaluation.


## 5.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This case study presents a few implications for the field of faith-based community development. There is a need for greater research and development of evaluation tools more directly focused on transformative agendas. Secondly, there are lessons to be learned from the cultural context of this particular case study. Finally, it has already been noted that transformation is currently a

popular topic in mainstream development, thus providing an opportunity for faith-based organizations to confidently enter the development dialogue. Faith-based organizations need to reflect on the important role of religion in transformative approaches and take greater strides to enter into academic dialogue.

Similar to mainstream development organizations, faith-based organizations adhere to various theoretical (and theological) frameworks. Mainstream development scholars have committed a great deal of time to encapsulating traditional and alternative approaches to development. However, this is not the case in faith-based development. There is a need for scholars to attempt further articulation of a model for Christian development, building on existing frameworks such as transformational development.

There is also a need for more extensive development of evaluation tools within a holistic approach to community development. Assessment cannot simply be an 'add-on', but a foundational aspect of sustainable development. Wilson (2011) suggests a balanced qualitative-quantitative approach to assessment strategies. Assessment must also include all parties – participants, donors, staff, and volunteers – because transformational development programs are complex and consist of intangible variables that challenge measurement efforts (Wilson, 2011).

This case study highlighted successes and challenges that are common throughout development. However, there are lessons to be learned from the unique cultural context in which these successes and challenges emerged. During field research, there was a certain sense of mistrust and suspicion present in each community, alongside genuine compassion for others and a desire to continue pursuing holistic transformation. Following is an excerpt from a Field Journal entry on November 11, 2012:

It seems like poverty has always been a reality here. The history of war and a
current culture of gang violence has left this society dealing with many issues
above and below the surface. Living in extreme poverty can make it difficult to
care for others, however, that is what many people are doing. I see people
working hard for their families and communities. They want to live – and live in
safety. This is a simple dream, yet a difficult reality. Under the surface there are
tragic experiences and bad memories that still resonate, leaving many people
believing that no one can ever really be trusted. This is certainly not the case
with everyone, but when an entire country has to move on after a war, it is a
messy process to pick up the pieces and work toward healing.

In El Salvador, this is the reality of a post-conflict society, but this is also the paradox of

transformation.  While transformation aims to address the needs of the whole person and

whole community, it may not be embraced by individuals and communities as a whole. It

is important to consider the practical ways in which faith-based organizations can

continue working for transformation in the midst of dynamic social, cultural, political,

economic and spiritual realities (Clarke, 2006). Also, there is a need to re-adjust results-

based thinking to include an understanding of the long-term sustainable community

development that can be achieved through the use of a holistic approach (Getu, 2002).

Finally, transformation is on the minds of individuals in both secular and faith-based

development. Chapter Two highlighted the changing landscape of religion in development and

there is a growing willingness to explore the merits of faith-based approaches. There is a need

for more faith-based organizations and practitioners to enter the conversation and thoughtfully

engage in meaningful dialogue about the value of a faith-based holistic approach to community

development. This effort should be supported by greater research surrounding this topic in the

field of faith-based development.

## 5.4. CONCLUSION

> We are looking forward because there are so many things to come. There is
> always the dream of the things that we're looking forward to and motivating us
> to continue. We are never going to stop.
> [Salvadoran Community Member]

The aim of transformational development is to promote that which is life-giving, strengthening

individuals and communities, and providing hope through changed identities and restored

relationships. There is no doubt that the work of Canadian Baptist Ministries in El Salvador has

been transformative for those involved. In the midst of unfinished programs and broken

promises, there are clear indicators of effective development.

Many individuals have indicated a renewed sense of dignity and families are striving to make the

most of what they have, and live compassionately and responsibly in their community. Parents

who have very little in terms of material resources share their faith and hope that the future can

be better for their children. Communities are organizing their own water distribution,

advocating for water as a human right, providing learning opportunities for young people and

striving to uphold exemplary business practices.

As evidenced in El Salvador, socio-political and cultural contexts can present many challenges to

a faith-based development approach. Transformational development aims to provide programs

that address these challenges, mobilizing individuals, communities and churches to influence

and shape their reality for the better. As one community member explains, transformation is a

universal vision - for El Salvador and for the whole world:

> The Kingdom of God is here. It's not just a situation. It is around. Every day.
> Because the Kingdom of God is around, then people, communities can be
> transformed by the gospel. Living with other values, values of solidarity,
> fraternity. The value of building society, putting others first, singing stronger. Also
> building a society and communities that are more just, more peaceful. This is our
> dream – better communities, better people.

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