

CG 301 Social Structures and Problems



Certificate and Diploma Levels

**Teacher's Handbook
Nazarene Theological Institute
Church of the Nazarene
Africa Region**

Nazarene Theological Institute
Church of the Nazarene - Africa Region

CG 301a Social Structures and Problems

Certificate and Diploma Levels
Syllabus

This teacher's manual was authored by:

LEDJOU G. Honoré L.E. (Licence d'Enseignement), M.A. (Maîtrise de
Lettres en Religion)

Rev. James Matthew Price, B.A., M.Div., Ph.D.

Editor: G. Crofford

Teachers: Please send requests for a copy of the final exam and all notices of typographical errors, to: admin.itn@gmail.com

Please allow at least one week for response time.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *New International Version* (Zondervan, 1988).

Course Description

This course will expose students to human social structures (family, tribe, nation, etc.) and various social problems (war, racial conflict, abuse of the environment, violence, injustice, divorce, exploitation, AIDS, etc.). The student as a minister of the Gospel will be able to understand and respond to these different problems.

Course Rationale

Narration

The African pastor in the 21st century will have the challenge of entering the ministry in a very complicated situation with the possibilities of economic growth or decline among church members who come from a long history of exploitation and even violence in African society. The Church of the Nazarene believes divine redemption, made possible through Jesus Christ upon the cross, aims at changing the social structures and problems which are the residue of the spiritual condition

of the sinner. At least, the pastor should know how to care for others who are victim of various injustices. Since Jesus called us to be the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matt 5:13-14), effective pastors should be aware of the resources available to create a safe environment of love and peace in which true reconciliation promotes just governments at all levels of society as a testimony of the grace of God for all humanity.

Program Outcomes

The following program outcomes assigned to this module are identifiable competencies required of the student in this course:

- CN 4 Appreciation of the theological foundations of the Christian faith from the Biblical point-of-view when read from a Wesleyan perspective
- CN 5 Realization of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of holiness doctrine when taught from a Wesleyan perspective
- CN 7 Appreciation of the mission, history, and government of the Church of the Nazarene and its place in the larger Christian community
- CN 12 Consider the application of Christian morality in daily life
- CN 13 Learn the principles of interpersonal relations

- CP 3 Ability to defend the doctrines and positions of the Church of the Nazarene
- CP 8 Ability to provide pastoral care through visiting the sick, important rites of passage, and give Biblical counseling
- CP 9 Ability to guide people toward reconciliation

- CR 2 Ability to show sexual purity before and after marriage and apply principles of marriage to the Christian family
- CR 6 Ability to give value to relationships through openness, righteousness, and honesty
- CR 9 Ability to engage in continuing formation and education
- CR 10 Ability to set an example of Christian stewardship

- CX 2 Ability to understand the context within which he or she lives with objectivity
- CX 5 Ability to interpret on a scientific and biblical bases the Christian position on magic, spiritism, medicine and traditional healing

Course Outcomes for this Module

For achieving the competencies listed above, this module organizes several learning activities and requirements around the following intended learning outcomes for this course.

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Define the concepts of society and culture and their role in the believer's life (CN 12);
2. Understand the various structures of society—family, government, economy, education, etc.—and explain the Christian perspective on each of these structures (CN 4, CN 12, CN 13; CP 3);
3. Explain the major problems found in society within this cultural context (polygamy, civil war, racial conflicts, violence, injustice, exploitation, etc.) as the result of original sin coming to life as systemic evil and sinful social structures (CN 4, CN 5, CN 9, CN 13; CP 8; CR 2; CX 2);
4. Understand the different political systems and the role of the church in the political system according to the context of one's ministry (CN 7, CN 12; CR 6; CX 2);
5. Explain the role of the church in society as an agent of reconciliation and redemption (CN 7, CP 9; CR 6);
6. Advise church members how to choose and participate in methods of reconciliation and redemption available in their contexts and/or how to form such as organization (CN 4, CN 5, CN 13; CP 9; CR 9);
7. Care for church members that fall victim to societal evils (CN 5, CP 8); Understand and explain the false hopes presented by the various practices of traditional religions (CN 9, CX 5);
8. Set an example of Christian stewardship (broadly defined), which includes one's stewardship of the created order (CR 10).

The following sessions and exercises of this course offer the following percentages of the four Cs:

Content	35%
Competence	25%
Character	25%
Context	15%

Course Texts and Supplementary Reading

The student handbook is based on the following resources in English and French:

Childs, S. Brevard. *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Durozoi, Gerard. *Philosophie L-ES-S:ABC BAC 2002 Sujets corrigés*. Paris: Nathan, 2001.

Guillou, Michel, and Moingeon, Marc, et. al. *Dictionnaire Universel*. 3e edition. Vanves: Hachette, 1995.

Labrentz, A.J. *Facing the new Challenges: the message of PACLA*. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1978.

Ledjou, Gahi Aime. *Libellule enchaonee*. Abidjan: CEDA, 1999.

Maluleka, H. Mashangu. *The Bible Speaks About Marriage: Challenging the Church in Africa*. Republic of South Africa: Africa Nazarene Publications, 2002.

Mbiti, John S. *Introduction to African Religion* 2nd ed. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd., 1996.

Mugambi, J.N.K. *African Christian Theology: an Introduction*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd, 1994.

Parrat, John. *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*. New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1995.

Pazmino, W. Robert. *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: an Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*. Grand Rapids (MI): Baker Book House, 1988.

Walker, Don. *Global Awareness: Our Stewardship of God's World and Contemporary Global Issues*. Nairobi, Kenya: Africa Nazarene School of Extension, 2003.

Course requirements and evaluation

+ Final Exam	50%
Quizzes (2)	10%
*Assigned Activities	40%

+ This exam should be given orally to those in the certificate level. For a diploma level student, the written exam should be administered.

* These are the “activities for action” and “questions for discussion” that appear throughout the course. Full credit of 40% should be given as long as a given student is fully engaged and participates in discussion.

Course overview

Introduction

Session 1—Society and Culture

Defining “society”

Activity for Action: Look up passages in the book of Genesis and identify the problems found in human relationships in society.

The Relationship Between Society and Culture

Defining Culture (Questions for Discussion)

Material and Non-material Culture (Questions for Discussion)

The Christian Believer in Relation to Society and Culture

Activity for Action: Scenarios: What is normal culturally and biblically?

Consider the scenarios in small group discussion or as individual homework assignments. Consider the reasons for these practices within the culture and then discuss these practices in light of the Bible. Try to arrive at an appropriate response for the minister of the Gospel in these contexts.

Christ and Culture

Activity for Action: Apply Christ and culture to the scenarios. Take one of the scenarios listed above and apply to it each of the five tensions between Christ and Culture. Evaluate which of the tensions is the best response to the cultural practice illustrated in the scenario. This assignment may be given as a small group project or as a writing assignment.

Session 2—Social Structures in Society

Defining Family

Activity for Action: Be a Better Family. In groups, read assigned Bible passage and discover how it will help strengthen families in your local context.

The Problem of Divorce (Questions to Discuss)

Comparing Polygamy (multiple spouses) and Monogamy (Questions for Discussion)

Reasons for Polygyny (multiple wives) (Questions for Discussion)

Defining Tribes (Questions for Discussion)

Comparing Traditional (Tribal) and Modern (Urban) Perspectives
Nation, Politics, Economy, and Government

Defining the Nation-State

Defining Economy: Socialism and Capitalism (Questions for Discussion)

Defining Politics and Government: Monarchy and Democracy

Defining Democracy (Questions for Discussion)

Activity for Action: Research and list rights and duties of the State for its citizens and vice versa within this particular country.

Manual Statement on the Church and Human Freedom

Summary on Government (Questions for Discussions)

Session 3—Major Problems in Society

War

Manual Statement on War

Activity for Action: Research local, national, or international newspapers (or online news sites, such as cnn.com or

bbcnews.com) for articles related to wars in the world today. After identifying these outbreaks of war, commit each local church represented in class to pray for those involved in these conflicts.

Racial Conflicts (Questions for Discussion)

Manual Statement on Discrimination (Questions for Discussion)

Violence

Activity for Action: Read the biblical passages assigned and consider the difficulty of making peace.

HIV/AIDS

What Is HIV/AIDS?

How Is HIV transmitted?

How can we prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS?

What are Biblical ways of avoiding infection by HIV/AIDS?

What attitude and actions should the church have toward those infected with HIV/AIDS?

Manual Statement on HIV/AIDS (Questions for Discussion)

Creation Care

Selections from chapter 2 of Don Walker's *Global Awareness: Our Stewardship of God's World and Contemporary Global Issues*

Activity for Action: Discuss specific ways in which a local church can have a positive impact on the environment, either in a preventive or healing way.

Session 4—The Role of Church in Society

Its Responsibility

Its Four Main Tasks in Society

Church as Agent of Redemption and Reconciliation

Activity for Action: Role-play conflict resolution between two factions that need to be reconciled, such as villagers in a land dispute or between husband and wife in a local family. After presenting the scenario, give the pastors an opportunity to discuss how they will act redemptively and in the ministry of reconciliation

Session 5—Living as Christian in Society

Who We Are (The Church)
What We Believe (Agreed Statement of Belief)
How We Live (Covenant of Christian Conduct:
What We Do, What We Avoid, and How We Live Together
(Questions for Discussion for each section above)

Session 6-The African in Social Context

Famine, Poverty, and Illiteracy in Africa
Africa and the Occult, Sorcery, Magic, and Spiritism
The Biblical Position on Magic, Sorcery, Spiritism, and Traditional
Medicine
A Positive Aspect of Traditional Medicine
Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence of God as an
Antidote
Biblical Texts Supporting Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, and
Omnipresence

Conclusion—Social Structures, Problems, and the Church’s Charge

Course Introduction

In responding to the philosophical question: “Who am I?”, Gerard Durozoi proposes a sociological approach to discovering knowledge about us in the following words:

I know that I live in a society, I belong to a certain social and professional context. A sociologist analyzes my group, describes its manners, economy, and leisure. I find myself lost in the mix of what society has given me. Eventually, its regularities, if not its laws, that seem to me very communal in nature allow me a way to describe just exactly how I am unique.

