The Lab, the Temple, and the Market: Expanding the Conversation

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Spirituality, Culture an Economic Development, Val Morin, Quebec, 16-18 August 1995.
(English Only)
It is available on the IDRC web site at:
http://www.idrc.ca/library/document/116064/valmorin.htm

The Temple, the Lab and the Market: reflections at the intersection of Science Religion and Development;
Edited by Sharon Harper. IDRC and Kumarian Press. 2000.
Excerpts from the book will be found at:
http://www.idrc.ca/books/reports/2000/01-03e.html
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The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them. (Albert Einstein)

People have to see with new eyes and understand with new minds before they can truly turn to new ways of living. The most important change that people can make is to change their way of looking at the world. We can change studies, jobs, neighbourhoods, even countries and continents and still remain much as we always were. But change our fundamental angle of vision and everything changes -- our priorities, our values, our judgments, our pursuits. Again and again, in the history of religion, this total upheaval in the imagination has marked the beginning of a new life...a turning of the heart, a 'metanoia,' by which men see with new eyes and understand with new minds and turn their energies to new ways of living. (Barbara Ward)

When we look back from the year 2100, I fear we will see a period when our creations - technological, social, and ecological - outstripped our understanding, and we lost control of our destiny. And we will think: if only - if only we had had the ingenuity and will to choose a different course. There is still time.......to muster that ingenuity and will, but the hour is late. (Thomas Homer-Dixon)

Foreword

When IDRC's plans to make a fuller and more formal publication based on a meeting of the SRD project's core project team and a larger circle of participants could not be carried forward I detected in those who attended the meeting, a real need to share the extraordinary conversation that took place. I was prepared to see what might be done, working with the transcript of the meeting and the papers prepared by the participants. IDRC responded to my request to take on the task and provided support for me to devote several days to read, ponder, and eventually write. The transcript was a 486-page challenge! But, such was the memory of the meeting, that as I read the transcript I heard again the voices and knew that I had been right to try to share it with a wider audience. In fact I was very much in the same frame of mind as when I sat to think again of the many conversations I had in the first stage of the project and which I was able to distill into the publication, *Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development*. In a sense I was both continuing and extending that reporting while at the same time trying for a sense of completion for the IDRC project.

I have organized what follows to identify and feature the voices in the conversation around the table in November 1999. I know that I cannot do full justice to the spirit of the contributions and the meeting itself; I hope that my friends and colleagues will give me the benefit of the doubt. In the second part of what follows I have ventured a synthesis. This, of course, is a much more personal perspective of the main messages that came from the

conversation. I hope that other participants at the meeting will accept my effort, and that where they have different recollections, they will use these differences as a basis for continuing the conversation about how science and religion can and must come together to ensure an approach to human development based on a fuller understanding of the nature of humankind.

I also want to extend thanks to Sharon Harper who once again brought her energy, skills, and suggestions to the editing of this work and to Chris Smart for his perseverance and creativity in encouraging this important dialogue.

Introduction

On November 23-25, 1999, a very special international meeting took place at the headquarters of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada. Twenty participants, scientists and development practitioners empathetic to the role of belief systems, faith, or religion in development, and themselves people of faith, came from countries in both the South and the North, to discuss their experience about how development and science could be enriched by the insights offered by religion, faith, spirituality, and values. No formal presentations were made, no papers were read. They came prepared to discuss their personal experiences and insights from years spent in education, community work, scientific research, and policymaking in Nigeria, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, Colombia, Canada, and the USA by answering three questions: who are you and what have you to say to this gathering? What have you heard about the work of the Science, Religion, and Development (SRD) project so far and how do you react to what you have heard? And, finally, what are we going to do about the questions and ideas being raised by this research?

This larger group was invited to build on the foundations of a series of earlier international meetings, organized by IDRC on the questions of what religion and belief systems can bring to the process of development, hence the SRD title. The first meeting was held at Val Morin, Quebec, in 1995, to respond to my initial soundings and analysis of issues related to spirituality/religion and development, which was published under the title, *Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development: Opening a Dialogue* (Ryan, 1995) The fruit of a series of off-the-record interviews with 200 theoreticians and practitioners in the international development field, this study uncovered a strong consensus that the spiritual dimension of human existence had to have its place in development efforts; that cultural and religious values must be better integrated into research on sustainable and equitable development; and that dominant approaches that search for the perfect economic incentive package and the right technological fix are failing and clearly unsatisfactory.

The Val Morin group agreed with the findings of the study and urged IDRC to proceed on both the theoretical and practical research fronts. The fruit on the theoretical front was a series of consultations with a small core group of four scholars from different disciplines, faiths, and cultural and geographic experiences of development. They were Dr Farzam Arbab, Director of the project, a physicist, founder of FUNDAEC (Fundacion para la Aplicacion y Ensenanza de las Ciencias: Foundation for the Application and Teaching of Science), a university for rural communities in Colombia; presently a member of the governing body of the Bahai faith, in Haifa, Israel. Azizan Baharuddin, a Muslim scholar in biology and in the history and philosophy of science, from the Department of Science and Technology Studies at the University of Malaya. Dr

Promilla Kapur, a Hindu with degrees in psychology and sociology, is director of the Integrated Human Sciences Foundation in Delhi, which provides counselling and crisis intervention based on the principles of whole health, including human and spiritual values. And, finally, Dr Gregory Baum, who has degrees in mathematics, sociology and Catholic theology; he is currently professor of religious studies at McGill University, Montreal, and has written more than 20 books on ethics and economics, solidarity, and various approaches to social justice within the Christian churches. Eventually their essays on their personal experiences of being scholars and believers concerned with economic and community development among those who have been economically marginalized became the heart of the book, *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion, and Development* (Harper, ed., 2000).

The meeting of November 1999, mentioned above, brought together with this core group sixteen additional scholars with similarly diverse backgrounds and experience, who had read the draft manuscript of *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market* and had accepted to prepare their own personal reflections on the interrelationships among science, religion, and development. The stated purpose of this final meeting in the SRD project was to seek agreement on changes to the way of proceeding and to legitimize the discourse officially for wider dissemination among theoreticians and practitioners in the field of development, as well as among concerned religious leaders. The ultimate hope was that this dialogue would engender a new consciousness both personal and public, of how science and religion can work together effectively and to their mutual benefit in fields devoted to creating a more humane and just world, such as development.

My purpose here, as one of the participants, but also associated with the project since its beginning in 1993, is to tell the story of that high-energy meeting in abbreviated essay form; I will try to capture something of the rich interpersonal dynamic without resorting to long quotes. Working from an imperfect transcript, I make no pretence of absolute completeness or accuracy.

Prior to the meeting, the participants had shared papers and some initial background information about themselves by e-mail. On the first evening, participants gathered for an informal session in which they introduced themselves and explained what had brought them to this meeting, that is, why the question of the role of religion and belief systems in science and development held some personal meaning for them. The stories were telling about their various experiences with development, as well as personal, funny, moving, and profound. Unfortunately, no transcript was made to capture their statements, but throughout this document you will read similar stories that came up during the course of our discussions.

When John Sigler, the chair of the meeting, formally opened the meetings the next morning he asked each participant to put on the table, again, however briefly, their primary interests and concerns, even if it meant a certain amount of repetition. In the interest of more lively participation and debate, John asked participants not to read from their papers nor to present them formally during the meeting. In the following section, I try to introduce the participants and link them with their central messages. Major issues will be discussed more systematically in the next section of this paper. I will, for the purposes of this presentation of the flow of ideas at the meeting, consult the papers prepared by the participants only for clarification of the transcript, except where a participant spoke substantially from his or her written reflections. I will end this piece with a few personal reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of this meeting and my sense of what it means for the future.

The Participants

John Sigler, the chair of the meeting and a Christian originally from the USA, is a specialist in international law and Middle East Studies at Carleton University. He commented admiringly on the extraordinary new kind of community represented by the group brought together by the SRD questions, with participants drawn from different faiths, universities, think tanks, government and international agencies, NGOs and grassroots movements. He suggested that it would be well-positioned to share widely and, with credibility, what came from the meeting. He pointed out that in spite of well-merited criticism of the concept of development, it has managed to bring together an alliance of environmental and development groups motivated by a common cause and concern, namely, that if we do nothing about overdevelopment we really can do nothing about underdevelopment. He believed that it is very much in the interest of our group to help sustain the powerful new alliance between these groups of concerns.

Naresh Singh, born to a Hindu family in Guyana, holds graduate degrees in natural science, agriculture, and environmental science. Presently, he is the principal advisor on poverty and "sustainable livelihood" at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He was challenged to explain why he saw the term "development" as a disservice, as a flagging, dying horse carrying too much baggage. He began with a brief history of the term "development" before describing the new "sustainable livelihood approach."

In terms of describing development, Naresh referred to the definition found in Wolfgang Sachs' *Development Dictionary* (1992). Underdevelopment was "discovered" on January 20, 1949, when President Truman used the term in his inauguration speech to describe the Southern hemisphere. At that point, development was first seen in terms of economic growth only. But before long development focussed on social development and then socio-economic development. In the 1960s, the discussion vacillated around "human" or "human-centred development," the provision of basic needs, and "endogenous" and participatory development. Although development thinking languished in the 1980s, the environmental movement took off and the resulting combination was reflected in the term "sustainable development," coined by the Bruntland Commission (World Commission for Sustainable Development, 1987). In the 1990s, as though reflecting on 40 years of failure, the United Nations held an unprecedented number of world conferences on children, human rights, population, women, environment, social development, human settlements and food, which generated political commitment and international agreement on a number of issues. Non-governmental and community-based organizations exploded in number as a byproduct of the preparation for and participation in these conferences.

During the Cold War, development was promoted for many self-serving purposes but by the 1990s at least six principles had been distilled from the 40 years of experience to help guide development efforts: participation, empowerment, sustainability, as well as a central focus on poverty, human rights, and equity. Perhaps the biggest problem was that over time ongoing development had become "the development project," a finite initiative, with a beginning and an end. Developers took development to developees; developees were to be changed, but developers were not themselves challenged to change.

Naresh's disillusionment with the development approach has led him to adopt and

encourage at the UNDP what he calls "a sustainable livelihood approach," which I will describe under the section on major themes.

Kamla Chowdhry, from India, has her PhD in management from Michigan University, Ann Arbor. Kamla describes herself as "not a Hindu in the traditional sense," but as being deeply influenced by the concepts and approaches of non-possession or non-greed (*aparigraha*) and being detached from the outcomes of one's actions (*sambhava*). She believes that religion and spirituality mean finding "fulfillment" through selfless service.

