

DARE to STOP THE TRAIN

Index - Poverty

Rev: 11/17/17

“A Christmas Story”

“Ask Why?”

“Community”

“Community Hope”

“Do You See What I See?”

“Give or Take”

“Quid Pro Quo”

“Race”

“Self-Worth”

“The Crippling Effect of the One-Way Gift”

“The Crucible”

“The Gift”

“The Park”

“The Slippery Slope”

“Volunteerism --- Money or Time?”

A CHRISTMAS STORY

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 07/25/12

December 21, 2011, just before the Community Services Center closed, a big, burly loud (but not angry) man came with his brother and girlfriend for food. Since he was the last to get his food and continued to be loud, he was noticed...missing teeth (top and bottom), hair and beard bursting out from a warm coat and an obvious limp...a hip replacement he explained. He put his food in a shopping cart and went to his car.

A short time later, one of the volunteers went to retrieve all of the carts in the parking lot. As the volunteer approached the burly man's car, the man pointed to the volunteer and roared "I remember you, but you don't remember me do you? You took me to the Greyhound Bus Station." The volunteer remembered instantly. The man, Charles, was temporarily working on a construction site in North Carolina when the scaffolding gave way and he was seriously injured. He woke up in the hospital with no money (no workers compensation insurance) and no way to get home (Pennsylvania). Someone suggested that the local SDA Church Community Services Center might help. He did come and they did buy him a bus ticket home, but he still needed a ride to the Greyhound Bus Station which the volunteer provided.

As Charles and the volunteer stood at the depot waiting for the bus, it occurred to the volunteer that Charles might not have money with which to eat. A quick trip back to the car secured a \$100 bill and after many "thank you's" the two parted.

Now here they were, years later, standing on either side of the car recognizing each other. Despite Charles' very painful hip, he moved swiftly around the car stammering, "That \$100 fed me for three weeks." Tears cascading down his cheeks changed him from a big, burly and gruff man. He bear-hugged the volunteer and whispered (loudly, of course) "I have been waiting for four years to thank you."

The "Thank you" was clearly meant for all of the SDA Church Community Services Center volunteers. Merry Christmas!

ASK WHY?

By Jerry McIntosh
Rev: 10/18/14

There are occasions when we see people in dire circumstances...poor, sick, incarcerated...and we wish to help.

During a particularly hot, humid summer in Houston, Texas, the news reported several deaths of the elderly in the inner city from heat stroke. A group dealing with poverty issues decided to organize a city-wide campaign to supply air conditioners. Surprisingly those air conditioners were not turned on. When asked, "Why?" the recipients answered that they couldn't afford the larger electric bill!

The next summer a route was organized to pick up the elderly each day and take them to an air conditioned gym...but, only three people participated. When asked, "Why?" many replied that they did not feel comfortable being seen leaving home for fear the gang members would ransack it in their absence.

When contributing across cultural or economic boundaries, do we take the time to understand what might really be beneficial?

COMMUNITY

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 11/21/14

Organization Theorists have long grappled with the challenge of “Efficiency” in organizations...that is, “How do people work together to produce better or more results?” Non-Profits and Foundations have recently added a new dimension by asking the question, “How do organizations create change?” So if the word “Efficient” must be enlarged to include change, a new word “Effective” must be used.

When organizational consultants attempt to help organizations become more Effective, meaning become more Efficient at creating change, they call it Capacity Building.

Several years of observations are drawing me to the conclusion, at least in the non-profit world, that change is rarely brought about by a single organization. Rather, change is brought about by multiple organizations drawn together with a mutual vision. So, Capacity Building should be seen as a community of organizations drawn together by a common vision with the express purpose of accomplishing change.

An example of this thinking would help to explain the intractable problem of Poverty. Thousands of organizations and billions of dollars have attempted to alleviate poverty, but it only worsens. A reason: Everyone is working feverishly to efficiently deliver their “silver bullets” to end poverty, and yet we, the American Society, have failed to eradicate poverty, a complex, not simple, malady. An attack of this complex problem could be facilitated by a community of organizations building the Capacity of those organizations to accomplish a common vision.