There is one major truth contained in this citation: humans are social beings. In other words, we live in society and society itself is guided by

rules that govern and determine the actions of its members. The life of a human being in society is a universally recognized conception.

After considering the relationship between self and society, we can then ask ourselves the next question: "How does this relate to humans and culture?" Professor John S. Mbiti responds to this important question in this way: "A culture fashions persons and persons create culture." It is universally accepted that persons are the product of culture. But, as Mbiti suggests, culture itself is a human creation. If persons are the product of culture, it is therefore important that ministers called by God have an adequate knowledge of his or her culture and context as well as that of the people among whom they work.

Beyond examining one's cultural context, this course will also offer an analysis of the major problems of society including war, abuse of the environment, racial conflicts, social injustice, exploitation, and AIDS and other diseases. The course will also look at different social structures and the role of the church within the social politics of the day, Christian morality and its role in society, the distinctive teachings of the Church of the Nazarene and how they relate to the African ministers in their cultural contexts. Finally it is important to mention that this course will attempt to show how character—how one acts when no one is watching—will guide one's involvement as a minister of God in society. It is important to remember the role of the Four Cs (Content, Competency, Character, and Context) in the preparation of ministers in the Church of the Nazarene.

SESSION 1: SOCIETY AND CULTURE

A. What is "society"?

According to the dictionary, **society** is defined as "a voluntary association of individuals...an organized group working together...an enduring and cooperating social group whose members have developed organized community, nation, or broad groupings of people having common traditions, institutions, and shared activities and interests."

These definitions of society reflect two basic ideas found in the Bible: human beings need each other and relationships between persons are for our common good (Leming, DeVries, and Furnish, 1989, 85-86) In Genesis 1, God creates a different aspect of the world (Greek, *kosmos*) each day concluding with the creation of man (Hebrew, *adam*) and calls all parts of His creation "good." But, God comments after creating man, saying "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Creation was not complete until woman was created in relationship to man. According to the Bible, human isolation is not good and human community is good. Humanity is created to be social, to be together.

God wants to encourage human interaction through:

Leviticus 9:18—the quality of human relationships

Ruth 1:16-17—the durability of human relationships

Matthew 19:6—the strength of human relationships

Some examples of God's concern for human society can be found in the following passages:

Husband and wife to be faithful to each other (Ephesians 5:21-33)

Kings (political leaders) to protect the weak and oppressed (Psalm 72:1-4)

Citizens to submit to the rule of legitimate authority (Romans 13:1-4)

Christians to gather together on a regular basis (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Neighbors to love one another (Matthew 19:19)

Wealthy to give to the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)

Strong to give aid to the weak (Luke 10:25-27)

Human relationships are also full of problems and difficulties, as seen in the book of Genesis.

Activity for action – Look up the following passages in Genesis and identify the problems found in human relationships in society:

Genesis 3:12 (Adam blames Eve for his sinful disobedience toward God)

Genesis 4:8 (Cain in his jealous anger kills his brother Abel)

Genesis 6:1-3 (Marriage relationships are perverted)

Genesis 19:4-9 (Neighbor exploits neighbor)

Genesis 25 (Jacob deceives/lies to gain from his own brother)

Genesis 37:12-36 (Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers)

Genesis 38:11-27 (Judah sleeps with his daughter-in-law disguised as a prostitute)

Genesis 39:2-23 (Potiphar's wife wrongly accuses Joseph)

Based on these biblical references, why do you think God's people are an important part of the society in which they live?

B. What is "society"? What is its relationship to "culture"?

Sociologists Richard T. Schaefer and Robert P. Lamm define society, generally speaking, as a group of individuals that share a common geographic space, common culture, and common language and are relatively independent from other groups in these same categories of territory, culture, and language (*Sociology*, 4th edition, MacGraw-Hill, 1992).

According to Schaefer and Lamm's definition of society, the connection between society and culture is undeniable. There is no such thing as a society without culture or vice versa. According to Schaefer and Lamm, "culture is the sum total of all that is learned and transmitted socially and defines behavior and actions of a social group

as well as what it holds as its main ideas, its values taught and received, and its customs and traditions." (Ibid., p.35)

1. The elements of culture

Culture helps us to understand our society and social relationships. There are five universal elements in culture: **symbols, language, values, norms**, and **material culture**.

Symbols are anything that carries meaning for members of a cultural group, such as objects, images, clothing, words, and positions in family, work, or society in general.

Questions for discussion

In discovering cultural symbols in one's society, ask the following questions for examples to discover cultural symbols in your society.

How do you find a taxi?

How do you know who the leaders are in your society?

Why are meals usually eaten together?

Language is a type of symbol that helps people communicate with one another.

Values are standards for people to judge what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Examples are found in art and music.

Norms are expectations that guide behavior in a society (usually derived from its cultural values). Examples are how parents raise children or how one deals with authority.

Material culture is the "stuff" or the things that persons use to relate to their environment (usually by applying shared knowledge to help each other with how to live in one's physical environment, through a process called technology.) We'll consider more of this cultural element later.

According to anthropologist George Murdock, culture helps us understand our social relationships in the types of sports and games that

are played, the way food is eaten, how men and women relate sexually through marriage and family, the way religious rituals are performed, how dances and music are performed, etc. These values may be expressed in a variety of ways between cultures and help one understand and give meaning to one's society.

Note on subcultures. Subcultures are small groups within society that may hold to certain symbols, values, language, and norms that differ from the dominant culture.

Questions for discussion

What might be some examples of subcultures in your society?
How might Christian believers be considered a subculture within your society?

In review, culture helps us understand our society (social relationships) by giving us symbols, to communicate values that guide our beliefs and actions, and the ability to apply this cultural knowledge to the place where we live.

2. Material and non-material culture

Sociologists make a difference between material and non-material culture. According to sociologist William Ogburn, **material culture** includes the physical and technological aspects of daily living, such as tools used for making and eating food, the manner and materials used to construct houses and other buildings, and forms of industry and transportation. **Non-material culture** refers to traditions, customs, beliefs, philosophies (ways of knowing and reasoning), styles of government, and means of communication and education. Non-material culture is much more difficult and more resistant to change than material culture (Schafer and Lamm, 35).

Questions for discussion

- a. Can you think of examples of material culture? (building homes from mud bricks or cement; taxis or horses, farming land or working in factories)
- b. Can you think of examples of non-material culture? (religious practices for healing someone, relying on sacrifices to ancestors,

teaching children at home or at school, meetings to discuss community problems)

c. Why do you think non-material culture is more resistant to change? (A variety of opinions might be expressed.)

3. The Christian believer in relation to society and culture

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see you good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).

In this passage from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus affirms that those who are truly his disciples are salt and light in this world, meaning representatives of Christian society and culture. Further, these Christian societies – “cities on a hill” – are regulated by certain norms—formal and informal (Matthew 5:14).

Formal norms are generally written down in the governmental constitutions used by nations to regulate human society. Those who violate these laws (norms or rules / Greek *nomos*) are punished. On the other hand, **informal norms** are unwritten but recognized and accepted by members of a society. These informal norms may be violated but there is not usually a formal punishment but rather the disdain of others toward the one who has not lived up to the expectations of society.

In addition, it is also important to remember that each society applies a system for sanctioning an individual's actions through a means equal to the individual's actions. The sanctions may be negative such as a penalty for breaking the norms or positive through gaining approval or upholding the norms. Respect of the laws of the state, or formal norms, may lead to social and political liberty. To break the law of the state could lead to imprisonment or fines.

If a society defines itself as being a group of individuals with the same territory and same culture, it means they have the same language, same religion, same customs, same traditions, and common laws. It is imperative for Christian believers to know the position of the Church in the midst of society and the culture of society in order to be a bright and shining example of God's light to the rest of the world.

Activity for action – Scenarios: What is normal culturally and biblically?

Consider the following scenarios in small group discussion or as individual homework assignments. Consider the reasons for these practices within the culture and then discuss these practices in light of the Bible. Try to arrive at an appropriate response for the minister of the Gospel in these contexts.

1) Consider the practice of the Ivorian ethnic group known as “Les Gouro.” In the case of a husband being away from his wife for a prolonged period, the true brother of the husband has the right to have sex with his brother’s wife in order to continue producing children. What does the Bible say to this particular aspect of this cultural tradition?

2) Among the Mukamba of Kenya, dead ancestors are venerated and prayers are addressed to them. Sometimes sacrifices are offered to them. The ancestors are considered intermediaries between those who are living and God. What is culturally and/or biblically appropriate?

3) The temples of voodoo, or fetchism, are found throughout Africa in which followers devote themselves to the dangerous practices of sorcery. What does the Bible say to them?

In all of these cases, what must be the biblical response of the Church in light of these cultural traditions and practices?