She too has little patience with the term "sustainable development,"[1] which she sees as political compromise language used by the Brundtland Commission (WSCD, 1987) to avoid critiquing either the North or the South truthfully. Kamla felt that the vagueness of the definition prevented it from providing any guidance at all. For her, the primary gap in development is fearless moral leadership, such as that exemplified by Mahatma Gandhi. She believes that the leadership qualities displayed by Gandhi emerge only out a personal experience of freely embracing poverty and living through an experience in which one is reduced to zero. Kamla backed up her point by referring to the story about Jesus counselling the rich man that it is easier for a rich man to pass through the eye of a needle than for him to enter heaven.[2]

Gandhi suffered an experience of being reduced to nothing when he was evicted from a first-class compartment--although he had a first-class ticket--onto the railway platform at Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. He was Indian, and non-whites were not permitted in first-class compartments. It is said that Gandhi was thrown off the train as a lawyer but, after a long, cold night alone, he got up from the platform a Mahatma (or great soul)--fearless, a champion of morality and of truth in politics. Gandhi's solidarity with the poor was such that his stated standard for development policy was asking how the proposed policy would affect the poorest man or woman he knew.

Using the example of great moral and spiritual teachers such as Buddha, Jesus, and Gandhi, Kamla pointed out that we can change others only by first changing ourselves. These teachers also supported non-violence as the highest priority in what they proposed and in their own actions.

Gregory Baum, one of the original members of the core group, was concerned that the group find language to express the dynamic interrelationship between the spiritual and the material, but not in such a way as to exclude secular friends and partners who are working toward the ends of social justice and solidarity. He has, he said, many friends who have a sense of the transcendent, but do not believe in God. They share with him a simple lifestyle and a sense of commitment for the poor and oppressed, but when he uses "God language" they hear something very different from believers. They are interested in the here-and-now and so are uncomfortable with otherworldliness. Yet, they have a sense of humility, even awe, because they see that great achievements come to us as gifts, rather than as personal creations. Gregory felt that we had a

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[1] "Sustainable development" was defined by the Brundtland Commission as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

[2] Matthew 19:24

great intellectual task to find language that could foster creative alliances with such secular people.

Gregory admitted that personally he has often been put off by the language of Catholic mystics. They may be concerned about the suffering of their neighbours, he said, but they do not seem troubled about the terrible injustices and structural exclusions in the world around them. He has often found that mystical literature does not help him; in fact, mystical language about inner peace has become questionable to him and even alienates him at times. Given the tragedy and despair of so many, Gregory used to find it hard to feel gratitude to God for his good fortune; but, somehow, this has changed for him. He described a recent shift in his spiritual thinking in which the suffering of others is felt so closely that it is grafted onto our hearts. To the world's suffering, the most appropriate response for him is "a blessed restlessness," not distracting nor destructive, but somewhat like a flywheel that constantly relates us to the needs and sufferings of others in all that we do. He felt as though this was something new with which Christian churches were wrestling, that is, the presence of God and the spiritual life in relation to the broken world. In brief, Gregory felt that some of the answers to these questions could be found among the wise men and women of the past, but that those answers were not sufficient. There are new circumstances, like social and global exclusion, that demand new reflection, new responses, and a new engagement.

Denis Goulet, a pioneer in development ethics and in linking the worlds of thought and action in development, is currently O'Neill Professor in Education for Justice at Notre Dame University, Indiana. He began with a story to illustrate the growing confusion that exists about the term "development" even in the minds of the architects of that development. His story centred on Albert Waterston, a development expert who wrote a number of books on development planning and had headed over 40 development planning missions to various countries over a period of 25 years. They both found themselves at a conference on grassroots efforts on development. They exchanged niceties with each other as they passed in the hallways or waited for the elevator. On the second morning Waterston told Denis that he hadn't been able to sleep, because he did not feel he understood what was going on in the meeting. The people from grassroots situations in Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Latin America were all upbeat about how the paradigm was changing toward working from the ground up. Whereas, from what he could see (e.g., Watergate, a worldwide recession), the world was not in very good shape. On the third morning, Denis saw Al looking more rested and asked whether he had slept well. Al answered that he had finally figured out what was going on. "We're in an upward elevator aboard a sinking ship."

For Denis this was an excellent metaphor for the situation of so-called "developed" countries, that is, they are experiencing upward development while the ship (i.e., the rest of the world) around them is sinking. The real question is whether developed countries dare push the down button of the elevator. By bringing more weight down to the ship they might create a new balance and perhaps keep it from sinking. Denis pointed out that seminal development thinkers, like social scientist Daniel Lerner, have found that where development was once seen as an unqualified good, those who have experienced development now see it as an ambiguous process, in which it is hard to separate the good from bad. And postmodern critics, such as Wolfgang Sachs and Arturo Escobar, now see development as an unequivocally bad process bringing a

triple curse--mass poverty, powerlessness, and hopelessness--to developing countries.

Denis also referred to the work of Eric Fromm--sociologist, psychoanalyst, and secular humanist--who studied the differences between a social and personal "being" orientation and a "having" orientation. The "being" orientation values consciousness, reflection, unity, and friendship, while the "having" orientation values acquisition and possession. (Fromm, 1976) He felt that either the "being" or the "having" orientation is expressed in the institutions, laws, and common sense wisdom adopted by a society, which might also be called its social character. After 40 years of clinical practice, Fromm claimed to have found an empirical basis for the superiority of a "being"orientation over a "having"orientation. He discovered that people with a "being" orientation ultimately achieved some form of inner satisfaction with themselves, often through the stripping away of ego, expectations, and/or possessions. Moreover, Fromm suggested that alienation in the midst of abundance is just as dehumanizing as alienation in midst of misery and poverty.

Economists like Amartya Sen (1987) and John Kenneth Galbraith (1958) have long been considering the role of values and ethics in economics. Sen says that we need to have new ways of doing economics, such as introducing value judgments at the very first levels of basic definitions and suppositions. This is in line with what Galbraith said forty years ago, when he was the US ambassador to India, that the most important question faced by economists, and one which they most studiously avoid asking, is what is the production for. He felt that economists shun this question because it can only be answered with a value-laden answer. And for more than a hundred years, science has postulated that you cannot reach truth unless you abstract from values. That is what Sen and Galbraith were questioning, and Denis felt that is what we were questioning in this meeting.

Denis also noted that today some small groups and NGOs are getting off the treadmill in which maximization is held as the greatest good and simply refusing conditional handouts from agencies such as the World Bank, saying "we are taking our development into our own hands." Denis felt that one of the biggest development challenges is to determine how the values that preside over these micro efforts and the institutional arrangements they have given themselves can gain some purchase on the criteria of decision-making at the macro-level. He felt that IDRC, with its partners at both macro and micro levels, could introduce these ideas at the macro level to help empower those who are in a qualitatively different mode of development.

Denis saw the groups at this meeting as sufficiently representative to redefine development as broader than "maximizing human well-being." He was once part of a five-day meeting at the Sri Lanka Center for Development known as the Marga Institute. There were about 60 participants: field workers, government representatives, and social scientists. They were searching for a workable definition of development upon which they could all agree. At first, this approach seemed futile: they could agree that development must aim at social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental well-being, but this left them dissatisfied. Then they hit on the idea that development should be open to transcendence and include what they called "the full-life paradigm." He felt that this "full-life paradigm" aspect of development would help to incorporate the questions that are being asked by this group. He suggested that a society should organize itself so that, at least, it is open to transcendence. This orientation would not determine what the content of that transcendence would be, but just that there would not be a hermetic closure on the possibility of transcendence.

Francis Idachaba, a Nigerian Christian, son of a Christian mother and an indigenous African father, took his graduate studies in agriculture and agricultural economics at Chicago and Michigan State Universities. Francis has spent his whole life in public service. He has worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, DC. He has worked as a teacher in a university, as Pioneer Vice Chancellor of a new university, head of a government agency, and as an advisor to the President of Nigeria. He is currently the Deputy Director General at the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) in the Netherlands.

Francis recounted that, within its borders, Nigeria encompasses wide religious diversity-- Christianity, Islam, and several indigenous African traditions. Moreover, a similar religious diversity also exists within many families, like his own. Despite oil development, agriculture remains the chief source of livelihood and foreign exchange in Nigeria, as it is with many countries. Francis felt that discussions around science, religion must have concrete roots in what is happening in the field of agriculture.

Using Nigeria as an example, Francis said that he continues to be amazed by its many paradoxes. He would label these paradoxes "the science gap," "the moral gap," and "the ethical gap." A gap is that which exists between available potential and concrete realization. For example, he sees vast stores of publicly available scientific knowledge but, proportionately, very little improvement in food security, reduction of poverty, and protection of the environment. The moral gap is the distance between the moral behaviours presented as ideal by the different faiths and the actual behaviour of political leaders, societal agents, and average individuals. The ethical gap is the distance between the ethical protocols and the actual ethical standards being displayed in the development process.

Francis also identified a phenomenon of great interest to the discussion of science, religion, and development. He has noted that individuals, households, communities, and societies invest enormous amounts of time, a scarce resource, in amassing what he called "spiritual capital." Through personal devotion, rituals, service, and money, they engage in a non-market related acquisition of morals and of ethical codes of behaviour. In interaction with market-related skills (or human capital development), he thought that this phenomenon of spiritual capital development could produce appreciable improvement in the human condition. He saw as a major challenge for the larger discussion of science, religion, and development the question of the appropriate role of government in religion, especially in multi-religious countries such as Nigeria.

Francis also dwelt on the hypocrisy of political leaders who patronize religion publicly but who are only too willing to indulge in corruption in private. This is not a unidirectional criticism of African and other developing countries, he was quick to point out, because no-one can be bribed unless there is someone offering a bribe. Financial incentives, in which multinationals are involved, can only encourage corruption. He also faulted development practitioners for failing to display a sincerity of purpose toward advancing the public good and the well-being of the common man and woman.

Promilla Kapur, one of the original core group members, felt that women's development is absolutely essential for any meaningful development. She regretted that it was only in India's 6th five-year plan for development (1979-1984) that this concern became a priority, as a result of

the international climate generated by the first UN conference on women in Mexico City (1975). Subsequent conferences in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995) helped to build on this issue. Two central points emerged from these conferences: the recognition that women's rights are human rights and these rights must be exercised in partnership with men to generate genuine quality of life and development.