COMMUNITY HOPE

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 03/01/13

If one wishes to change a destitute community,
then one must walk past the burned out buildings
and into the hearts of the destitute.

For as we care for the hearts of those who hurt,
then their community will look not as it is ...
... but as it could be.

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 02/01/10

Did you know that young boy could become a king?

For you see, you couldn't possibly know
what combination of genes,
what heritage lies waiting to spring to life.

Did you know that young girl could become a queen?

For you see, you couldn't possibly know
what arrangement of parents, siblings, grandparents or
friends will nurture her to greatness.

Did you know that young lad could become a prime minister?

Please understand, you couldn't possibly know that
his heart is accepting, loving and teachable.

Did you know that young lass could become a president?

Please understand, you couldn't possibly know that
God has a plan, a future of greatness
for every young child on His earth.

Did you know that every dear being, young or old,
black or white, rich or poor, free or enslaved, is
bursting with potential and is waiting for you?

Waiting for your encouragement, your belief, your support
for you see - extraordinary accomplishment may be only
one hug away.

GIVE OR TAKE

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 07/24/12

It has been my observation that service on volunteer boards
clearly separates the participants into two groups:

The “Givers” present their life experience as a contribution to the organization out of a satisfying
marriage, career or personal view of life.

The “Takers” present their need as a drain on the organization
because of an unsatisfying marriage, career or personal view of life.

So it should follow that in pursuit of volunteer board members
who would contribute, one should screen for members
who are well adjusted in their lives.

QUID PRO QUO

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 10/19/12

Welfare – a safety net from which few escape.

It is wonderful to have a financial safety net when enduring inextricably bad circumstances. But why is it so difficult to extricate oneself from the welfare net?

Quid Pro Quo: “Something of value given or received for something else”- Webster.

Although the reasons driving one into welfare are varied, the fact that one rarely escapes suggests something beyond initial mitigating factors – some life changing element within the welfare system.

Human beings innately need to live a life of exchange. When receiving something of value, we feel the need to exchange something of value for value received. When receiving a monthly government check and not being allowed to return something of value, Quid Pro Quo is not achieved and a sense of loss of usefulness and self esteem ensues. Furthermore, it is clear that decision making has been transferred from the welfare recipient to the government. Freedom of choice slips away with every monthly check.

What to do?

In time, welfare recipients come to lose ownership of their possessions, jobs, businesses, cars and homes. So they land in a financial and emotional pit with little ability to escape. So help that is non-enabling must appear, help that will encourage the reemergence of self esteem, pride of accomplishment and material possessions.

Such help could be in the form of Individual Development Accounts (IDA's) where every dollar saved by the welfare recipient is matched by foundation dollars up to a predetermined amount at which time the recipient is allowed to use the money to start a business, go to school or buy a home. During the savings period there need to be classes regarding banking, home management, job searching, proper dress, etc. All of this allows the recipient to slowly retake control of their lives and escape the welfare net.

Experience shows that once the welfare recipient takes their life back from the government they rarely return to the “net”.

RACE

By Jerry McIntosh
10/20/12

The term “race” is often a pejorative term,
meant to disparage others based on differences.

Culture and ethnic differences create curiosity
and an interest in learning about one another.

Life flowering with cultural and ethnic
variations is so much more interesting.

By the way, are we not all the same race...
the Human Race?

SELF WORTH

By: Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 10/31/13

American history, until the mid-1900's, was replete with assistance for those who have fallen on hard times. This assistance always came from their local community businesses and churches. And these community businesses and churches had expectations of a full recovery from those in need, along with an intact self worth.

In the mid-1900's, however, poverty, particularly Generational Poverty, began to capture people and never release them... except for a few. Politicians and well meaning citizens devised a mechanism to assist people under the poverty line and called it "Welfare", but it lacked a basic provision. That basic provision was that citizens must contribute something for their welfare check – Quid Pro Quo, meaning "value given for value received". Without contribution to the system the citizens under the poverty line lose self worth and the hope to escape from the Welfare net...except for a few.