C. Christ and Culture

A 20-century theologian and author H. Reinhold Niebuhr recognized that there is always a dynamic tension between the biblical teaching and the culture found in human society. In one of his books entitled *Christ and Christ*, Niebuhr proposes five possible relationships between Christ (the Church) and culture:

1. **Christ against Culture** – (The Antagonists) Christ is the sole authority to which people may submit and not to culture or society. Culture is to be avoided or criticized. (Usually Evangelicals)
2. **Christ of Culture** – (The Accommodationists) The Christian system is not different from the culture in nature but only in quality; the best cultures must therefore be selected and be added to the teachings of Christ. Culture is accepted as it is. (Usually Eastern religions or Marxists)
3. **Christ above Culture** – (The Synthesists) The grace of God enters human life and society from above and creates a perfected order for all of one's personal and public life, fulfilling the aspirations of the person and society. Culture has some signs of God's grace actively at work. (Usually Roman Catholics)
4. **Christ and Culture in Paradox** – (The Dualists) The Christian lives in two worlds that never meet. One is the kingdom of law ruled by depravity and the other a kingdom of grace ruled by mercy. Culture will never be changed and society will never get better. (Usually Lutherans)
5. **Christ transforms Culture** – Christian work at changing aspects of culture toward God's coming Kingdom of grace in contrast to the depravity of the world knowing that all change is completed only in Christ—neither too optimistic or too pessimistic. (the Ideal)

Activity for action – Take one of the scenarios listed above and apply to it each of the five tensions between Christ and Culture. Evaluate which of the tensions is the best response to the cultural practice illustrated in the scenario. This may be a writing assignment or for small group or large group discussion. One option would be to create five small groups, one for each of the five tensions, and have them present a response to the cultural practice found in a scenario based on the tension they are assigned. Students may be arguing for a position they disagree with, but they should still put forth the effort.

✓ **The final point on Christ and Culture**

According to professor Mbiti, "The Gospel in its essence is above culture. The supremacy of the Gospel in relation to culture comes from

the fact that God is the author of the Gospel whereas humanity is author of culture. It's not the culture but the Gospel that gives us the last word upon our existence as human beings." (Labrenz, 281)

Finally, the Christian must be guided by the Bible under the direction of the Holy Spirit in one's society and culture. He or she has the responsibility to ask the question: "What does the Bible say about this situation?" Likewise they can and will know how to avoid the pitfalls of depravity in society and the cultural context in which they live.

SESSION 2 – SOCIAL STRUCTURES IN SOCIETY

There are social structures represented in society, namely, the family, tribe (ethnic group), nations, governments, educational institutions, and economy. This section is fundamentally about offering definitions of each social structure within contemporary African society accompanied by relevant biblical passages.

A. Defining Family

The Universal dictionary defines the "family" in the following way:

"The basic unit of society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their own or adopted children. A group of persons living under one roof with single head, or coming from a common ancestry, or united by common affiliation, convictions, or characteristics."

This definition corresponds to most Western and African views on the family. The African family goes beyond the father, mother and children to also include uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, grand-parents, and grandchildren, all of the descendants from the head of the family through succeeding generations.

In sociology, the educational dimension of the family is very important. The family represents the first "society" that forms, educates, enlightens, and guides the first steps of a human being during their time on earth.

Even in the eyes of the Creator, the family has an uncontested place and plays an undeniable spiritual role. The Bible insists that the parents must educate their children according to the way of the Lord from childhood to adulthood. The Bible is in some way a history of families beginning with Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel—the first human family according to Genesis). The most recognizable biblical family line includes Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael / Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob / Jacob, Leah, Rachel, their twelve children who become the twelve tribes of Israel.

Activity for action – Separate the groups into pairs. Assign them one of the following passages from the Bible. Following the reading, have them describe the Christian family based on what they read.

Colossians 3:18-22

Ephesians 5:22-33

1 Peter 3:1-7

After giving each group a chance to respond, ask for specific actions a person can do to be a better family member. Take time to pray with the students to ask for God's help to make them a better family member: spouse, parent, child or other.

Conclude the activity by saying that there's a single commandment found in all three texts: Christian love is to be lived out among one's family.

B. The Problem of Divorce

The Church of the Nazarene has clear statements on divorce and those in the ministry. The following excerpts are from the Manual listed by paragraphs. Read *Manual* paragraphs listed below and discuss the following questions.

35.2. Ministers of the Church of the Nazarene are instructed to give due care to matters relating to solemnizing marriages. They shall seek, in every manner possible, to convey to their congregations the sacredness of Christian marriage. They shall provide premarital counseling in every instance possible before performing a marriage ceremony including

proper spiritual guidance for those who have experienced divorce. They shall only solemnize marriages of persons having the biblical basis for marriage. (107-7.1)

35.3. Members of the Church of the Nazarene are to seek prayerfully a redemptive course of action when involved in marital unhappiness, in full harmony with their vows and the clear teachings of the Scripture, their aim being to save the home and safeguard the good name of both Christ and His Church. Couples having serious marital problems are urged to seek counsel and guidance of their pastor and/or any other appropriate spiritual leaders. Failure to comply with this procedure in good faith and with sincere endeavor to seek a Christian solution, and subsequent obtainment of divorce and remarriage, makes one or both parties subject to possible discipline as prescribed in 504-4.2 and 505-5.12.

35.4. Through ignorance, sin, and human frailties, many in our society fall short of the _____ plan. We believe that Christ can redeem these persons even as He did the woman at Samaria's well, and that sin against God's design for marriage does not place one beyond the forgiving _____ of the gospel. Where a marriage has been dissolved and remarriage has followed, the marriage partners are enjoined to seek the grace of God and His redemptive help in their marriage relation. Such persons may be received into the membership of the church at such time as they have given evidence of their regeneration and an awareness of their understanding of the sanctity of Christian marriage. (27, 107.1)

N.B. – There are a number of *Manual* paragraphs that address the eligibility of a divorced person to be ordained as a deacon or elder. See 320, 427.1, 428.3, and 429.3. These paragraphs outline a careful process by which a candidate – working closely with the appropriate district structures and the presiding General Superintendent – *may* be district licensed and ordained.

Questions for discussion

1. What responsibilities does a Nazarene elder possess in solemnizing marriages? (35.2)

2. How does the Church of the Nazarene view people who have suffered divorce? (35.3 and 35.4)

3. How might a divorced person fulfill the requirements to be ordained in the Church of the Nazarene? (320, 427.1, 428.3, 429.3)

C. Comparing monogamy and polygamy

These are two types of marriage recognized and sometimes encouraged in some African cultures. We will examine and compare both types.

- **monogamy**

The term *monogamy* describes a form of marriage in which a man and woman are married exclusively to one another.

Question for discussion

What are some of the basic biblical passages supporting monogamy? (If they cannot think of any particular passages, point out Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1-11; Ephesians 5:28-33.)

- **polygamy (including polygyny, and polyandry)**

Certain cultures permit polygamy which means a person may marry several spouses. *Polygyny* is when a man is permitted to marry several women as wives. This practice is especially found in Africa and the Middle East. *Polyandry* is when a woman may marry several men as husbands, as found in the Himalayas and parts of southern India. Spend time comparing the reasons for marrying several spouses in your cultural context with the list given below.

Reasons for polygyny

(from Hiebert and Meneses, 1995, 89)

- To solve the social crisis created by a husband's death by providing the widow and her children with a substitute husband and father

- ❑ To provide a family with children when the first wife is barren – There is a strong desire to have children, in part to care for the parents in their old age.
- ❑ To provide security in one's old age by having many children
- ❑ To make alliances with good families for purposes of social prestige, financial gain, and/or political power
- ❑ To acquire more workers to work the fields and so make the husband wealthy and powerful
- ❑ To provide husbands for all women – This is particularly true in societies where many men are killed in raids and wars.
- ❑ To enable an important man to be more hospitable by providing women who can care for the guests and the destitute who come to his home
- ❑ To provide sexual gratification for a husband in societies where he is forbidden to sleep with his wife for two or three years after she gives birth to a child – This postpartum taboo prevents the birth of another child who might threaten the life of the first because the mother does not have enough milk for both.
- ❑ To provide a man with status and a sense of social well-being because his culture places high value on having many kinfolk around
- ❑ To provide help to senior wives who are tired of doing the household chores

Questions for discussion

1. What are some biblical passages that refer to polygamy ? (Consider the family of Abraham in Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-11 and his son Isaac in 29:14-30:1) How do these Bible references compare to how polygamy is practiced today (see the chart above, "Reasons for Polygyny")?
2. Take some time to debate the positive and negative aspects for polygamy in today's society. Has urbanization in Africa affected the prevalence of polygyny? If so, why?

3. Read 1 Timothy 3:2. How should this passage be understood and applied in the Church today in relation to the polygyny question?

D. Defining “Tribes”

A **tribe** may be defined as a group having a common ethnic origin, single culture, shared language, and that is identified with a particular territory. The emphasis in tribal societies is on kinship (French, la parenté). Identity with the group is more important than as an individual. A biblical example would be the people of Jacob, known as Israel, who had twelve sons that became the head of the twelve tribes of Israel. In Africa, a tribe can be considered a subunit of an ethnic group that uses the same language. For example, in Côte d’Ivoire, the ethnic group known as the Dida includes the tribes of Godjié, Avicam, and Nêkô.

Look at the chart below from Hebert and Meneses (adapted from *Incarnational Ministry*, 1995, p. 25), then answer the questions that follow.

Comparing Traditional (Tribal) and Modern (Urban) Perspectives

Traditional (Tribal) Perspective	Modern (Urban) Perspective
Wholistic (natural is supernatural and vice versa)	Segmented (there is a difference between the natural and supernatural)
Organic (value on relationships and adapting to environment)	Mechanistic (value technology and controlling world in predictable ways)
Group-Centered (focus on family, kinship, sharing, help, shame, group ownership)	Self-Centered (focus on individual, self-reliance, guilt, private ownership)
Space and Land Oriented (sacred tie between gods, ancestors, people, and land, time is cyclical, looks to past)	Time and Future Oriented (efficiency, linear time, looks to future)

Sound-Oriented (believe what elders have told)	Visual-Oriented (believe what one has seen)
Story-based (thinks in concrete terms for practical living)	Debate (values analytic thought and reasoning)
Rituals and Myths Important (allows mystery, symbols are reality, rituals create reality)	Rituals and Myths Unimportant (seeks understanding, symbols represent reality, rituals only remember)

Questions for discussion

1. What are the major tribes in your context? What distinguishes one ethnic group or tribe from another?
2. How does one present the Gospel to a tribal society? What values would be present in a Church in a tribal society compared to an urban society?