Yet, women in India still have little real decision-making power at high levels. For her, empowerment of women means supporting their ability to develop their human potential, rather than merely providing them with more power. This human capacity-building involves spiritual empowerment, that is, recognizing and realizing the divine presence and potential in every person, including themselves. This understanding is necessary for self-transformation, which, in turn, is a prerequisite for the transformation of society. Without self-transformation, women will merely abuse their new-found power to marginalize others, in the same manner as many of their male predecessors. Within this spiritual vision, a fundamental realization is that the whole world is all one family; people are interrelated and intended to help one another in order to live in peace, harmony, so that human needs are met and human potential realized.

Promilla raised concerns with certain terminology and concepts used by some members of the group. For example, the distinction made between spirituality and religion was problematic for her because she felt that spirituality is one of the main purposes of real religion. Likewise, the Western usage of the term "secular" (as the opposite of religious) is different from its usage in India where "secular" means equal respect for all religions. And, finally, she simply disagreed with Kamla's position that to be spiritual one must embrace physical poverty, because she felt that there was a role for everyone in the re-visioning of a new kind of society. Although wealth might limit their ability to understand the situation of the poor, some people use their money as a means to help the poor. We will return to this debate in the section on major themes of the meeting.

Farhang Rajaee, a Muslim political scientist from Iran, is presently a professor at the College of the Humanities, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Previously, he was a professor at the University of Tehran, the Iranian Academy of Philosophy, and Beheshti (National) University, as well as a member of the Iranian United Nations delegation. His book *The Battle of Worldviews* established his reputation as an interpreter of Islamic movements and political Islam. He recently published a book, *Globalization on Trial* (Rajaee, 2000), in which he provides a fresh and critical inquiry into the nature of globalization from a multidisciplinary and multicultural perspective.

In this meeting, Farhang was optimistic, encouraged by this dialogue on the relationship between science, religion and development. He believed that he is seeing a shift from the modern Western approach in which humans pretend to be God (the creator) to an approach in which humans act in imitation of God (the creature), demonstrating a much more humble attitude. He proposed the development of a new paradigm in which humans are both creator and creature; but we have to remember where and when to be creator and where and when to be creature. As a paradigm of this balance, he recited the Christian prayer: Give me the power to change the things that I can change, the patience to tolerate the things that I cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference.

He gave great credit to Edward Said and his book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978) for helping to

initiate this shift toward humility in development thinking, for example, from domination of the earth to learning to live with the earth. He finds hope too in recent initiatives to include both God and all creation in development discourse, as well as a new emphasis on the rights of women and children.

For Farhang, it is important to reject the separation of the sacred from the secular, the saint from the merchant, and religion from development. We must not be content with suggesting that we have to inject moral principles into development projects to keep them from failing. He illustrated the fallacy of the religion-business dichotomy with an amusing story: a group of Muslim bandits robbed a caravan in the desert, and then lined up to pray at the appointed time. One of the victims, noticing this, remarked, "I really don't understand you people - you rob us and then turn to prayer." "Oh," answered one of the robbers, "there is really no relation between them. One is our job, the other is our religion."

The basic error is to try to separate the sacred from the secular and thus avoid the question: Where does the sacred fit in a secular worldview? He believes, following Ernest Gelner, that since the end of the Cold War, we find three ontological worldviews – a religious fundamentalist worldview, a postmodern worldview that does not believe in objective truth or reality and, from the Enlightenment, a narrow rationalist, utilitarian worldview. He does not think that such different approaches to reality, such "worldviews," can speak to one another at all. He saw our group, however, as sharing a basic worldview that accepts morality, ethics and religion as having a direct bearing on the realms of the economy, politics, and science and technology; thus each of the participants could be open to a process of development and change through the battle of ideas.

In order to find a conceptual way to place these dimensions in relationship, Farhang proposed a triangle whose three sides, science/technology, religion/principles, and development/politics, roughly coincide with the three elements of our SRD project. When held together in balance, he proposed that these three elements have guaranteed security in and endurance for ancient civilizations such as China and Greece. Although these societies had the capacity to develop technologies that could inflict massacres, they did not because they feared upsetting the balance established among the sciences, moral principles, and politics. He fears that in the process of globalization we will upset this necessary balance just as we did in the age of industrialization.

But HOW do they relate to one another? Because this question and also Farhang's proposed triangle permeated much of our discussion and was subsequently developed by some of the group into what we are now calling "the virtuous triangle," I will take this up later as a major theme.

Magi Abdul-Masih, a Coptic Christian from Egypt, holds doctorates in chemistry and theology. She has done research on the interdisciplinary dialogue between science and religion, the Christian-Muslim dialogue in Egypt, and the Palestinian liberation movement. Magi said she prefers to talk about concrete people who happen to be scientists, believers and/or development agents, rather than about abstractions. As an example, she took the case of Averoes, a Muslim philosopher of the the 12th century who was also a judge, medical doctor, physicist, optician, and student of the Qur'an and the Shariah. His books were destroyed by certain individuals claiming religious power based on Shariah law. The film, *The Destiny*, tells the story of a young man

whose spiritual father was killed for his fanaticism, coming to seek solace from Averoes. But Averoes was harsh with him, asking him, "What do you think you are doing? By knowing two pieces of poetry you become a poet? By knowing two pieces of the Qur'an you become a scholar?"

Averoes asked the young man what he knew about medicine, about optics, about physics, about truth, about justice, about the Qur'an, or about the Shariah; he was telling this young man that he must know about all these things before he could even start to talk about God. In this SRD project, Magi continued, we are not dealing primarily with a dialogue between worldviews or abstract positions. We are looking for a different framework, a different starting point, something other than the abstraction "development."

In other historical periods, the power of human reason was used in science not only to study optics and physics but also to help figure out what God wants through the revelation of the Qur'an and the Shariah. When we seek understanding, it is not only mind or reason that is at work but also imagination, desire, and vision. Rather than talk about the two sources of knowledge as revelation and reason, as Aquinas does, Magi preferred to talk about the concrete, people seeking wisdom by using reason in different ways to guide their daily life. She feared that talking about seeking knowledge for itself may lead us to subordinate the questioner/seeker to meaning and understanding rather than seeing that these are, in fact, subordinate to the human questioner. Humans are not subordinate to science and development.

Today religion is not considered science. Science co-opted reason for itself and gave birth to dualism. Scientists see faith as being blind - not as a reasonable acceptance of the transcendent. They fail to see that what God wants is not God's own "good," but the good that comes from being fully human. God does not contradict God's creation.

Magi described a complex human phenomenon in the empirical observation of the world. Since reality is complex and cannot be understood all at once, it must be reduced for methodological purposes to partial realities. These partial realities are studied one by one, while conceptually putting the others on hold. Such reductionism was first seen as a necessary methodological step in science, but gradually it came to be seen as the ideal. Science has now become what can be proven experimentally. Since it can only measure what is material, the perception of reality is limited exclusively to what is material and therefore measurable. Thus, scientific method has become a worldview and what it can measure--the material world--has become the sum total of reality.

To illustrate her point, Magi used the example of a metal detector, a machine that detects metal but cannot detect things such as people or stones. Soon enough, if the metal detector is the only method of measurement available--because metal is the only substance it can detect--both the method and the material are glorified and seen as the full extent of reality.

Today, we have a scientific world next to a religious world next to a development world. The concept of "development," in which everything moves from underdevelopment to development, is itself a product of the theory of evolution. Evolution is another example of a method of explaining a process that has itself become a worldview, a particular way of understanding the world. Given this history, it is not useful to critique the development concept without also evaluating the whole mindset that created it and which continues to be destructive for both the North and South.

Religious values have power not only because they are a value system but also because

they form identity, a sense of "who I am." Magi felt that projects that go into a society and disregard culture or religion, do violence to individual and societal identity. Such methods attack who they are. Magi said that she sees a red flag whenever people make the language of science the standard of all language. She was also reticent about any approach which does not recognize religious reflection as the work of reason. Thus, she suggested caution in how we use the word "scientific" in our work because we may then define it to exclude religious or moral reflection.

Chris Smart is Director of the Special Initiatives Program at IDRC and of the SRD project. From an Anglican background, he has a bachelors degree in General Science (University of Toronto) and a Masters degree in the History and Social Studies of Science (University of Sussex). He was a secondary school teacher in Canada before working for two years in Sarawak, Malaysia as a CUSO volunteer, and for four at the university of Papua New Guinea. On returning to Canada he worked for three years with World University Service of Canada before joining IDRC in 1979.

Chris described, while he was in Papua New Guinea, how he became aware of millenarianism and cargo cults, which are characterized by the belief that material wealth can be obtained through ritual worship. In other words, he saw the people of Papua New Guinea reconciling the receipt of modern Western goods with their view of the universe. They decided that the goods came from the heavens and they believed that if they imitated in detailed ways Western methods of building houses with picket fences, planting gardens, and other ways of shaping their environment, the cars, refrigerators, and clothes would continue to come. Without further context, there was no way for them to understand that these goods flowed through specialized shops and commercial systems and so they fit the arrival of these goods into their ongoing way of understanding the world. This was Chris' way of demonstrating how difficult it is to change one's worldview, even given drastic changes in the environment, and how unpredictable are the outcomes of the effort.

As a key IDRC representative, Chris also reminded the group that however fitting and necessary it was to have "deliverable" products emerge from this meeting, the process remained primarily about "share-ables." He recalled how my initial research survey had set the pattern of putting between covers the voices of many actors and thus sharing their urgent messages. He cited as an example a presentation made at the University of Toronto by Rex Nettleford, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, former board member of IDRC, artist, founder of the National Dance Company of Jamaica, and a Rhodes Scholar. In this talk, Rex discussed the fact that universities are in crisis and are examining their very reason for existence. Some of this questioning comes from the fact that a number of university activities, from engaging in development projects to "filling the seats with bums," are motived by concern for profit and survival. Rex used my findings in *Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development* to suggest that the universities were examining and trying to re-find their souls.

IDRC initiated a lengthy process to put between covers another set of voices in *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market.* Together with the present meeting, the wide circulation of this book will help to legitimize the experience of our project. He reminded the group that this non-conventional research project by IDRC was an attempt to defy gravity, in order to create some space for development colleagues inside and outside IDRC, to promote an intellectual shift in how we think about development.

Finally, Chris reminded the group of its own power to legitimate these issues and perspectives because of its widely diverse backgrounds in the sciences, various faiths, and development work. He suggested that whatever we finally succeed in producing will not come as a result of marketing but because people like us will share these ideas and thus widen the group that takes an interest in these perspectives. In the meantime, he said he felt privileged to be participating in these conversations and was enjoying very much the exercise of defying gravity.