Who are these few? I know four...Alma, John, Larry and Jim. Of the four:

two were born into poverty, two fell into it,

two are black and two are white,

one is a woman and three are men,

two are educated and two are not, and

all four had prison/jail records

all four are driven by some supernatural force to escape the welfare net.

(If you knew the four, you would have to conclude

that the supernatural force was God, the only source of self worth.)

Let's talk about these four extraordinary friends of mine. Ladies first! **Alma** – born into poverty. Doing drugs by her early teens. Dealing drugs by late-teens. Prison by early twenties and out in her early 30's. For protection, she married a tough, mean man and moved back to her original neighborhood. She got a job at a local food chain and turned out to be a fantastic manager/trainer, but with a prison record, there were no more promotions.

SELF-WORTH (continued)

SELF-WORTH (continued)

Alma had a dream. She wanted to build two brick homes side by side in the 'hood and tried to qualify for the two homes in Habitat/Jimmy Carter's 100 one-time home building effort in Houston, TX, but she did not qualify. She next came to Partner's-5-West for assistance and now has the two brick homes, side by side, but the story does not end there. Remember, she had great managerial skills but a "record" and if no one will hire you then why not become an entrepreneur? She is presently putting together a transportation/safety company for one of the largest oil refinery companies in the world with the help of a recent MBA graduate (John) and the sky is the only limit.

Alma's dream: to be a friend and advisor to the girls and women in her neighborhood who were in the same prison where she served time (they loved the change in Alma and wanted it for themselves).

John – a recently graduated MBA student has become a partner of Alma's. John, too, was born into poverty. His father had eight children, all with different mothers. It was sometimes difficult to tell who was a sister (or brother) or a cousin. John also had trouble with the law, but felt the need to move out of the welfare "net". When asked how he was able to find the resolve to escape, he said his mother "believed in him"... one person. John is bright, articulate and driven. John is an example of poor people who can achieve and so we, as a nation, must not conspire to keep them poor.

Larry – born into poverty. Painful childhood. Larry, too, was burdened by skirmishes with the law. Years ago he decided it was necessary to begin giving back. Again, he was driven by some inherent "force". He chose to give back (Quid Pro Quo) through a church Community Services program. He does this for several programs, city wide, and is a powerhouse of energy and enthusiasm. He infects everyone around him with energy and hope. About ten years ago Larry met Jim who also wanted to give back and together they have been unstoppable.

Jim – is just as educated as John. Jim fell into poverty and was making great headway towards moving out of poverty. He was a thinker, a true intellectual and wrapped all his thoughts in humor, so he became a teacher even as he worked to deliver food and other necessities to his friends in poverty. Jim was also very sick, but no one knew it, not even Larry. He died in December of 2012 from cancer (two lesions in his lungs and four in his brain) but was an inspiration to all who knew him.

So, what does this all mean? Well, I am not in possession of sufficient knowledge to say what ALL this means, but I do have a few thoughts:

- Poor people must be taken care of and encouraged by their **home** communities and churches.
- Our expectations are that our politicians will not willingly return the "Welfare" program to the local community to solve but...we in the community must take care of one person at a time, so that, in time, there will be less and less need for "one-size-fits-all" government Welfare programs.

SELF-WORTH (continued)

- We must cross poverty/middle class/wealthy class boundaries...learn new languages and make new friends.
- We must beg God for instruction. Remember – it had to have been God who inspired these four people to want what was (and is) best for them...God's image.

Oh yes, GOD. I can "imagine" a scene one day, in heaven, with a multitude of people surrounding God's throne. I expect to be there, inside the gate, but at the back of the multitude of people looking to the front and there will be Alma, John, Larry and Jim surrounded by friends that they loved into the kingdom! All receivers of God's gift...Self Worth.

Additional characteristics of welfare:

Recipients, essentially, don't own things of value-worth-fighting-for.

- What if welfare recipients and helping organizations worked together for the acquisition of things of value...cars?