NOTE: The comparison between worldviews will be discussed more in the course entitled "World Visions in Comparison."

E. Nation, Politics, Economy, and Government

1. What is a nation-state?

A **nation** may be defined generally as a group with common origins and kinship, such as a tribe, as well as a large group of various nationalities united by political organization and common territory. For instance, a nation like Ghana may have a common government overseeing multiple tribal or national identities. A **nation-state** is similar in definition but emphasizes the role of a common government for all of its members, making it politically sovereign in its decision-making and relationships to other nation-states. For example, the government of Nigeria cannot impose its governmental policies upon the people of its neighboring nation-states such as Benin, Niger, or Cameroon.

2. What is the economy?

Economy is derived from the Greek word *oikonomos*, meaning household manager. The basic definition of economy is how one manages that for which one is responsible. The members of a particular society are responsible for managing basic resources, such as material goods and services, necessary for their community to survive and thrive. Economics is the study of the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within a society. The economic system of a society is how this process of meeting a community's needs will be organized for the benefit of its members. The economic systems of most nations are organized between the poles of capitalism and socialism.

3. What is socialism?

Israel Katoke, author of a seminal article on the "Church and African socialism," (1976) argued that **socialism** is an economic system that gives equal chance for all people to benefit within society. As the Marxist slogan says, "From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs." Generally speaking, a Marxist seeks an immediate revolution of the economic system that equalizes the value of labor, usually the poor, with the value of capital, usually held by the rich. A socialist, on the other hand, seeks a gradual equalization between economic classes.

This gradual process, according to socialists, should be guided by the state by regulating fair labor practices and by controlling the means of production. The goal will be to prevent some members of society from gaining more material wealth and power through the exploitation of other members of society.

4. What is capitalism?

Capitalism refers to an economic system in which the means of production are mostly privately owned and for profit. The cost of goods and services are determined by the demands of the market and not through government control. Promoters of capitalism assert that a free market regulates itself through profit motive and competition and offers anyone with a little capital the opportunity to succeed individually as well as contributing to economic growth in society. **Globalization** is a current example of market forces at work. The modes of producing and

distributing goods are self-organized and streamlined so more goods and services became available for lower cost to those who demand the goods and services.

Capitalism can sometimes lead to ***monopolies*** (a single owner or company controls the market for its good or services) and ***imperialism*** (states seek to expand their markets and means of production through increasing its political influence and economic control). Christian critics of capitalism seek a mixed economy of capitalism and socialism by curbing government regulation of private ownership and the free market as well as striving for better government oversight for fair labor standards to protect the rights of those who might be exploited for their work as well as economic justice for the poor and the oppressed.

Questions for discussion

- a. What is Christian about socialism? What is Christian about capitalism?
- b. What difference does the Christian faith make in how a believer lives and works within the economic systems of their contexts?
- c. Read the following biblical passages (Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37) and discuss the similarities and differences between these passages and the local contexts in which the students minister.

5. Defining "politics" and "government"

Politics refers to all that relates to the governance of a state and participating in the public affairs of a state. It is the art and science of governing.

The ***government*** directs and guides the decisions and actions of a group. It is usually characterized by the term "state." It is the official representative of the political system of the group or nation. The government may be a ***monarchy*** (governed by one ruler) or a ***democracy*** (governed by the will of the community).

Absolute monarchy and direct democracy represent the extreme forms of each type of government. An ***absolute monarch*** is a ruler without equal in power and influence over a group, much like military dictators today. On the other hand, a ***direct democracy*** not only

selects representatives for government but also allows voters to direct policy, found mostly in governments of smaller groups.

There are various forms of governments throughout the world. Today there are forty ***constitutional monarchies*** in which a monarch reigns as head of state, but elected representatives rule the state through the powers invested in them through a written constitution of law. ***Representative democracies***, also known as republics, are governed by constitutional law and elected representatives that guide policy, decision-making, and regulation on behalf of the society. Unlike monarchies, the head of state is also elected by the people.

The characteristics of monarchy and democracy will need to be considered in further detail.

6. Defining "Democracy"

The following are major characteristics of a democracy:

Democracy is a political regime directed by the people. "In a republic, the people as a body have the sovereign power, that's a democracy," according to Montesquieu. It includes constitutional rule of law, the separation of powers, human equality before the law, the participation of citizens in the state, the freedom of expression, the right to privacy and property, a respect for diversity, and the right to belong to the opposition.

Constitutional rule of law

Democratic states rule their countries through a collection of articles of law known as "the constitution." The constitution must be voted upon and written down by members of the government representing the people.

Question for discussion

Has God also offered a constitution to the human race? If so, what is it?

Separation of powers

Executive, judicial, and administrative powers are not all entrusted to the head of state, such as a president, but are shared between the various parts of government, namely, the executive, judicial, and legislative bodies.

Question for discussion

Think of biblical examples of power given to one person “in ignorance” only to be revoked and shared with other (HINT: Look in 1 Samuel). What support can you find for power-sharing in the Bible as it relates to this aspect of democracy?

Human equality before the law

In all true democratic societies, all people are equal before the law. There is no one that is above the law. All people are accountable to the just rule of the government.

All citizens have the right to participate in the political life of the state. Each citizen enjoys the right and duty to participate in the political life of the country. This participation may be supporting or criticizing new legislation, voting in general and local elections. The voice of citizens should make their opinion known to the government through petitions. Citizens also have certain duties to fulfill their responsibility to the state, such as paying taxes and following the laws required of them.

Activity for Action – List the rights and duties of the state toward its citizens and – on the other hand – of citizens toward the state.

Questions for discussion

1. What passage from Paul’s Epistles supports human equality? (Galatians 3:28) After finding the passage, discuss it as a group.
2. Read together the story of the jailing of the apostles and their appearance before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17-32). Why did Peter say in v.29: “We must obey God rather than men!”? Does Peter’s response contradict Paul’s directive in Romans 13:1, that we are to submit to governing authorities? Under what circumstances might civil

disobedience be allowable for the Christian? What are the potential dangers of the Church complying with ungodly directives from the state? On the other hand, what are the dangers of such non-compliance?

Freedom of expression

In all democratic societies, all people enjoying their rights and duties as citizens have the right to freedom of expression in the areas of politics, ethics, the arts, etc.

Right to privacy and private ownership

Citizens have the right to legally acquire goods of all kinds including their property. They also have the right to privacy, to be protected from unlawful and unwanted intrusions from others.

Respect for diversity

Citizens in a democracy respect and welcome diversity of opinion, belief, and expression whether they agree or disagreed. There is always a place for dissenting opinions.

Right to belong to opposition

The right to oppose the majority within legal parameters exists in order that individuals or groups may diverge from the party in power or from other parties in the political system.

Manual Statement on the Church and Human Freedom, 903.6

Read aloud and together the following statement in the *Manual* in paragraph 903.6 on the church and liberty.

“Concerned that our great Christian heritage be understood and safeguarded, we remind our people that both political and religious freedom rest upon biblical concepts of the dignity of humankind as God’s creation and the sanctity of one’s own individual conscience. We encourage our people to participate in appropriate activity in support of these biblical concepts and to be ever vigilant against threats to this precious freedom.

“These freedoms are constantly in danger, therefore we urge election of persons to public office at all levels of government who believe in these principles and who are answerable only to God and the constituency that elected them when carrying out a public trust. Further, we resist any invasion of these principles by religious groups seeking special favours.

“We believe that the role of the Church is to be prophetic and constantly to remind the people that ‘righteousness exalts a nation’ (Proverbs 14:34). (2005)”

Questions for discussion

1. Is there one biblical form of government? Defend your position.
2. How do a monarchy and a democracy differ? What are the benefits (and drawbacks) of each?
3. When the Bible speaks of Jesus as our “King” or describes the “Kingdom of God,” are these political statements or spiritual ones? Explain.
4. What is the best form of government for human nation-states in general and African nation-states in particular? What forms of government—monarchy or democracy—are found in modern African nation-states, cities, and villages?
5. How can Christian believers be active in the government without falling into discord and even violence with fellow members of society?

SESSION 3—MAJOR PROBLEMS IN SOCIETY

The following section will survey the problems of war, ethnic conflict, violence, and AIDS. These sections will be followed by a consideration of the Church’s redemptive role in resolving these social problems through reconciliation. An addendum dealing with abuse of the environment and the Christian response of Creation Care will follow.

A. War in historical and biblical perspective

1. What is war?

War is an historical and social phenomenon that is defined as being an armed struggle between states. Civil war is an armed struggle between groups and citizens of the same state. War is the opposite of peace.

2. What are the consequences of war?

War as an armed struggle has many ill-fated consequences such as loss of life, destruction of buildings, pollution of the environment, decreased availability of food, increased sickness, displacement of refugees, and a cessation of development.

3. Does the Bible talk about war?

War is not absent in the Biblical record. Even Jesus Christ announced that wars would be signs signaling his return (Matthew 24:6-8). There are several other biblical passages referring to war:

Genesis 14:2

2 Samuel 12:31

2 Samuel 22:35

1 Chronicles 20:3

2 Chronicles 25:12

Psalms 27:3

Psalms 79:3

Ezra 9:4; 13:16, 19:2

Ecclesiastes 3:8

Revelations 6:4

Jewish law on the subject of war: Deuteronomy 20:2, Deut 23:9; Deut 24:5; Leviticus 14:31

4. Wars of the 20th century

The 20th century witnessed two wars many wars that engulfed many nations, thereby earning the title "world war." In September 1914, the **first World War (WW 1)** began in Europe and lasted until 11 November 1918. According to historians it was one of the bloodiest

and most destructive of human lives. It was known at the time as the Great War and the War to End All Wars . . . at least until 1939.

In September of that year, the Nazi government in Germany invaded Poland, leading Italy, Russia, Britain, and the United States (among others) to declare full-scale war. Known today as the ***Second World War (WW 2)***, it was fought in Europe and northern Africa until 8 May 1945. In August 1945 the war was brought to an end in the Pacific after the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan forcing its surrender.