Ouyporn Khuankaew, a Buddhist from Thailand, lives in an Ashram community that tries to integrate simple living, Buddhist perspectives and practice, into its social activism and human rights training in grassroots movements in Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, and Vietnam. She wondered aloud whether she could learn and contribute enough to justify coming to this Ottawa meeting, given that her air ticket had cost the equivalent of two years's earning for a farmer in her village. She wanted to share her personal experience rather than talk about theories. She heard the group talking about participation, sustainability, and human rights, but in her experience these values were already in the Buddhist tradition long before the arrival of the Americans in Southeast Asia. Ouyporn said that they had had all the values espoused by modern human rights, in fact more, because in the Buddhist tradition you are not supposed to harm any being, not just humans. The values that we had did not work, she said, because we did not realize we had the value of what we had.

People accuse her of romanticizing the past, but in her discussions with people in her village she has found that people miss what they had in the days before "development." Ouyporn has been in the worlds of international education and international development work and found so much missing. Finally, she went to live in the Ashram. Here they try to live Buddhism and Gandhi's principles in their life and work, but also use this perspective to work with grassroots groups.

She is dismayed to discover that grassroots groups are imitating what the NGOs are doing or are in fact being guided by NGOs. The NGOs themselves often follow government and Western approaches; even though they criticize the West, they still look to it for models. She finds the struggle for justice in society can make NGO workers angry, frustrated, and without inner peace; their intellectual islands and ideological debates end up separating people. For many years she did not talk about the fact that she meditated because NGOs would ask her what was wrong with her that she needed to meditate. Gender they could talk about, but not meditating and living a simple life. Workers in NGOs accumulate feelings of frustration and hopelessness and yet do not have any moment in a day where they feel peace. How are these people going to help others or give them hope if they themselves have no inner peace, she asked.

It is discouraging to her that grassroots workers go off to conferences like the one in Beijing to come back to sit in the public square for hours speaking to assembled groups of women in academic terms and in English about gender. Without knowing it, they are imposing a Western-type hierarchy on relationships within the villages and a Western-type feminism, forgetting that the villages already have a way of life in which men and women work together. For her, gender work has to include both men and women and encourage the voiceless--such as Buddhist nuns, women factory workers, and prostitutes--to find their voices. She also felt that by confining spirituality only to temples or churches that we could miss many people, spiritual leaders, that carry much wisdom.

Ouyporn suggested that the principal task for the North is to change itself. She felt that the answer given by a great Cambodian monk to Japanese journalists who had asked him how Japan could help suffering people in Cambodia was appropriate: "Thank you. You can help us by taking good care of Japan." She asked how the North could empower the South when it has so many problems itself? In the hours she spent on a cramped subway car in Tokyo, individuals ignored one another, reading comics or listening to music; she realized how many people in this so-called developed society are already dead. Her trips into Cambodia, into areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge, showed her the hope, compassion, and love of the people. While in the North people run from suffering and death, Buddhist wisdom accepts the inevitability of personal suffering and the suffering of others and embraces it, in order to understand it.

She believed that science must become humble and recognize its limitations, especially to people in the South. When science is put in the position of the divine it leads people into ignorance, which, in the Buddhist worldview, causes suffering. Scientific development and materialism/consumerism is not the answer for Cambodia, for example, where there is still so much anger and hatred. She does not deny the need for science, but it can come later. In places like Cambodia, religion and spiritual practice is needed more, to learn how people might develop peace and harmony.

Ouyporn had no illusions about the need for reform in Buddhism itself because ignorance and corruption have crept into its practice. She is looking forward to a planned meeting of all the Buddhist traditions in 2001 to face this challenge. She hopes that Christian churches will accept the same challenge of reform, to renew their vision of their purpose and genuinely to be with the suffering people of today's world.

Janet Somerville is the first Catholic woman general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches and also a theologian and religion educator in ecumenical settings. Formerly, she was a senior producer of the CBC Radio program *Ideas* and a journalist with the *Catholic New Times*. Janet suggested that this group has a common intuition concerning what they desire, that is, authentic, non-alienating development that supports spiritual empowerment or the possibilities for life with deeper meaning. But if it is to be more than a dream, we must think of it in terms of time and place. She felt that "identity" and "worldview" are embedded in a community and so she asked whether there could be authentic development without reference to a community. And, assuming we cannot, then, how do we know when we have discovered the community?

She also pointed out that the dominant technology leads us to believe that everything can be done in very quick order, yet it has taken 50 years just to arrive at a concept of more human development. She asked what time frame it would take for a change agent--those who think they are providing the solutions--to be changed by the community. For Janet, this is the process by which change agents set aside the dominating mindset of their socialization and education for one of genuine partnership--like the process described by Kamla of being reduced to zero or the Judeo-Christian spiritual experience of exodus from Egypt to the nothingness of the desert?

Janet cheered the newfound power of the NGOs demonstrated, for example, by their worldwide jubilee campaign in which they collected millions of signatures supporting the cancellation of debt for poor countries. Yet, as a journalist, she worries that with the support of instant communication through the Internet, the NGOs may fall into the trap of flooding the world with one fashionable concept after another, forever promoting the correct thinking of the

day. In other words, the multiplication of NGOs is not enough. What is needed are the genuine partnerships that happen when committed communities in the North bond with communities in the South. In her church experience, this creative bonding requires a mediating person who has been transformed by respecting, loving, and hoping for a community in a radically different situation, a process that can take half a lifetime. She wondered which people could make that transforming link between concrete community situations and the paradigms and language of North America.   Janet said that she knew of many wonderful stories of hope and development in small communities that provide local examples of a healthy balance between science, religion, and development. Intuitively, we know what to do, but massive greed and the present distribution of power in our world make that action dangerous. It will not be a simple as discovering a new paradigm that, once floated, will transform the world. There exists a desire to continue the domination and we will need courage to struggle against deep-rooted patterns of domination and greed.

     Azizan Baharuddin, another member of the original core group, has already been associated with the SRD project for more than three years. Perhaps for this reason, she found herself torn between being enriched by the unstructured discussion and her concern that this meeting define its parameters sufficiently to come up with some "deliverables" or products that can help people like herself working in the field. Although we do not know the details of God's plan for the world, she felt that we were agreed that we would work with all people, because, as Promilla said, "God is within each and all." Personally, she believed she is living the sense of being zero, if she is without God. But she also reminded the group that it must remember that most people know nothing about the concepts or the paradigms we were talking about.

     When Azizan looks at Malaysia, she said she sees a fast growing country that welcomes modern technology uncritically and is gambling that, in this way, it can leapfrog several steps to become quickly more like the North. "Third-World thinking," as she called it, is still not self-critical, with the result that there are presently small groups of winners, mostly power-brokers, and huge numbers of victims. She finds herself caught between these two groups. She admitted that she received a good education because of the forces of colonialism and that she enjoys the fruits of science and technology. So she felt that somehow God is in all this too.

     Her task, as she saw it, is to help people see the bigger picture by promoting a natural theology whereby religious leaders may become familiar with science and then reinterpret religious beliefs and visions and thus make religion relevant in the present context. In Malaysia, she said, she should not have to be ashamed or afraid to say what she believes in public. She believed that this process is already underway, empowered by believing and unbelieving agents alike, and now this bringing science and religion together will foster more authentic development. She asked IDRC to produce out of this meeting some good material that will be credible to the way of thinking in the South. Most people in developing countries are believers and she felt they would be grateful for this reinforcement of the relevance of their religious beliefs in fostering authentic development.

     Ogbu Kalu studied history (Toronto) and divinity (Princeton, McGill) and is currently director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He saw development as liberation, as attempts to overcome a situation of vulnerability. Development occurs because

people are confronted with challenges within their ecosystems and they must respond; this response can either be planned or unplanned. The key question for him was how to pursue planned development. He believed that attitude to ecosystems and the evironment is a crucial factor and that eco-ethics defines the ability of a community to survive or go under. The way to understand the eco-ethics of a community, he said, is by examining its worldview. But we must be careful about romanticization of religious cosmologies, he warned. Many religious cosmologies also contain what he called "intimate enemies," practices and concepts that are unfriendly to the environment. He also felt that these "intimate enemies" might explain why certain communities are unable to deal with vulnerable situations.

Ogbu pointed out that some traditional religious worldviews are ambiguous on the issue of the conservation of the environment. They can and often do enhance conservation but good conservation can be undermined by the belief, for example, in some traditional worldviews, that the gods are responsible for all that goes wrong. He also illustrated this point with an example from Western Nigeria. In traditional belief, if you want to cut down a tree you must first make sure the spirit has left it. A pot of palm oil placed at the foot of the tree will placate the spirit and ensure that it leaves. Then, with the spirit gone, you can cut the tree down. But this worldview says nothing about replacing the tree.

He also believed that religious cosmologies or worldviews are organic and can be transformed. So, for him, the problem is crafting an ethic of conservation into traditional worldviews. In Africa, conservationists are promoting tree-planting by using religious cosmologies in two ways. In Zimbabwe, the Christian approach is to introduce a tree-planting Eucharist. The people bring seedlings to church; confess their sins against the land and the trees; pray to thank God for both seeds and trees; and, finally, they go out to plant trees as a way of carrying out their stewardship. Traditional religionists will do it differently: they begin by dancing around the saplings, followed by a process of confession that to cut down a tree is to murder a relative. They sing about the relationship in which trees share the same ecosystem as themselves. Since the tree was murdered, the spirit of the tree is floating around and still needs a proper burial. The spirit is appeased by planting new saplings.

Ogbu sees this type of renewed cosmology counteracts an ethic of domination and the use and destruction of material resources without their replacement. This is a process for which the pace cannot be determined, but he sees it as a way for development agents to introduce new technologies and change policies through the grooves of existing worldviews. If development agents do not get an adequate understanding of the environment and the ensuing culture of a community, the result will be the failure of the development activity. He felt that one of the great strengths of the northern countries is their ability, when they come into contact with different cultural forms, to critique their own worldviews and then to change them by integrating cultural facets that have worked elsewhere. He felt that interaction with new cultural forms should be more like a dialogue, in which some things are absorbed and others rejected, rather than a wholesale acceptance of the new cultural force.