Welfare encourages the fathers to live elsewhere from their families.

- What if welfare recipients and helping organizations form "families" of fathers helping fathers to become family leaders?

Recipients spend much of their time qualifying for different parts of welfare, without adequate transportation – all of the welfare programs added up still do not give a person sufficient money to escape the "net" and for sure, "they can't get a job because then they will lose their "benefits" and have to start all over again. I could go on.

- What if city, state and the Federal Government formed consolidated one stop shops for all benefits?

THE CRIPPLING EFFECT OF THE ONE-WAY GIFT

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 03/15/13

The need, even urge, to do good...one human to another...is innate. Only the most pathological has experienced the extinction of this most important characteristic of humanness. However, if this need is exploited to the point of the recipient of "goodness" having no way to reciprocate, than the "need to do good" is thwarted.

When parents shower goodness on their children, the goodness the parents never had, without the children returning goodness within their capacity, the children may feel unequal, then worthless, even hostile.

When welfare recipients receive goodness from the formal welfare system, churches or non-profits through no effort of their own, they may sense that they have nothing to offer...that they are useless.

When countries (particularly the U.S.) give goodness to other nations requiring nothing in return, is it any wonder we are so hated?

There is a theme that is becoming transparent...and a cure. Borrowing from Dr. Edgar Cahn's theory of Co-Production, healing this malady is absolutely possible. The "giver" and "receiver" of goodness must team-up to establish accomplishment that leads to the joy-of-change. Change that is substantial, long lasting and requires the contribution of both.

There is joy that emanates from families of children giving back to parents (including the elderly). There is excitement and success in business where employees' are expected to join with management and are celebrated for contributing their talents and gifts. There are welfare recipients who want to contribute, rather than extract from society, if given the opportunity to use their skills and gifts. There are countries (cultures) who would become strong political allies if only the U.S. would see them as equal partners in solving global issues.

THE CRUCIBLE

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 08/02/09

In the Inner City we, conservatives and liberals alike,
find that we bring not our ideologies,
but rather our talents to the “crucible”,

Because we come not to a faceless structure,
but rather to the faces of
individuals in hopeless pain

THE GIFT

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/08/12

The fresh air of freedom will be present when we STEP AWAY
from our biases, from our materialism, from our preconceptions

and

when we GIVE AWAY
our “prized” thoughts, our “special” abilities, our “right” to be first -

so that others might grow into their fullness.

THE PARK

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 11/09/14

I went to the park this morning; it was cool and green.

There was a mixture of sounds from:
a folk concert in the distance, parents picnicking with children,
splashing water, many kinds of birds,
auto horns in the distance (a part of the city "hum").

The sight captured people, water, trees, ducks, etc.
It was tranquil --- my thoughts could wander.

Suddenly, a man with long white hair and a beard appeared out of nowhere.
He was neither dirty nor clean, but
would erupt into noises, gestures and short speeches.
He then moved on.

Later, another man who could only grunt and take short two-inch steps appeared and tried to
communicate with another ... but couldn't.

Where did these individuals come from?
Homeless, I suppose.

What did they want?
Outwardly, to communicate, but
inwardly, I suspect they wanted to be heard...to be understood.

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/11/12

The “Slippery Slope” could be defined as that condition in which a community’s integrity becomes less competent.

The Slippery Slope takes place in an atmosphere of neglect, benign or otherwise; an atmosphere in which the community gives up or becomes complacent, or an atmosphere where individual members resist responsibility.

The Slippery Slope should not exist when a community is engaged in its present and hopeful future - an atmosphere that searches for knowledge and truth, an atmosphere of honesty and courage.

We should fear the Slippery Slope only if the individuals of community have embraced a weakened integrity.

VOLUNTEERISM --- MONEY OR TIME?

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 09/11/14

If it is a correct observation
that charitable organizations would rather
receive a cash donation than
a commitment of volunteer services,
then one must ask,

“Does this proclivity towards a gift of money,
rather than a gift of service,
represent an absolution
of social responsibility?”