Apart from these two world wars, many nations in the world have suffered atrocities from wars and civil wars. In the 1990s several ***civil wars arose throughout Africa***, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC; formerly Zaire), Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, to name a few. These wars tore apart, disfigured, and destroyed the populations of these countries and their neighbors. According to some survivors, many women were violated during the civil war in the DRC. They insist that many women were kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery.

5. Wars since a.d. 2000

Recently, war has not decreased but only changed locations. In the Middle East war is a constant threat. Even Côte d'Ivoire – once known for its peaceful existence – broke into civil war in September 2002. As Zechariah prophesied about the coming Messiah at the birth of Jesus, the Messiah would “shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace” (Luke 1:79).

6. *Manual* statement on war

Read aloud and together the following statement in the *Manual* in paragraph 903.7, “War and Military Service”:

“The Church of the Nazarene believes that the ideal world condition is that of peace and that it is the full obligation of the Christian Church to use its influence to seek such means as will enable the nations of the earth to be at peace and to devote all of its agencies for the propagation of the message of peace. However, we realize that we are living in a world where evil forces and

philosophies are actively in conflict with these Christian ideals and that there may arise such international emergencies as will require a nation to resort to war in defense of its ideals, its freedom, and its existence.

“While thus committed to the cause of peace, the Church of the Nazarene recognizes that the supreme allegiance of the Christian is due to God, and therefore it does not endeavor to bind the conscience of its members relative to participation in military service in case of war, although it does believe that the individual Christian as a citizen is bound to give service to his or her own nation in all ways that are compatible with the Christian faith and the Christian way of life.

“We also recognize that, as an outgrowth of the Christian teaching and of the Christian desire for peace on earth, there are among our membership individuals who have conscientious objection to certain forms of military service. Therefore the Church of the Nazarene claims for conscientious objectors within its membership the same exemptions and considerations regarding military service as are accorded members of recognized noncombatant religious organizations.

“The Church of the Nazarene, through its general secretary, shall set up a register whereon those persons who supply evidence of being members of the Church of the Nazarene may record their convictions as conscientious objectors (2005).”

Activity for Action – Research several local, national, or international hard copy (or internet) newspapers for current articles related to wars in the world today. After identifying these outbreaks of violence, commit each local church represented in class to pray for those involved in these conflicts.

B. Ethnic conflicts

There have been ethnic conflicts throughout world history. Three cases will be examined here: Racism in the USA, apartheid in South Africa, and the Jewish holocaust in Germany under the Nazis.

Editor's note – The language of “race” is fraught with difficulties. Charles Gailey, former head of the School of Missions of Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO (USA), has questioned whether the concept of “race” as popularly conceived (with its fixation upon incidentals, like skin color) is accurate, helpful, or even necessary. After all, is not God the Father of *one* race, Adam’s race, otherwise known as the *human* race? Gailey believes that the more common, narrow use of the word “race” tends to divide us, rather than unite us as one human family, since it focuses attention upon superficial differences rather than upon the more important characteristics that we as humans share. Because of this concern, the alternate terms “ethnic” or “ethnic groups” will be favored in this manual. However, for clarity of understanding, the words “race” (or “races”) will also appear, though in quotation marks (“ ”) to indicate their dubious validity. Since no functional equivalent of the word “racism” exists – “ethnocentrism” carries a weaker meaning, and “prejudice” is broader – the word “racism” has been retained.

1. Ethnic conflicts in the United States

The United States of America is a multi-ethnic society. In the 19th century, the presence of freed slaves and immigrants offered new citizens the opportunity for religious freedom and certain liberties. The mixture of ethnic groups is a true reason for joy on the part of the United States, but also a tension between groups as they struggled to understand each other as equals. For the minority populations these tensions sometimes became a violent struggle for survival, particularly for black Americans.

Up until the 1960s black Americans struggled under severe segregation of the “races.” For decades better schools, universities, neighborhoods, hospitals, shops, hotels, restaurants, and professions were refused to non-whites. Certain restaurants, buses, trains, and other public places has certain sections for whites only or blacks only. Some blacks were refused participation in some parts of society regardless of their competencies and qualifications simply because they were not white.

There was also a violent turn in the separation of “races.” The Ku Klux Klan was an organization situated mainly in the American South that attempted through legal demonstrations and illegal acts of violence against non-whites to submit to what its all-white membership perceived to be white superiority.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. represented two sides in the struggle against racism in the United States during the 1960s. Malcolm X converted to Islam and chose to battle racism by following the dictum: "An eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth." His methods were mainly violent, as he told his many followers and sympathizers, "If a white slaps you, send him to the cemetery." Malcolm X was assassinated by another black man. Racism, therefore, was not only a case of hatred of one race toward another one, but hatred for oneself. As one observer noted, however, "racial" conflict is not only psychological but also the results of years of social and economic oppression.

Martin Luther King, Jr. chose the path of non-violence in the struggle against racism in the United States during the same period of the 1960s. Born in 1929 in the southern city of Atlanta, Georgia, he was raised in a Christian family. His education included a bachelor's degree in 1948, a master's of divinity in 1952, and a doctoral degree in 1955. He became a pastor in the same Baptist church where his father had served.

He became involved in the civil rights movement through the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This organization was created to struggle against social injustice. It used non-violent methods such as marches and the "sit-in." The sit-in was a non-violent means of protest by just sitting peacefully in a place reserved for whites only such as a restaurant. In 1964 MLK received the Nobel Peace Prize. Four years later, at the age of 39, King was assassinated by a white man.

Question for discussion

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King represent violent (Malcolm X) and peaceful (MLK) means of social change. Which one is the most effective way to change one's society? Which one is the most biblical way?

2. Apartheid in South Africa

The word "apartheid" is Afrikaans for "separation." Racism through apartheid was instituted officially into South African law and implemented by the white government from 1948 to 1991. It was under the prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd that apartheid instituted the law of

"separation of development" in which the nine ethnic groups of Bantus or blacks were to live in 14% of the country separated from the whites. The main gold mines and principal cities were governed by the white minority.

Blacks were to live and work in their own neighborhoods, ones assigned to them by whites. They could leave these areas only with appropriate identity papers. In 1962 police could arrest a black person without identity papers outside of their assigned neighborhood. In such a case, they could be imprisoned for 30 days. Blacks also could not own land under apartheid law. Oppression of these fundamental rights of human beings led to a tremendous outcry from the opposition, namely Nelson Mandela. Active in the African National Congress, a South African political party representing some blacks, Mandela was accused of acts of violence and put into a political prison in the early 1960s and stayed there for 28 years.

Despite UN resolutions and protests by religious organizations from around the world, apartheid worsened during the 1960s. In the same period, South Africa withdrew from the Common Wealth—a collection of nations united under the British crown. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa withdrew from the World Council of Churches in spite of the calls for social justice in their country.

The last bastions of apartheid fell under the leadership of Frederik de Klerk during his time as prime minister of South Africa. A new constitution was written and voted into law in 1993. De Klerk suggested that a multiracial and multiparty government should be instituted. Multiparty and free elections were held in 1994 which gave the victory to the African National Congress. Nelson Mandela became the first black President that was democratically elected in South Africa.

3. The Jewish holocaust in Nazi Germany

The Nazi political party ruled a totalitarian regime in Germany from 1933 to 1945. Totalitarian governments require absolute control over the government and society. During the Nazi regime led by Adolf Hitler, the national identity of Germany was tied to the superiority of the Aryan race over all others—noted by certain physical traits. The Nazis created a stereotype for the ideal man and ideal women. A ***stereotype*** is a common yet prejudiced opinion or judgment about others.

Most social _____ were blamed on minority groups, especially Jews. They used negative stereotypes to sow fear and hatred of these minorities. It is estimated that six million Jews died during the years of Nazi rule in Germany and its conquered territories.

Manual statement on discrimination

Read aloud and together the following statement from the *Manual*, paragraph 903.2, "Discrimination":

"The Church of the Nazarene reiterates its historic position of Christian compassion for people of all races. We believe that God is the Creator of all people, and that of one blood are all people created. We believe that each individual, regardless of race, color, gender, or creed, should have equality before law, including the right to vote, equal access to educational opportunities, to all public facilities, and to the equal opportunity, according to one's ability, to earn a living free from any job or economic discrimination.

"We urge our churches everywhere to continue and strengthen programs of education to promote racial understanding and harmony. We also feel that the scriptural admonition of Hebrews 12:14 should guide the actions of our people. We urge that each member of the Church of the Nazarene humbly examine his or her personal attitudes and actions toward others, as a first step in achieving the Christian goal of full participation by all in the life of the church and the entire community.

"We reemphasize our belief that holiness of heart and life is the basis for right living. We believe that Christian charity between racial groups or gender will come when the hearts of people have been changed by complete submission to Jesus Christ, and that the essence of true Christianity consists in loving God with one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself" (2005).

Questions for discussion

1. The Church of the Nazarene is blessed by its multi-ethnic membership. Discuss relations among various groups within the Church

of the Nazarene. Be sure to remain factual, objective and true in describing these relationships.

2. What stereotypes are found in your local context? (Examples: One ethnic group might be viewed as overly opinionated or violent. Another might be construed as quiet and submissive toward outsiders.) How do societies create and maintain stereotypes? What can the Scripture tell us about breaking stereotypes? (See Galatians 2:26-29 and Philippians 3:4-11).

3. How can Christian believers avoid notions of ethnic or “racial” superiority? How can Christians minister to those whom society has historically – and wrongfully – treated as somehow inferior?

C. Violence

Violence is any brutal force or illegitimate restraint exercised against the will of another person. The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, in his view of human relations, taught that one man is a predator upon another. People truly are a danger to others in that they will sometimes exploit others. They will also go further and commit acts of murder and violence upon others either in the political realm or in one’s own home. This course will look particularly at the social problem of domestic violence.