Farzam Arbab, the leader of the original core group, with his rich background in the physical sciences, enjoyed Magi's description of the process by which science, by limiting its object to measurable material reality out of methodological necessity, soon starts to see material reality as ideal and before long as the only thing that really exists. For him, this process of

scientific reductionism is a like the carpenter whose only tool is a hammer and thus everything comes to look like a nail. The developmental worldview reduces the sources of knowledge to that which is quantifiable, measurable, classifiable, and controllable. Those that inhabit this developmental worldview will concede other sources of knowledge, such as spiritual insight and intuition, as long as they do not get in the way and they are confined to the private or marginal sphere. There are, of course, writers such as Alfred North Whitehead (Whitehead, 1959), who understood that science does not necessarily require a reductionist treatment of spirituality, religion, or aethestic values.

Farzam was somewhat concerned that we might show a tendency to over-romanticize the dynamic latent in traditional societies or worldviews. However deplorable it may be, he pointed out, the trend has been that traditional communities are rapidly disappearing. Latin America, for example, has gone from being 70 percent rural to becoming 70 percent urban in just 30 years. The overwhelming majority of these new city dwellers are now locked into the reductionist worldview that presides worldwide. And there are few, if any, alternatives, where people are living from a particular spirituality, religion, or value system, to which one might look to find new sources of critical and creative thinking. In cities, humans no longer belong to one community, but dozens of willed or chosen communities with partial overlapping identities, no one of which makes total claims upon anyone's allegiance. So, there is no wisdom--to explain the totality of life in a way that brings unity to it--that matches science. The wisdom we need cannot overlook conflicts, contradictions, and complexities to impose unity; we must work hard to achieve a unity that is always vulnerable and has to be constantly built and rebuilt.

He pointed out that the documents of the United Nations and the World Bank still help to propagate a striking illusion. He also noted a similarity between these documents and documents from Iran's past. These Iranian documents always began with praise of God, the King, and the Grand Vizier, referencing the reign or authority under which the document was issued. Strangely enough, these authoritative documents about development start in much the same way. They begin by praising the free market as the wonderful solution to our serious development problems. Pages are spent praising the "god" of economic incentive. Then, after several more pages, we are subtly introduced to the data of human development. The income gap between the richest and the poorest countries has increased and is increasing exponentially. Over the last thirty years the gap in per capita income between the industrial and developing worlds has tripled, from $5,700 in 1960 to $15,400 in 1993. The poorest 20 percent of the world's people saw their share of global income decline from 2.3 percent to 1.4 percent over that period, while the share of the richest 20 percent of the world's people rose from 70 percent to 85 percent. The assets of the world's 358 billionaires exceed the combined annual income of *countries* with 45 percent of the world's people.[3] But we are doing well, these reports insist, the market and development are working. Praise be the market! Praise be economic incentive! The reports seem certain that the true way has been found and it is going to work. But based on the data, the world is not doing very well. Farzam said that he asked himself, "Am I being cheated? Are they charlatans who are saying these things?" Yet, knowing that they are good people, he could not help but ask what is really happening and why.

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[3] Statistics from the Human Development Report 1996 (UNDP 1996)

He did not want to limit this discourse to the collection of voices of people of faith or of personal stories, however helpful these may be, or to the worldviews or latent dynamics within traditional cultures. Nor, did he feel that the idea was to add on religion as another aspect of development. Instead, he was convinced that development must be changed at a deeper level, a change that engages the dynamic coherence between the spiritual and the material. This was the goal of the essays in *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market*. But, he asked, can the system of development and globalization that is in place be influenced? And is there the intellectual capacity, will, and energy to do something about this situation?

If we take stock, there are three forces at work in our world, a world that is, under the forces of globalization, becoming increasingly smaller. Science has a very powerful role. Religion continues to influence the lives of the vast majority of people, as do the deliberate efforts of the development enterprise. The question is whether the relationship between these forces can be articulated differently. Can we talk about a non-reductionist science? About a development that takes into account the dynamic coherence between the spiritual and the material? Like Naresh, Farzam wanted to talk about scientifically generated knowledge about development; further, he did not feel that religion had to be confined to the language of poetry, symbol, and myth. Since today's science is accepting its limits in searching how to deal with uncertainties, it is becoming clearer that it need not contradict the world of religious belief. Personally, Farzam looks at the relationship between science and religion as one of complementarity, much as the relationship between the two descriptions of the constituents of matter as particle and wave in physics is one of complementarity. Can science provide us with the intellectual foundation for development research that will be open to religious and spiritual issues and no longer remain purely materialistic?

Sharon Harper, a Canadian of Christian background, with degrees in journalism (Carleton), law (Ottawa), and theology (Harvard). She was project manager for IDRC's SRD project and editor of *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market*. She expressed her concern that in our language we be conscious that many people in the North share many of our values, but are not members of faith communities. They are uncomfortable with "God language" or the language of faith because of the history of religion. People are committed to justice and peace and may be curious, but are wary of missionary or neocolonial tendencies. Thus, we need to use language that is welcoming to partnerships, without losing the meanings that can sometimes only be conveyed through the language of religion, faith, and spirituality. But people must come freely to these ideas, through their own experimentation and personal change. As well as developing inclusive language, she felt we needed to create appropriate tools for research that incorporate or allow room for the objectives and concerns that characterize religion, faith, and values.

Bill Ryan, a Canadian Jesuit priest and economist (Harvard), founding director of the Center of Concern (Washington, DC), special advisor to IDRC's·SRD project and author of its early research, *Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development: Opening a Dialogue* (Ryan, 1995). I suggested that our efforts to relate spirituality to development merited celebration. I recounted how, while doing early research for the SRD project, I found myself sitting beside a Sri Lankan medical doctor on a flight from Sri Lanka to India. He asked me what I did for a living. I told him that I was a Jesuit priest and an economist. He immediately jumped to his feet and called

out to stewardess, "Break open the champagne. We have a man with us who is both a priest and an economist." For him, the attempt to link faith with economics was almost too much to be believed.

I shared with the group some of the trends I discovered in my research that seemed to indicate that we were on the right track. For example, the fact that so many of those interviewed in the initial research admitted that they felt pressured or even harassed to find politically correct public language to express their views about the relationship between faith and development suggested they would be open to seeing this situation change. Each of the world faiths also has a a strong sense of the connectedness and unity of the universe, a special concern for the poor, and teaching consonant with human dignity, social justice, and sound ecology. These are valuable resources for development, especially at this time when there is renewed, even explosive interest worldwide in religions and in things spiritual, often in reaction to abuses associated with the domineering forces of globalization.

Significantly, this is happening at a time when science has become more open to acknowledging its own limitations and the existence of indeterminacy in the universe; in some instances science is carrying on serious dialogue with religion. For example, in recent years, more than 1,000 religious experts and environmental scientists have been meeting at Harvard University's Centre for the Study of World Religions and seriously asking themselves the question: "Can religions re-interpret their myths, visions and scriptures in such a way as to provide vision, meaning, and motivation for the modern big-bang story of the universe?" Likewise, several UN agencies have recently organized public forums on the relationship between religion/spirituality and the specialized focus of their own agencies. The World Bank, in particular, under the leadership of James Wolfensohn, has organized with leaders of nine world faiths a World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). We find serious scholars and writers such as Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama, insisting on the significant role of culture and religion in the future of modern world affairs. And, finally, sociologist José Casanova of the New School in New York, in his book *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Casanova, 1994) puts forward the thesis, based on case studies in various countries, that religion is becoming increasingly deprivatized in today's world. He sees religious traditions throughout the world refusing to accept the marginal role reserved for them by theories of modernity and of secularization. For Casanova, the point of view that declares that religion is dying or withering away is itself now dead.

Casanova's thesis is further supported by the increasing involvement of faith-based and secular NGOs in recent conferences and public protests throughout the world. I suggested we would do well in our theorizing to draw on persevering dialogue among committed people who are scientists, believers or empathetic to belief, and development practitioners. In this, I felt that we should steadily refuse to obey the current correct public fashion that neither God nor spiritual language can be used in public discourse.

Chandima De Silva, a Sri Lankan Buddhist, is a senior lecturer in computer science at Kelaniya University and has a special interest in the relationship between Buddhism and modern science. He started off his remarks by saying that he had been largely silent for the first day or so of the meeting because, as a Buddhist, he believed that it is only in silence that one can hear the voice of God. He also said that he was overwhelmed by the enriching remarks of the other

participants. He also briefly discussed the Buddhist wisdom that is at the basis of his practice as a university lecturer; when interacting with his students he says only what he can do and then he does what he says.

Chandima proposed that in considering how to address the problems of poverty one could consider the merits of an economic theory based in Buddhism. He was quick to stress, however, that although he is using the term Buddhist, the principles and characteristics of this approach could come from anywhere and that this was more important than designating it Buddhist. He discussed the Buddha's noble Eightfold Path, a Middle Way that counsels moderation and avoids the dangers of both asceticism and sensual gratification. This Middle Way consists of right understanding, right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

One way of understanding the idea of Buddhist economics is articulated in E. Schumacher's little book, *Small is Beauitful* (London, 1977). He wrote that while a materialist is mainly interested in goods, a Buddhist is interested in liberation. But Buddhism is "the Middle Way" and therefore is in no way antagonistic to physical well-being. It is not wealth that stands in the way of liberation but attachment to wealth; not the enjoyment of pleasurable things, but the craving for them. Schumacher pointed out that the keynote of Buddhist economics is simplicity and non-violence. From an economist's point of view, he wrote, the marvel of the Buddhist way of life is the utter rationality of its patterns--amazingly small means leading to extraordinarily satisfying results. (At this point, Denis reminded Chandima that the subtitle of Schumacher's book was "Economics as if People Mattered.")

For Chandima the main points of Buddhist economics are also illustrated in Shinichi Inoue's book *Putting Buddhism to Work* (Inoue, 1997), that is, 1) an economics that benefits oneself and others; 2) an economics of tolerance and peace; 3) an economics that can save the earth. But the concept of human well-being generally favoured in the West is brought into question by a Buddhist approach. While the Western concept of freedom centres around the rights of the individual or the "freedom to do something," the Buddhist concept of freedom involves means "freedom from attachments" and the conquering of personal desires. Buddhism also presupposes that human happiness requires economic stability, but also includes the sharing of wealth, blameless actions, and moderation. A Buddhist economics would support a market economy that promotes health and welfare of not just the individual but of everyone.