The press regularly reports on cases of **domestic violence**. What exactly is domestic violence? Simply stated, it is to inflict one’s domestic partner with violence through beatings with fists, wood planks, whips, and even machetes. It has even been reported that common household objects like chairs, stools, and kitchen instruments have been used to harm family members. Sometimes the violence causes injury and at other times even death. In other cases children can be beaten brutally by their parents or older brothers and sisters.

This description of domestic violence confirms that Thomas Hobbes was right in that a person can become a “wolf” or predator in relation to other people.

Activity for Action – How difficult is it for Christians to act peacefully or violently in a given context? Look at the following Biblical passages,

and consider whether Christians seeking peace could act in such a manner:

Genesis 2:18-24
Colossians 3:18-25
Ephesians 6:1-9;
1 Peter 3:1-7
1 Peter 2:18-25
1 Timothy 6:1-2
Titus 2:9-10

Take some time in a small group to prepare a Bible study or legal public protest against domestic violence. Search and use these biblical texts for this activity.

D. HIV/AIDS

The following section will discuss the definition of HIV/AIDS, ways of transmitting the virus, means of prevention, biblical counsel about avoiding HIV/AIDS, and the Church's compassionate response toward those infected or affected by AIDS.

This section on AIDS is extracted from an article, "Basic information on HIV/AIDS" by Rev. Trino Jara in *TransAfrica* magazine (January/February/March 2002, also found in the resource from Africa Nazarene Publications (2002). Jara organizes the article in a question and answer format as presented below.

What is HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus responsible for ***AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)***. This mysterious sickness has spread around the world over the last thirty years.

Since then there have been no vaccinations or cures discovered to conquer this illness. There have been medicines developed that inhibit the growth and symptoms of the virus, but it is always present in those inflicted.

Every human body has an ***immune system***, a natural defense against common diseases. Its main task is to defend the human body against any strange organism that tries to attack it. When the immune system works correctly, the cells, called CD4 or white globules, work in different ways. Some directly attack the disease's pathogenic agents and absorb them while others form what are called "antibodies" as their answer against the invaders. The antibodies generally protect us against diseases and infections. When the immune system is weak or damaged its ability to protect the human body is less efficient and it is, for that reason that illness attacks a person.

The HIV virus attacks the human immune system and makes the victim vulnerable to other diseases, such as influenza, tuberculosis, and others. ***AIDS*** is the last phase of the infection caused by ***HIV***.

The period of time between initial infection and subsequent death varies according to the state of the victim's health prior to contamination as well as their level of nutrition. Generally speaking, this period of time may last up to ten years.

An infected person in this incubation period will not show visible signs of the illness yet remains a vector for spreading the virus, usually through unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing used needles for intravenous drug use.

How is HIV transmitted?

A person infected with HIV possesses a great quantity of the virus in certain bodily fluids, such as the blood, sperm, vaginal fluids, and maternal milk. HIV may be transmitted from an infected person to a healthy person in the following ways:

- **Blood transfusion and transmission** (sharp objects, such as needles, contaminated by blood)
- **Sharing syringes**—contaminated and non-sterilized—usually used by drug addicts to inject heroin.
- **A mother infecting their child** during pregnancy
- **Breastfeeding between mother and child**—the HIV virus is also contained in the mother's milk.
- **Sperm and all vaginal fluids.** Infection occurs through sexual intercourse.

It is important to remember that HIV is contracted 90% of the time through sexual relations.

How can we prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS?

Although there is not yet a cure for HIV/AIDS, this disease can be avoided by following these guidelines:

- Sexual abstinence before marriage
- Sexual fidelity between marriage partners
- Require a blood test before marriage to insure one's partner is not infected.
- Use a condom during sexual relations.
- Use only sterilized equipment for injections.
- Be careful in selecting clinics; make sure they use sterilized equipment for taking blood or giving injections.

Remember that it only takes one instance of unprotected sexual intercourse with someone carrying the virus to become infected oneself with HIV.

What are biblical ways of avoiding infection by HIV/AIDS?

(Make sure to read aloud all of the scripture verses listed with each point.)

- Maintain self-control (1 Timothy 1:7).
- Live a life consecrated to God (Romans 12:1).
- Avoid sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3).
- Practice sexual abstinence outside of marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18).
- Flee all situations that make one vulnerable to sexual sin (Genesis 39).
- Be capable of making good decisions (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- Know that Christians are strangers in this world (John 17:15-20).
- Guard one's thoughts and use of time. Choose good friends, those who will encourage you to do the right thing (Proverbs 17:17).
- Remember that using a condom will usually protect us and others against the spread of HIV/AIDS, but it cannot protect our souls against the power of sin (James 4:17).

What attitude and actions should the Church display toward those infected with HIV/AIDS?

Our Lord Jesus Christ shows compassion for those infected by illness including the lepers of this age. The church must therefore follow in the footsteps of our Master by testifying and acting with compassion toward those who are infected and affected with HIV/AIDS. The following statement comes from the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene:

***Manual* statement on HIV/AIDS**

Read together the following *Manual* statement on HIV/AIDS (paragraph 903.15):

“Since 1981, our world has been confronted with a most devastating disease known as HIV/AIDS. In view of the deep need of HIV/AIDS sufferers, Christian compassion motivates us to become accurately informed about HIV/AIDS. Christ would have us to find a way to communicate His love and concern for these sufferers in any and every country of the world (2001).”

For discussion

Discuss ways in which pastors can guide their local church members to be a witness of Christ’s love to persons afflicted with HIV/AIDS in one’s local context, such as a hospital or clinic. List those ideas and have pastors commit to discussing these acts of compassion with their churches.

E. Creation Care

1. The sin of exploitation

Sadly, one of the effects of the Fall is that instead of caring for the creation, humans too often **exploit** God’s good earth. The Apostle Paul speaks of all Creation as “groaning” (Romans 8:22). This is a result of the Creation being “subjected to frustration” (v.20) at the time of the Fall. This groaning continues as human activity exploits Creation with little thought about future consequences.

2. Owners or stewards?

When something _____ to someone, it is only natural to believe that he or she is free to do with it what they want. For example, if I own a **bicycle**, I can keep it clean and safely secured to avoid theft. On the other hand, if I choose to leave it caked with mud and leave it outside where it might be stolen, that is my prerogative. After all, it's **my** bike.

When it comes to the earth, too often humans have treated the environment like that bicycle. Some care for their bikes, but many do not. But in reality, the earth is not a bicycle or any other possession.

Humans do not own the earth. The Psalmist writes:

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. – Ps. 24:1

We are not the earth's owners, but we are its _____. A steward is one to whom another's possessions have been entrusted for _____. The owner will return and expect an account of one's stewardship.

Read together Genesis 2:15. What important task did the LORD give to Adam to accomplish?

Notice the final phrase: "take care of it." In the same way that Adam was assigned by God to care for the garden of Eden, ***Christians are called to care for the entire Creation.***

In his book, *Global Awareness* (p. 19), Don Walker compares the earth to a "gift" that a father gives to his children – see Matt. 7:11. Our heavenly Father has given us a gift. It is our responsibility to care for the gift, so that we may one day pass it on to our own children. In what condition will this gift (the earth) be when it's our children's turn to care for it?

3. The danger of deforestation

One of the key ecological problems in Africa is ***deforestation***. In ***Côte d'Ivoire***, for example, one of the finest natural resources has been hard wood harvested from trees in its many forests. In the 1960s, it was

estimated that 48% of the country was covered by forests. However, by the mid 1990s, according to news reports at the time, this figure had shrunk to 18%. With fewer trees, nature's water cycle is disrupted. This changes the pattern of the rainy seasons and makes it difficult for farmers to know when they should plant crops, such as coffee or cocoa.

Côte d'Ivoire is not alone. The government of **Kenya** in 2009 launched an initiative to preserve its main watershed, the Mau forest. Experts estimate that only 12% of the land surface of the country is still covered by trees. When forests are gone, soil erosion is the inevitable result, since tree roots do much to keep soil in-place when hard rains fall.

The Caribbean nation of **Haiti** – with only 1% tree cover – is proof of the catastrophic consequences of overharvesting trees, and not replanting. Annual tropical storms and hurricanes dump huge quantities of water on the mountainous island. Since few mountains have tree cover, the water can rush down to the valleys, killing animals, destroying houses, and drowning hundreds, even thousands of citizens in its wake.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the reasons people cut down too many trees? What would encourage the planting of new ones? How can the Church be involved in finding alternative sources of fuel that would make deforestation less likely?

2. Beside deforestation, what are some of the other ecological challenges facing your country? (*Students might mention, for example, air or water pollution in growing cities*). Name one positive thing your local church could do on a regular basis to help resolve the problem.

SESSION 4—THE ROLE OF CHURCH IN SOCIETY

A. The responsibility of the Church

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you . . . [Jesus] said to them, Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but

whoever does not believe will be condemned. - Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16

The church of Jesus Christ has a noble and gracious task to preach the Good News of salvation offered by Jesus alone (John 14:56; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 8:1). Christians must not only preach the teachings of Christ, but put them into practice on a daily basis (Matthew 7:21ff; James 2:14-26).

B. Four main tasks of the Church in society

1) **Teach** Christian believers and other members of society the importance of Romans 13:1-7, particularly verse 1:

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

2) **Show** how the political authorities working justly are in service to God and for the members of one's society (Romans 13:1-7).

See discussion of this passage in relation to Acts 5:29 at the end of session two.

3) **Give** to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Mark 12:17). What does one do when the political authorities act contrary to the Biblical teaching? There are times when there is a conflict between political authorities represented by Caesar in this passage and the authority of the biblical witness.

4) **Hold** the political authorities to the divine commandments and the biblical message. Use the means of preaching biblical messages, conferences for pastors, and evangelistic services from which God's Word may be heard spoken in humility and truth. Remember the role of the prophet Nathan speaking to King David who had just committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. Or, consider also John the Baptist's response to King Herod's adultery with his brother's wife (Matthew 14:3-4). John did not back down but paid the price of standing up for God in a non-violent manner against human political authority (Matthew 14:5-12). In John's case, such courage demanded great sacrifice, so we, too, must be prepared to "count the cost."

C. To save, not condemn

The Church in society is like the prophet Jonah and must continually preach God's message of righteousness to all members of society (Jonah 3:1-10). This task is done in the hope that members of society will turn away from sin and the damaging effects it has on society and turn toward the only true God in the message of Jesus Christ.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:17).

D. The Church as agent of redemption and reconciliation

Sin in the heart of individuals and their relationships is at the base of many problems found in society. Being separated from God by sin results in artificial divisions in society, family, and politics, driving us to the need for **reconciliation** and **redemption**.

1. Redemption

All sinners are spiritually and relationally separated from God because of their sin (Isaiah 59:1ff). But when someone repents of their sins and believes in God through Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they will be saved (John 1:11-13; 3:3-8; Acts 16:31; Romans 8:1ff; Ephesians 2:8). This is what the Christian message means by the term **redemption**. Following the truth of the passages cited above along with these (Romans 5:10-11; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20) will help a sinner enter into the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ.

2. Reconciliation

It is important that the Church takes responsibility for receiving the "ministry of **reconciliation**" (2 Corinthians 5:18ff). This ministry is from God in this world that suffers so much division and conflict. God teaches and even commands the Church to begin the reconciliation of all enemies with one another as it leads to the possibility of worshipping and serving God (Matthew 5:24; 1 Corinthians 7:11).

Activity for Action: In a role play, offer a scenario between two factions that need to be reconciled, such as a dispute over land ownership or a problem between a husband and wife. After presenting

the scenario, give the pastors an opportunity to discuss how they will act redemptively and in the ministry of reconciliation.

For group reflection: What is a “redemptive analogy”?

Missionary Don Richardson worked among the Sawi people of Irian Jaya. In his book, *Peace Child*, he tells of his frustration in trying to reach them with the story of Jesus. In their culture, treachery was considered the highest good. When they heard the story of Jesus’ crucifixion, they would clap for Judas!

War broke out between the Sawi and a neighboring tribe. Because his people were suffering, the chief knew what he must do. He took his baby son, and solemnly presented him to the chief of the enemy tribe. As long as the baby lived, there would be peace between the two groups. Anyone who killed the “peace child” would himself be killed. That day, a lasting peace was born.

Richardson saw in this act a **redemptive analogy**. It was a picture of what God did when He gave his only Son, Jesus, to reconcile the world to himself. The incident was a break-through for Richardson, and allowed him to present the Gospel in a way that they could understand.

Questions for discussion

1. John Wesley taught that **prevenient grace** was an expression of the drawings of the Father, the enlightening of the Son, and the convictions of the Holy Spirit. (See Wesley’s 1765 sermon, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*). Prevenient grace always precedes our conversion, and operates universally. In what way might redemptive analogies be considered expressions of God’s prevenient grace?
2. The Church is to be an agent of redemption. What are some of the “redemptive analogies” in your own culture that the Church could use to preach the message of redemption and reconciliation?
3. Beyond words, what concrete actions could your local church or district take to bring reconciliation between feuding rivals or tribes that live in your community?

SESSION 5—LIVING AS A CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

The Nazarene *Manual* offers guidance for how to live out a Christian witness within society. There is a section in the Church Constitution that describes the Church as a whole and the Church of the Nazarene particularly and the important role of its members in society.

The following section includes excerpts from the Church Constitution found in the Nazarene *Manual*. It covers areas listed here as Who We Are (The Church), What We Believe (Agreed Statement of Belief), How We Live (Covenant of Christian Conduct) divided into three sections labeled here as: What We Do, What We Avoid, and How We Live Together.

Read each section and respond to the questions that follow. Be prepared to discuss these questions in class.

Who We Are	What We Believe
<p>THE CHURCH</p> <p>I. The General Church 23. The Church of God is composed of all spiritually regenerate persons, whose names are written in heaven.</p> <p>II. The Churches Severally 24. The churches severally are to be composed of such regenerate persons as by providential permission, and by the leadings of the Holy Spirit, become associated together for holy fellowship and ministries.</p> <p>III. The Church of the Nazarene 25. The Church of the Nazarene is composed of those persons who</p>	<p>IV. Agreed Statement of Belief 26. Recognizing that the right and privilege of persons to church membership rest upon the fact of their being regenerate, we would require only such avowals of belief as are essential to Christian experience. We, therefore, deem belief in the following brief statements to be sufficient. We believe:</p> <p>26.1. In one God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</p> <p>26.2. That the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.</p> <p>26.3. That man is born with a fallen nature, and is, therefore,</p>

<p>have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the doctrines and polity of said church, and who seek holy Christian fellowship, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, their upbuilding in holiness, and the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church, together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature.</p> <p><i>For discussion</i> -- Reflect on the three statements above. Why do you think it is important for a Christian believer to be a church member?</p>	<p>inclined to evil, and that continually.</p> <p>26.4. That the finally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.</p> <p>26.5. That the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race; and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.</p> <p>26.6. That believers are to be sanctified wholly, subsequent to regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>26.7. That the Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.</p> <p>26.8. That our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.</p>
<p>How We Live</p>	<p>What We Do</p>
<p>V. The Covenant of Christian Character</p> <p>27. To be identified with the visible Church is the blessed privilege and sacred duty of all who are saved from their sins and are seeking completeness in Christ Jesus. It is required of all who desire to unite with the Church of the Nazarene, and thus to walk in fellowship with us, that they shall show evidence</p>	<p>27.1. FIRST. By doing that which is enjoined in the Word of God, which is our rule of both faith and practice, including: (1) Loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself (Exodus 20:3-6; Leviticus 19:17-18; Deuteronomy 5:7-10; 6:4-5; Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:8-10). (2) Pressing upon the attention of the unsaved the claims of the</p>

of salvation from their sins by a godly walk and vital piety; and that they shall be, or earnestly desire to be, cleansed from all indwelling sin. They shall evidence their commitment to God—

For discussion

How is church membership a privilege? How is it a duty?

List five words from the first paragraph and explain how they are the basis for living as a Christian in society.

gospel, inviting them to the house of the Lord, and trying to compass their salvation (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

(3) Being courteous to all men (Ephesians 4:32; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 3:18).

(4) Being helpful to those who are also of the faith, in love forbearing one another (Romans 12:13; Gal. 6:2, 10; Colossians 3:12-14).

(5) Seeking to do good to the bodies and souls of men; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and ministering to the needy, as opportunity and ability are given (Matthew 25:35-36; 2 Corinthians 9:8-10; Galatians 2:10; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17-18).

(6) Contributing to the support of the ministry and the church and its work in tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Philippians 4:15-19).

(7) Attending faithfully all the ordinances of God, and the means of grace, including the public worship of God (Hebrews 10:25), the ministry of the Word (Acts 2:42), the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-30); searching the Scriptures and meditating thereon (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-16); family and private devotions (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Matthew 6:6).

What We Avoid	How We Live Together
<p>27.2. SECOND. By avoiding evil of every kind, including:</p> <p>(1) Taking the name of God in vain (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; James 5:12).</p> <p>(2) Profaning of the Lord’s Day by participation in unnecessary secular activities, thereby indulging in practices that deny its sanctity (Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27-28; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10).</p> <p>(3) Sexual immorality, such as premarital or extramarital relations, perversion in any form, or looseness and impropriety of conduct (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7).</p> <p>(4) Habits or practices known to be destructive of physical and mental well-being. Christians are to regard themselves as temples of the Holy Spirit (Proverbs 20:1; 23:1-3; 1 Corinthians 6:17-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:18).</p> <p>(5) Quarreling, returning evil for evil, gossiping, slandering, spreading surmises injurious to the good names of others (2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:15; Ephesians 4:30-32; James 3:5-18; 1 Peter 3:9-10).</p> <p>(6) Dishonesty, taking advantage in buying and selling, bearing false witness, and like works of darkness (Leviticus 19:10-11; Romans</p>	<p>27.3. THIRD. By abiding in hearty fellowship with the church, not inveighing against but wholly committed to its doctrines and usages and actively involved in its continuing witness and outreach (Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:1-3, 11-16; Philippians 2:1-8; 1 Peter 2:9-10).</p> <p><u>For discussion</u></p> <p><i>What are some ways that Christian believers can "abide in hearty fellowship with the church"?</i></p> <p><i>What are some ways in which Christians fail to "abide in hearty fellowship with the church"?</i></p> <p><u>Further discussion</u></p> <p><i>Which activities deemed harmful to a church member are the most difficult to avoid in your local context?</i></p> <p><i>What can a Christian believer do to avoid these harmful activities if the rest of their family members are not Christian?</i></p>

<p>12:17; 1 Corinthians 6:7-10). (7) The indulging of pride in dress or behavior. Our people are to dress with the Christian simplicity and modesty that become holiness (Proverbs 29:23; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; James 4:6; 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 John 2:15-17).</p>	<p>(8) Music, literature, and entertainments that dishonor God (1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; James 4:4).</p>
---	---

SESSION 6—THE AFRICAN IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

A. Famine, poverty, and illiteracy in Africa

According to Israel Katoke of Tanzania, there are several constants in much of rural Africa. First, **ignorance**, or lack of knowledge, keeps much of Africa from developing beyond the problems that arise from primitive technology, lack of sanitation, malnutrition, and bad governance, illiteracy, and lack of vision. This ignorance is perpetuated by **illiteracy**—the inability to communicate through reading, writing, and understanding the written language and symbols in the larger community.