But a Buddhist economics must also be supported and complemented by a Buddhist political theory. As guideposts, Chandima listed the ten qualities considered vital for a Buddhist ruler: sharing or generosity; virtue; sacrifice or philanthropy; uprightness; gentleness; self-control and moderation; absence of anger; non-violence; patience; non-obstruction of the people's will. He felt that if these values and virtues could be found among our political representatives, we could have some hope for a political theory that would support the goals of a Buddhist economics and would work toward the well-being of all beings living in the state.

Even with these guideposts, Chandima illustrated with a humorous story the need for moderation in this process because undoubtedly, there is more than one possible way to achieve the goals we were discussing. He described being on a train in India, on a very hot day. A vendor was selling fans made from cardboard at a station and one of the people on the train bought a fan and was using it. In no time, the fan broke. The purchaser called the vendor of the fan over to complain. The vendor asked how he had been using it and the person said, "What do you mean? I

was fanning myself and it broke." The salesperson said, "That's the problem. You were not using it in the proper way. You are supposed to hold the fan still and shake your head like this."

In terms of science, Chandima suggested that if these economic and political principles were in place we should be able to incorporate science with a human face into the development process. Yet he quoted Einstein as saying "All our science, measured against reality is primative and childlike, yet it is the most precious thing we have." Chandima felt that "reality" in this quotation includes the spiritual and philosophical understandings that we had been discussing in this meeting and that Einstein was pointing to the limitations of science in comparison with this enormously complex reality. Beyond these limitations, Chandima said, lie the meanings contributed by religion and spirituality.

Lawrence Troster, a Canadian Jewish rabbi serving a congregation in Bergenfield, New Jersey. An associate with the United Nations Environment Program's Interfaith Partnership, he has a special interest in the relationship between science, religion, and the environment. He began with a story. Two people came to a rabbi to discuss a conflict between them. After listening to the first person explain his position, the rabbi said, "You are right!" After listening to the second explain his point of view, the rabbi again said, "You are right!" When his wife protested that they could not both be right, he replied, "And you are right too!" In fact, this was Lawrence's reaction to the discussion of the group, because he found little in what he had heard to be mutually exclusive. For example, in his own experience with the environmental movement he has come to appreciate better how worldviews determine our values in action and how that action, in turn, can change our consciousness. He felt that both top-down strategies and bottom-up grassroots efforts can be important. A top-down worldview influences changes in policy and bottom-up grassroots efforts can change people's worldviews.

Lawrence said that he has been observing the emergence of an environmental worldview that crosses traditional religious and religious-secular splits; it includes a critique of the present economic paradigm together with a counter-cultural vision. Speaking in November 1999, prior to the WTO meeting in Seattle, Lawrence accurately predicted the unlikely but powerful coalition of environmental, labour, and religious groups that took to the streets to protest on that occasion. From the environmental point of view he sees a unifying worldview emerging that is at once scientific and can appreciate individual religious traditions and values, at least with the Jewish and Christian traditions.

He pointed to the work of scholars such as Ian Barbour (Barbour, 1997) and John Haught (Haught, 1995) as consistent with a unifying worldview. Barbour, in particular, talks of a "critical realism," in which science and religion each have some measure of reality, but without having the whole truth. Science can help illuminate meaning in the universe, as well as provide the foundation upon which each religious tradition can build its worldview. And religion, for its part, can give science a perspective consistent with its highest quest for knowledge and thus liberate it from associations with limiting ideologies.

The environmental critique of development, Lawrence suggested, leads us to ask about the ultimate vision or goal of development? What is the World Bank's vision for the future of China? Is it suburban America? This is a patently an impossible vision. It would take five earths to provide the necessary land and resources to sustain it. But what alternative model is going to be projected? Which leads him to the next question: how will people in the West be convinced to

give up our present levels of over-consumption?

Lawrence also discussed the situation in the Jewish community in which many people do not identify themselves as religious and yet still see themselves as part of a people. He also noted that the Jewish community, historically and today, can be primarily concerned with its survival and thus it is sometimes difficult to legitimize a particularly Jewish sense of commitment to social justice and environmental issues, which are considered the province of the non-Jewish world and secular organizations. Yet, many Jewish young people who do not formally identify with religion, nevertheless feel the pull of spiritual impulse, social justice issues, and environmental concerns.

Pierre Beemans, a vice president at IDRC and the initiator of the SRD project, has degrees in education and philosophy (University of Fribourg), experience in Latin America and Africa, and 20 years with the Canadian international Development Agency (CIDA), as well as a three-year period advising Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau on North-South issues. Pierre limited his few remarks to explaining the origins and history of the project and his final hopes for it. He told of how gingerly he had initially approached the whole question of science, religion, and development by using phrases such as "ethical and belief systems," and how I had pushed him to put more than one toe in the water by speaking first of spirituality, and soon of religion itself, with all the shocking baggage that carries for children of the Enlightenment. He felt reinforced by the public statements by individuals such as James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, who has said that he had accepted the task of president not for personal prestige but because he believed, as a part of his Jewish faith, that he had to take on this responsibility for the sake of the broader community.Despite this growing acceptance, Pierre was convinced that it is still necessary to use a language that people can understand. He appreciated, for example, Naresh's usage of "spiritual capital or assets" as more acceptable in wider circles.

He saw that through this project we have become a trusting, sharing, loving community and he felt that the presence of these participants and their rich dialogue legitimized IDRC's progress thus far. He felt it was our common task to make this new knowledge and experience widely available to replicate similar forums elsewhere in the world. He supported more case studies, as Kamla had always maintained, and the development of new ways to access both universities and popular groups. And, finally, he hoped that we would find alternative sources of funding to support more widely the initial efforts of IDRC.

Major Themes

Major themes discussed here were not necessarily selected for their relative importance but rather by the amount of time the group devoted to discussing them. For example, important themes such as the equality of women and sound ecology were briefly and strongly raised by a few participants, to obvious general approval, but there was little follow-up discussion.

1. Reductionist Science - the Primary Villain? Is there an Alternative?

There was an early and firm consensus in the group that the methodology of reductionist and materialist science was at the heart of our dissatisfaction with the experience of development.

As already seen, participants expressed this in different ways. As Naresh pointed out, the reductionist methodology applied to economics carries considerable responsibility for the biggest failure, that of changing development from an ongoing process into the "development project" with a finite beginning and end, an intervention with the intention of changing other people but not ourselves. Kamla saw scientific reductionism as inseparable from Western values of domination and control. She saw the popular concept of sustainable development simply as a compromise term to avoid critiquing either North or South. She expressed it colourfully as searching for the lost car key, not where it was lost, but under the streetlamp where there was light. Others focussed on the exclusive nature of scientific reduction, in particular the manner in which it excludes non-measurable spiritual or religious realities.

There were suggestions for alternative approaches that would better take into account the realities excluded by the scientific method - especially spiritual reality. Although Magi questioned whether the characteristics of the scientific method would allow it to embrace religious poetic, symbolic, and metaphysical language and the knowledge embodied in this language, others such as Naresh, Lawrence, and Francis were open to experimentation. Farzam insisted that we had to proceed scientifically, and could do so more confidently now that science is itself wrestling with uncertainties or indeterminacies in nature. He saw that a non-reductionist science--a science open to uncertainties and so no longer taking an opposing stance to religion--might now be feasible. As we saw earlier, Farzam was confident that we could establish a relationship of complementarity between science and religion similar to the relationship understood by physicists between particle and wave descriptions. Like Denis, he was dissatisfied with talk of simply bringing religion into the development paradigm, he wants science to provide an intellectual foundation for development research, science open to spiritual reality.

I note briefly here some of the alternative approaches suggested. At the United Nations Development Programme, Naresh is working on "a sustainable livelihood approach," or "a human participatory indigenous development," that parallels recent developments in postmodern science with its chaos and complexity theories, self-organizing systems, and recognition that some phenomenona are contextual or local and others are universal. And its recognition that occasionally a small intervention at the right point of a system can result in a disproportionate change. In development, he is shifting from an approach that focusses on needs to an approach that highlights assets, from traditional diminishing returns of the industrial era to increasing returns in a knowledge-based economy. In brief, his assets approach involves doing pilot studies on the ground, through participatory analysis, aimed at getting a better understanding of the asset base - human, social, natural and physical - of a community. He would put spiritual or religious assets under human assets, but would also be quite ready to call spirituality "human capital" and religion "social capital. A second step looks at what government policies or arrangements would permit people to improve their lives based on their now known asset base– economical, social, and spiritual--and what policies and arrangements are presently preventing people from using their assets. Through this approach, he believed better policies could be developed, but also a better definition of appropriate technology.

These approaches seem consistent with what Denis suggested as a step in the right direction, that is, the introduction of a "full-life paradigm" dimension into the development paradigm, leaving it open to considerations of the transcendent aspects of human existence. Similarly, Farhang's civilization triangle attempts to open up the accustomed viewpoint and

approaches to the transcendental, spirituality, and principles. Others, like Francis and Ogbu, expected exciting results to emerge from more extensive existential dialogue between secular and believing scientists.

In sum, the group agreed that it was not sufficient to critique the present development paradigm, we must understand and critique it at its roots in the reductionist scientific method and, from this understanding, suggest alternative approaches.

2. Worldviews

The concept of worldviews came in for lengthy discussion throughout because perceptions, values, and assumptions that are radically dissimilar--across cultures or across disciplines--were seen as a particularly pressing problem in discussions of an expanded notion of human well-being and development practice and research toward that end. We find these acute differences in discussions around development (e.g., North vs. South), science (e.g., Newtonian paradigm vs. Quantum theory), and values (e.g., materialist vs. religious). In fact, "worldviews," "cosmologies," "mindsets," "paradigms," "ideologies," "theories," and "ideas" were used by the participants, often without definition. One point serves as an example of the difficulties that can come up in this type of conversation. Farhang suggested early on that worldviews did not change, but there was considerable dissent. It turned out that he was using "worldview" in a rather unique sense that related to the ontological bases of fundamentalist religious beliefs, postmodern worldviews that do not allow for an overarching objective truth or reality, and, from the Enlightenment, a narrow rationalist, utilitarian worldview. He felt that worldviews in this sense were closed to change, in fact, that debate among them was usually a zero-sum game. But, during the conversation, it became clear that most participants used "worldview" in a more organic sense, as a perspective or life-pattern that could change or be changed over time. Lawrence, for example, described how he witnessed change in worldviews through the evolving environmental movements. Many members of the group saw this transformation as our chief hope and challenge.