According to Katoke, **poverty** is the source of malnutrition due to primitive means of production. The cycle of poverty at times prevents the progress necessary to develop sustainable goods and extra goods for export.

Famine and disease continue unabated in many rural areas beyond the reach of local hospitals and clinics. Preventive health and sanitation might help avoid many of these pitfalls. **Malnutrition** can also be attributed to certain beliefs in totems, certain animal or plant foods rich in nutrients but considered off-limits by certain traditional religions.

B. Africa and the occult, sorcery, magic, and spiritism

According to Kenyan John S. Mbiti, many times when something bad happens to a person or in one’s family, the question is generally asked, **“What caused this misfortune?”** This usually is not a question of how did it happen, but what was the supernatural or

mystical cause of the misfortune. In the majority of cases, the victims of a misfortune will suspect that someone used sorcery against them, their families, or their possessions.

In Africa, there is a belief in the existence of mystical forces in the universe, according to John Mbiti (pp. 166-173). There is also the belief that certain people possess the knowledge and capacity to control and use these forces. Once these forces are conquered by this special person, they can be used for specific purposes through the certain rituals or words. ***Magic*** is the mastery and possession of this universal force.

This power can be harnessed for evil purposes, which is known as ***black magic*** or ***evil sorcery***. Others can use these same forces to benefit society and it is considered good magic or good sorcery. According to Mbiti, these mystical forces in the universe are not evil or good in themselves but rather like other natural forces at the mercy of what humanity does with them. The use of these mystical forces can be termed sorcery, traditional medicine, and spiritism.

Sorcery, according to Mbiti, generally takes the form of ***bewitching***—wishing evil to another—through poisoning or mystical attacks upon others, their property or possessions. Sorcerers and practitioners of black magic are those who are most hated and feared in society. It is believed that sorcerers and magicians use spoken incantations, rituals, and magic objects for inflicting evil on others. To achieve their malicious goals, they will take someone's fingernails or toenails, hair, or pieces of clothing belonging to that person and use it to inflict evil upon their victims.

Traditional medicine according to Mbiti has many connotations for Africans. One of the objectives for traditional medicine is to defy and struggle against malevolent natural forces. Likewise, traditional healers are sometimes seen as benefactors in society in their use of natural forces for a positive result against evil spirits and sorcerers. The practitioners of traditional medicine in some ways are seen to stabilize society by using their knowledge and mastery of natural forces, their mystical gifts, and their religious activities such as prayers, rituals, and sacrifices. They are considered as channels of good health, wealth, fertility, peace, and social well-being.

Spiritism is defined as being a teaching that affirms the survival of the spirit after death and allows the possibility for communication between the living and the dead. Today this kind of spiritism is being practiced in Africa. In Mbiti's book entitled *Introduction to African Religion* (1992, 124-130), he affirms that the dead are never really dead in Africa, since the spirits of the dead are considered the protectors of the living. The "living dead" is inherent in the religious belief and social practices of many Africans. Catholic theologian Benezet Bujo arrives at the same conclusion as Mbiti. The spirits of the dead are also considered intermediaries between the living and God, becoming the benefactors and protectors of the living. These spirits also are believed to punish the living should they forget the dead and the necessary sacrifices meant to appease the dead. (See also, John Parrat, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 122-136.

C. The biblical position on magic, sorcery, spiritism, and traditional medicine

The biblical position is clear in relation to the practice of magic, sorcery, spiritism, and traditional medicine. Using a Bible concordance, you can find the biblical teachings on these practices; the Bible condemns these practices for Christian believers. The following passages offer the Christian teaching on these practices:

1 Samuel 28:7ff	Galatians 5:20
Zachariah 10:2ff	Col. 2:6-23
Micah 3:7ff	Acts 8:9ff
Daniel 2:2-27ff	Acts 13:6ff
Jeremiah 27:9ff	
Jeremiah 29:8ff	
Malachi 3:5	

Editor's commentary: What happens after death?

Christian theologians do not speak with one voice on the issue of life immediately beyond the grave. New Testament scholar N.T. Wright has championed the view that conscious human existence ends at death, pending the general resurrection and judgment at the return of Christ (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15). An alternate view, based in part on the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) as well as Jesus' words to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43), allows for a conscious existence for both the righteous and the wicked immediately following death, the former

enjoying blessings while the latter are tormented. In this conception, human spirits are in a holding place from which they cannot exit, cut-off from interaction with the living. Only on the day of judgment will they be released and reunited with their resurrected bodies.

Nazarene Article of Faith # 16, "Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny," affirms:

20. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, that the bodies both of the just and of the unjust shall be raised to life and united with their spirits—"they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

What may be concluded?

It is irrelevant whether Wright's position or the alternate view is correct. **In either case, from a biblical standpoint, the dead do *not* interact with the living in the manner that spiritism supposes.**¹ What is guaranteed for the dead is not continued interaction with the living, complete with their deference and petitions, but judgment before a holy God (Hebrews 9:27).

While deceased humans await the resurrection – either in non-existence (Wright) or in a holding place of punishment or comfort (Luke 16) – evil spirits are not subject to the same limitations. Accordingly, they may impersonate deceased humans, in the same way that Satan "masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Interactions with deceased "ancestors" or other persons are in fact encounters with the forces of darkness, and should be treated by the Christian as such (Eph. 6:10-18).

1. A positive aspect of traditional medicine

Contrary to Mbiti's perspective, there are particularly gifted people in Africa who have medicinal knowledge of certain plants, herbs, and roots. These persons may care for their patients without an association with mystical forces of nature or ancestral spirits. . The effectiveness of their medicine is found in the chemical composition of the plants they use. In this way it can be said that this kind of African traditional medicine is beneficial. God created Adam and Eve, putting them in a

¹ 1 Samuel 28 :7ff and the story of the witch of Endor is a disputed instance. The witch's surprise at seeing Samuel come up from *sheol* underscores that this was a first-ever phenomenon. This one possible exception that God allowed was in order to pronounce judgment on King Saul. As such, it should *not* be taken as a biblical proof of spiritism's belief that ancestral spirits routinely interact with the living.

natural environment so they could live using natural resources available to them without any relation to the occult.

2. The omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of God as an antidote

The theological terms for describing how God relates to and acts toward Creation are _____ (all-powerful), omniscience (all-knowing), omnipresence (ever-present). These words are not themselves found in the Bible, but the ideas are there.

In Hosea 4:6 God said, "My people perish, because they do not have knowledge." Africa perishes today under the practices of sorcery, magic, and spiritism because it does not have knowledge of God in his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Africans will regularly turn to their divinities, idols, and spirits for fertility, health, success, and all sorts of needs simply because they ignore the fact of who God is and what God can do.

God in written revelation—the Bible – is revealed to humanity as being God Almighty for whom nothing is impossible. God is shown to be ever-present in all creation and nothing is hidden from the divine presence. Why then should Africans look for refuge and solutions in their idols? God is also omniscient. God knows all that we think and do.

Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence

Omnipotence	Omniscience	Omnipresence
Isaiah 9:5 Daniel 2:20 Micah 5:3 Habakkuk 3:19 Ephesians 6:10 Genesis 17:1-8 Genesis 28:3-4 Genesis 35:11 Genesis 48:3 Exodus 6:3 Luke 1:37 Ephesians 3:20 Revelation 1:8	Psalm 139:1-12 Acts 5:1-4	Ezekiel 48:35 Psalm 139:1-12 Matthew 28:20b

Conclusion for social structures, problems, and the Church's charge

The Church has a duty to teach African Christians about the living God who knows all, can do all, and is everywhere present. It is important to teach all believers who will then teach others about who God is. God's grace and solid Biblical understanding will lead African society toward a path of spiritual revival and social renewal. Only God's Holy Spirit – the true Guide and Counselor for Christian believers – can enable Africans to go beyond the empty promises of sorcery, magic, and spiritism.

Most of all, ministers in Africa seek to serve God and the Church within the context of their society. We do not neglect or reject this society. They need to hear the Good News, and they hear it from within the social context of their nation. So, let's "make Christ-like disciples in the nations."

Quiz # 1 – based on sessions 1 & 2

Here are ten true/false questions. The student should number his or her paper from one to ten. Then, write "true" if the corresponding statement is accurate, or "false" if it contains anything wrong.

1. According to Gerard Durozoi, humans are social beings. (True)
2. When God created Adam, he later said: "It is very good for man to be alone." (false)
3. The first part of the definition of "culture" (from Schafer and Lamm) says: "Culture is the sum total of all that is learned and transmitted socially." (true)
4. One example of material culture is beliefs. (false – Beliefs are an example of non-material culture).
5. Informal norms are always written down. (false – They are unwritten).
6. In "Christ against culture," culture is to be avoided and criticized. (True)
7. "Family" may be defined traditionally as two parents rearing their own or adopted children. (True)

8. A divorced person cannot be ordained in the Church of the Nazarene. (false)
9. "Polyandry" is when one woman has more than one husband. (true)
10. Representative democracies are also known as republics. (true)

Quiz # 2 – based on sessions 3 & 4

1. World War II may be traced to the rise of the Nazi party in Germany (true)
2. A conscientious objector refuses military service because of a religious conviction against war. (true)
3. Malcolm X refused to use violence in the struggle against racism. (false – that was Martin Luther King, Jr.)
4. The Afrikaans word, "apartheid," means "integration." (false – it means separation)
5. HIV may be transmitted by the sharing of syringes. (true)
6. The four main tasks of society include teaching believers to respect authority. (true)
7. In the "peace child" redemptive analogy from Don Richardson, war was stopped through the sacrifice of a baby boy. (false – The boy was presented to the enemy, but kept alive).
8. Prevenient grace includes the convictions of the Holy Spirit. (true)
9. Part of the Church's task is to be an agent of reconciliation in society. (true)
10. Refusal to pay taxes is our Christian duty. (false – "Render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar" means we should be subject to legitimate authority, including paying taxes).