Rather than abstract or theoretical analysis, Ogbu and Magi both insisted that the best way to modify worldviews was through existential dialogue among persons holding different beliefs and worldviews. In this type of dialogue, concrete experience and problems should be the first point of reference. Ogbu gave an example of the process of dialogue changing worldviews. Some years ago, on a cold Saturday morning in Toronto, a mixed group protested in front of a supermarket, declaiming the supermarket chain's support of (or apathy toward) apartheid by selling fruit from South Africa. Some came there to protest as Africans, some as socialists or Marxists, others as Christian socialists or democrats, others simply as anti-capitalists; but each from his or her own perspectives were agreed that the supermarket should not sell the produce of an apartheid system. For Ogbu, this example showed the direction and process of change in worldviews, but also the indeterminacies of its pace. Ogbu believed that one strength in the North is that its people have, over time, shown they are willing to critique their own worldview and change it, as occurred in the 18th century with the Enlightenment, and again today. For him, such flexibility is sadly lacking among the peoples of the South.

Ouyporn pointed out that people from her village need a worldview that makes the links

between such things as dam-building and deforestation, and corruption and the lack of democracy. They need to see how everything in their world is interrelated. In sum, there was a strong consensus that a deeper understanding of issues facing development, science, and values could not be reached unless questions of differing worldviews were also addressed.

3. The dangers of dualism

Kamla started a heated discussion around whether we actually needed new paradigms or worldviews or whether we needed to learn how to translate what we already know into action. Her model was Gandhi, who identified with the poor; he often wore only a loincloth to symbolize this solidarity. We too easily forget that the processes being generated by the World Bank or the UNDP are designed by the rich and powerful, who can have difficulties envisioning the effects of their policies on those who are economically or socially marginalized. Gandhi had a simple piece of advice for policymakers: Ask yourself how your proposed policy will affect the poorest of the poor. He believed that in dealing with people one must go through the other person's point of view and process of understanding before giving them any advice about development.

Francis was convinced that our present problem is less with concepts of development than with the practitioners of development: for him, they have failed in its implementation, by failing to display a consistent commitment to public good, failing to display a sincerity of purpose, and failing to advance the cause of common men and women. John suggested that scientists, engineers and technicians, in particular, find it difficult to understand gaps in and thus change their worldviews. In a similar vein, Lawrence discussed a radio report about a new book entitled *The Next New Thing,* in which the author described many of the professionals who work in Silicon Valley as "socially dysfunctional." They know how to relate to virtual reality only, not flesh-and-blood women and men. They live in a world abstracted not only from other people, but also from the natural environment. Thus, they tend to be very anti-environment in their attitudes.

Ouyporn talked about her preference for concrete action, for example, teaching refugee women about human rights. Gregory also appealed to praxis (practice and action); for him, people working together to solve a common problem can change their consciousness. They learn an affinity for one another and learn to communicate with each other, even though their theory (theologies and/or ideologies) may not converge. For example, personally, he has little use for abstract interreligious dialogue but can see concrete results when Buddhist, Christians, Jews, and Muslims come together over an issue of social justice, as is happening in many regions of the world today.

Naresh still strongly defended the necessity of developing suitable theory, however. Denis reminded us, in the words of his longtime friend, Paulo Freire, that the challenge is changing people who have been mere objects of history (and thus passive) into subjects of history (and thus action-oriented). He was annoyed with himself at not being able to recall the name of a pioneer in development education in northeast Brazil who founded a university for the poor. He wrote a book in Portuguese entitled "To the Universal from the Particular," justifying his policy of not permitting any separation of theory from practice in his curriculum. Finally, however, this mixed group of practitioners and theoreticians agreed that the gifts and experience of both theory and action are necessary to support each other.

An implicit theme in all our discussion was the absolute requirement for sustainable

development to expand inclusion step-by-step in order to overcome destructive dualisms or divisions that marginalize various groups--women, the poor, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups everywhere. Kamla likened modern development to the traditional houses in India and her metaphor was seized on with enthusiasm by the groups as an excellent metaphor, based in concrete local experience, for the disempowerment and unnecessary conflict inherent in dualisms. She described the kind of houses lived in by her parents and grandparents. They had a front yard with a raised platform that was the seat of authority where the men gathered to talk about political problems and other important affairs of the world. Inside there was the kitchen and a niche for the gods and goddesses and, then, in the backyard was the domain of the women. Here they gossiped about themselves and their neighbours and shared secrets about themselves that could not be talked about in front of men. In the backyard, they grew flowers and herbs for cooking and healing. This was where needy people came for help and where marriages were arranged. Thus there were two important parts of the house; one, where political power and other weighty issues of the universe mattered and another where sustenance, healing, relationships and community mattered.

Today, she sees the front yard as the urban centres where politicians, engineers, economists, and businessmen discuss and plan the affairs of the world. And the backyard is the domain of the poor, living in villages, farming, steeped in religious beliefs, rituals, and pilgrimages. In its development, India has created two Indias, elitist urban India inhabits the front yard while the backyard is occupied by poor rural people, who do not speak English and have time only to worry about the matters of their daily survival. Kamla suggests that it is time that science and religion--the front yard and the backyard--be integrated, and all marginalized groups become genuine partners with the elites in all that has to do with sustainable development.

4. Reduced to Zero to become Free

As we have seen, Kamla, using the example of Gandhi, also challenged the group about the necessity of being reduced to zero and embracing poverty in order to become free to change one's worldview and to provide fearless leadership. On the other hand, Promilla questioned whether it was necessary to embrace absolute poverty. Ouyporn explained that, in her Buddhist experience, it was not so much in embracing poverty as in embracing (or understanding) suffering that one becomes free and finds inner peace. She sees people in the West trying to escape suffering by various means, but they leave their loved ones to die alone in the care of a machine. Who is it then who needs to change its worldview -- the rich North or the poor South? While social transformation will come only with personal transformation, this will happen not as the result of scientific knowledge or intellectual discussion, but from inner discovery. Denis offered confirmation of Ouyporn's perspective. He described how Eric Fromm found scientific evidence that inner peace or satisfaction was connected with distancing oneself from the "having" orientation, which includes possessions and personal ego. Chandima made the same point from Buddhist teachings on economics and politics.

The question of being reduced to zero also raised the absolute necessity for humility, empathy, friendship, and relational learning in development activity. In contrast, we find the attitude that often accompanies development. It is unself-critical, sees development primarily as charity and, based on the apparent "successes" of the West, assumes that development agents

know exactly what needs to be done in order to improve the well-being of others, even those radically different from themselves.

Finally, Farzam described that in the mystical tradition of Islam, individuals are seen as journeying toward God through a number of valleys. Bahá'u'lláh wrote an exposition on the subject called The Seven Valleys, which are the valleys of search, love, knowledge, unity, contentment, wonderment, and true poverty and absolute nothingness. Farzam felt that the themes of these valleys are quite relevant to the search for solutions to the problems of development.

5. Community-based Approaches

Early in the discussions, Janet Somerville insisted on the crucial importance of using an approach to change that is based in the community. Farzam reminded the group that community is the "soft thing" between the extremes of individualism and collectivism. A community can support the need to work simultaneously on changing individual hearts, as well as human and institutional structures. In all previous times, a sense of community was considered essential but now that understanding is disappearing, especially in the process of urbanization. People in these circumstances are trying to build partial specialized communities, whether religious, scientific, or cultural to foster some kind of basic unity in their society. These new communities can become the focus for change in both social structures and human hearts. Farzam pointed out that in building and sustaining such interconnected communities both theoreticians and practitioners are indispensable: the theoretician transfers the knowledge and the practitioner puts it into action at the grassroots.

In fact, the chief strategy for following up on this meeting was that the participants would share this experience with their own communities in ever-widening circles and, to the extent possible, by replicating the experience of this now enlarged core group, which has proven a joyful, fruitful experience of sharing in the Spirit across different faiths, cultures, disciplines, and geographical borders.

6. "Religion" or "spirituality"?

Participants also shared their personal experiences around the use of the term "religion." For example, Pierre explained it would have been easier with this project to use some expression like "ethical and belief systems" or even spirituality. Religion raises red flags because it carries so much historical baggage. In their professional lives and perhaps especially in seeking grants for development projects, several participants had been strongly advised not to use religious language in their proposals, even though funds were often being administered through religion-based organizations because of their proven and largely corruption-free track records in helping those in most need. Magi suggested that because of this baggage she preferred to use phrases such as "the sacred" and "the transcendent" to push beyond the religious institutions to their divine source.

In general, however, "spirituality" seemed to the group as too weak or vague a word to cover the experience we were discussing. John recalled for those who had recently heard the distinguished Muslim thinker Seyyed Hossein Nasr speak at Carleton University of his

impatience with the association of spirituality with changing cults and fads. Nasr's view that only when knowledge is fitted into "awe for the sacred" will we finally understand how science is not in conflict with religion and vice versa.

For his part, Lawrence pointed out that there is no word for "spirituality" in Hebrew. He saw the reluctance to use the term "religion" in the West as having its roots in the fact that religion has become an intensely private affair, rather than communal, and is seen as subjective. Spirituality movements are growing but they usually revolve around personal self-actualization, having nothing to do with social justice. In fact, it is the transfusion of consumerism into the religious realm. Because the generally accepted view in Western society is that the only reliable path to knowledge is science, people are uncomfortable with and avoid using religious or God language in public, especially in academe. But Lawrence reminded us that science and even secularism are not value-free.

I suggested that people live by spirituality, that is, out of their experience of the presence of the Spirit or of God active in their daily lives. Spirituality is the dynamic revolutionary force in religion. But it cannot be only self-serving and self-actualizing; authentic spirituality quickly reaches out to others in love and service, especially those who are suffering or who are poor. To my mind the compromise being promoted by the communitarian movement in North America and by the sociologist Amitai Etzioni is insufficient. Believers are invited to bring their values into the public forum, but to park their religious language at the door. This is a superficial compromise that serves to thwart the dynamism of those societal values, by cutting them off from their roots in the religious beliefs that nourish them.

Denis cited sociologist Peter Berger (Berger, 1992) on the persistence of religion in spite of ever higher levels of education and science's growing prestige. He suggested that the persistence of religion and of religious phenomena are empirical data, that natural scientists, as well as social scientists, must take into account. He dismissed the suggestion of mass illusion -- there is too much evidence of free choice in faith matters in our times -- and concluded that religion is simply part of reality that cannot be wished away. As Ouyporn put it, "Religion is always there. It depends on the observer whether he or she decides to see it or not." Francis pointed out that the people of Nigeria do not want a secular state, but rather they want to talk about their religion in public life. Why should foreigners try to stop this civil society dialogue, rather than encourage the people of Nigeria to benefit from their spiritual capital?

Farzam admitted that there have been abuses by religion, but asked whether anyone can deny the abuses perpetrated by science and politics? Why are abuses of the latter tolerated, while those of religion are reason to suggest its marginalization and demise? Denis pointed out the tendency in development to discuss religion openly only as an instrument that facilitates or obstructs development.

A serious problem remains, however, in terms of building a larger solidarity. Sharon and Gregory pointed out that religious language makes many of our closest allies uncomfortable and closes them to the value of these ideas. Many of these people share the values and principles we were discussing and even a sense of the transcendent beyond the material, but they do not express it in religious terms. Moreover, we must not use missionary language that seems bent on converting people from one system of belief to another and excluding others who do not share those beliefs.

Farzam, however, was concerned that we would not retreat from the freedom provided to

us in *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market*. He suggested that we should continue to use the language we had been using thus far, while searching for a more broadly understandable vocabulary. Lawrence suggested that we can only proceed step-by-step, by cooperating on social justice and environmental causes and by concentrating on dialogue with various concerned groups rather than on correct language or interreligious debate.

7. Science, Religion, and Development

In his reflection paper, entitled "A Civilizational Approach to Development; A Feast of the Spirit, the Mind and the Heart," Farhang suggested that the relationship among science, religion, and politics can be modelled as a dynamic triangle. In our meeting, this SRD triangle was a central and recurring theme. Upon review, it became evident that there was no common understanding among participants of what Farhang was suggesting and therefore I decided to share his thinking more fully here.[4]

Farhang's approach reacts against current thinking and the popular feeling that "development" is tantamount to complete aloofness from a belief system. He illustrated this point with a story recounted to him in 1998 by a old man in his home village in northwestern Iran. He said, "I am developed, I guess, because I have piped water, electricity, and even a television, plus the possibility of enjoying some health care and even the benefit of a social security card. But inside I am lost. No longer do I enjoy the revered status of father, as an elder or as a senior member of the community. Further, I feel my ethical and moral world was the price I paid for this development."[5]

Here I am using Farhang's paper, on which he based his interventions at our meeting. He wrote: "A human being is a composite of economic, political, moral, religious and scientific personalities. Any formulation of theory of politics, society and development has to take this complex composite into consideration. Any formulation that relies on nothing but science would be mechanistic and lack sensibility. One that was nothing but politics or economics would be beastly and lack compassion and horizon, while that which was nothing but religious would be saintly, but lack worldly desires." Instead, Farhang suggested a holistic thinking based on all spheres of the human life-world, modeled as a triangle. The basis of this triangle is a combination of the mind, the heart, and the soul, which represent the various components of a human being. The soul sets the path, the mind makes sense of the path and the heart perseveres through the process of materialization. The first is done by religious experience, the second by the sciences and the third is done through politics. It is interesting to observe that while they are connected at the level of what constitutes reality (ontology), each has its own sphere of operation (epistemology) and own manner of operating (phenomenology).

Ignorance of the interconnection of these dimensions or elimination of any one dimension results in an unrecoverable imbalance. For example, during the Middle Ages, the power of the Christian churches was such that the dimension pertaining to the mind was ignored and suppressed. The result was evident in the tragic suppression of great minds and ideas. On the

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[4] Following the meeting, four of the participants, Denis, Magi, Sharon, and myself worked with Farhang via email to articulate this triangle relationship more fully for a wider audience under the title "The Virtous Triangle: A Holistic Model of the Human Condition," which we hope to publish in an academic journal.

[5] Page 1 of "Civilizational Approach to Development; A Feast of the Spirit, the Mind and the Heart."

other hand, in the Soviet experience the regime tried to ignore or suppress the spiritual dimension, which led to the unfortunate collapse of that balance and the effects that still continue.

Farhang felt that historical consideration of past civilizations shows that whenever the dimension of religion, science, and politics operate in harmony, the result has been human emancipation and socially meaningful exercise of human artistic and intellectual innovation--in short, development. In fact, it has been proven time and time again that ignoring the religious/spiritual/principle dimension paves the way to cynicism and unlimited self-interest, suppressing science leads to ignorance, and the absence of politics encourages injustice and tyranny. The complexities and diversity of humanity and its very survival demand a balanced approach, which avoids excesses in any one dimension.

8. What are we going to do about it?

I have already laid out Azizan's dilemma whether to enjoy the rich dialogue at the meeting or be more concerned with the product IDRC would put into her hands to share with her various communities in Malaysia. Pierre and Chris both stressed the exciting legitimation process taking place because of the SRD project, through the sharing of experience and struggling to find new and better language to communicate more effectively these experiences of living out this holistic triangular approach to development. Most participants shared their plans to share this rich experience with their various specialized communities and some their hopes to replicate it in their country or region. They also foresaw benefitting regularly from this new sharing and understanding among persons from different faiths, disciplines, cultures, and development experiences via e-mail. The then-pending publication of *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market* by IDRC and Kumarian Press was considered a giant step in legitimizing and disseminating the fruits of this project and thus widening the circle of persons interested or directly involved in promoting it in their local research, teaching or practical experience in development.

Chris shared a hope that a third and final publication would be produced, through which the proceedings of this meeting would be disseminated, along with the revised versions of the reflections the participants had prepared and shared prior to this meeting. The goal was to provide messages of hope and invitation for today's youth to explore new ways of looking at the world. Unfortunately, as a result of forces beyond IDRC's control, the recordings of our meeting could not be suitably adapted for use by CBC Radio programs, nor was a lead article able to be developed from the transcripts, as anticipated. Without this core piece, plans for the third publication had to be dropped. This present summary is the best we can do at this time and will, I trust, achieve at least some of the important goals articulated by the participants and help them in their efforts to widen the circle of those interested in this exciting area of thought and research. It was certainly IDRCs desire to find a widening circle of partners with which it could share this groundbreaking, demanding, and exhilarating area of thought and research.

A Few Final Personal Reflections

It is hard to find words to describe this meeting adequately--perhaps an unfinished symphony comes closest. Perhaps too, that is why the participants stayed around afterward, chatting in small groups as if not accepting that the meeting was really finished. Given the

different backgrounds of the participants one could not have anticipated the intense spontaneity, creativity, and freedom experienced by the group, even making allowances that they had already reviewed a draft of *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market* and developed their own personal written reflections on the topics.

Of course, there are certain weaknesses inherent in this type of discussion. At times, the general looseness of language and absence of definitions led to the perception of wide consensus on crucial points, but made it difficult for anyone to describe precisely the content behind that consensus. This was particularly evident in the wide range of meanings associated with the term "worldview." In preferring spontaneity to discipline we also sacrificed closure on particular points and a final list of agreed-on findings. But, the alternative of having participants read from prepared texts could have reinforced academic or ideological positions and hierarchies and would not have allowed time to develop the synergetic sharing across faiths, cultures, disciplines, and lived experiences of development work, which was, after all, the very rare and genuine gift of this unusual meeting.

On balance, I believe we made the right choice, but as already suggested, we are left with an unfinished symphony. I suppose with a tangle of questions this large and complex, one could not expect a finished work in five, ten, or even twenty years. Now, however, we are left with the challenge to multiply similar dialogues around the world, as a means of education, sharing, and community-building. We are also challenged to keep working on the symphony by organizing smaller and longer meetings that have the time, the patience, the expertise, and the experience to find new inclusive language and terminology, acceptable to scientists, believers, and development policymakers alike, which will enable them to examine more systematically the implications of non-reductionist scientific methodologies.

The most obvious strength of this meeting was the diversity and high quality of these experienced participants, whether as theoreticians, practitioners of development, or scientists. This provided them, I believe, with the freedom and creativity to deal fearlessly with experimental ideas, open-ended concepts, and a wider rationality, without anxious concern for precise definitions and closure on particular debates. This was evident, for example, in their critique not only of the modern development paradigm but also of its foundation, the reductionist scientific method itself, and also in their innovative suggestions for working toward a holistic, non-reductionist scientific method that will be open to the benefits that come from an appreciation of the transcendent.

This freedom was perhaps even more evident in the willingness to consider the implications of Kamla's challenge to search their respective faith traditions for ways of understanding the experience of being reduced to zero, to nothingness, and of embracing poverty as an essential condition for conversion of both individual hearts and cultural worldviews. It was also there in the acceptance of Ouyporn's challenge that people from the West had to examine and change themselves, especially their environmental and consumeristic attitudes, before they suppose that they can "help" the poor in their own countries or in the South.

Yet their experience also led them to reject easy romanticizations of tradition and poverty, but to look for an understanding of development in which material advancement is not shunned nor are traditions abandonned, but are evolved to reflect the changes that people are experiencing everyday. I think there are few models for development that advance the conditions of physical life, as well as nurturing communities and the spaciousness of individual hearts. Certainly the

lopsided Western model of growth has not achieved this balance and therefore should not be envied or emulated wholesale, as it is so often. This meeting was ultimately about finding this balance, becoming aware of the models that currently exist, and encouraging the creation of others.

Ouyporn and Kamla, with others, certainly suggested that the ideal should not be the Western approach, where individualism, materialism, and the pursuit of power are all too often and openly acclaimed the highest goods. They were saying that material satisfaction alone is ultimately insufficient and deeply unsatisfying, and that undue attachment to material goods can create personal suffering and a blindness to the suffering of others. But, as Farzam emphasized, there are many paths to God. Although true spiritual and societal leadership may require an understanding of the situation of the poor based in experience, people engaging in ongoing self-transformation may find that they have other challenges to face and other abilities to offer in service.

The participants also accepted as simple fact that spirituality, religion and its influence *is* scientific data for both believer and scientist alike. Although they did not abdicate their use of God and religious language in the public forum, the participants saw one of the aspects of the way forward as being open, persevering existential dialogue. That is, a dialogue with secular people leading to action against shared problems in a common search for mutually understandable and inclusive language that can encompass the larger reality that the majority of the world's population knows to exist.

Finally, the participants also seemed agreed that the pursuit of these issues should proceed step by step, drawing theoretical concepts from local experience in developing countries, rather than from the accepted wisdom of Western ideologies or worldviews imposed as a universal absolute. In other words, the process needs to involve patiently learning how to proceed from multiple particularities in order to formulate an inclusive, open, and responsive global environment that holds the goals of environmental sustainability, peace, justice, unity, and self-understanding and -transformation on par and in balance with intellectual, scientific, and economic pursuits.

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