

Engaged Spirituality: Prayer within the Providence of God

Alan Wright, Jamie Edgerton and Bill Walker¹, September 2015

I. Introduction

This paper describes a model of dynamic partnership between Aid and Development practitioners and Christian praying communities (intercessors) committed to social and spiritual renewal through organisations such as World Vision. Such partnerships offer the possibility of bridging the notorious sacred-secular divide amongst Christians. This divide perpetuates an abstract spirituality focussed on the Church's religious activities rather than whole-of-life discipleship. As a result, the impact of the gospel is both blunted and limited in scope.

The paper describes the experiences of a small group of people as they prayed in response to God's grace, spiritually advocating before God and working in partnership with World Vision staff and volunteers. Over the last nine years they supported staff introducing a model called Citizen Voice and Action (CV&A) to local communities. CV&A is World Vision's approach to empowering citizens to advocate for, and transform, local community public services in low and middle-income countries.

This paper first looks at the CV&A approach currently being implemented by World Vision and then it outlines the theory and practice of Engaged Spirituality that has underpinned CV&A. It finishes by proposing the introduction of multiple intercessory prayer partnerships, based on Engaged Spirituality, to support World Vision's work.

The Engaged Spirituality model is applicable to all Christian ministries which challenge the principalities and powers that corrupt societies and obstruct the work of those engaged in 'seeking first the kingdom', promoting justice, and ameliorating powerlessness and poverty.

II. The CV&A Story

CV&A is a robust and well-tested approach that empowers poor and marginalised people to take action as citizens, and to claim rights from, and to work in partnership with, governments. CV&A initiatives facilitate a shift in local asymmetric power structures by enabling often illiterate community members to articulate their basic needs and aspirations in health, education and other essential services. In this process they are enabled to realise their rights as citizens and to exercise their God-given creativity and dignity by taking action together for the common good. Thus citizens learn to influence and shape key factors in the public sphere that matter most for daily well being and, in so doing, they learn the basic skills needed to escape from powerlessness and poverty. The CV&A process draws on citizens' local knowledge to articulate local reform agendas and to engage in well-informed conversations with governments and other authorities. Governments are thus rendered more responsive and accountable to citizens and assisted to fulfil their human rights obligations.

The roots of CV&A

CV&A is the culmination of almost 30 years of work alongside of and by the poor, as they have struggled to have their voices heard and to seek justice. Its roots lie in the work of the

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Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, his concept of '*concientización*' (action based upon consciousness raising), and in his practices, which showed that empowering marginalised people enabled them to generate their own actionable knowledge. A key method of *concientización* is the social audit, which originated in struggles for justice and accountability among people injured in the Bhopal disaster in 1984. This and other methods were developed into a hybrid approach by CARE in Malawi and refined as an empowerment and social accountability tool by the World Bank, which was called Community Based Performance Monitoring (CBPM). World Vision's piloting of the CBPM approach began in 2005 in Uganda and Brazil.

During the period of piloting CBPM in these and other countries, World Vision changed its focus and practice significantly. To increase the empowerment impact on marginalised adults and children, a much stronger focus was placed on creating an enabling context for citizen engagement in each community. These changes were so significant that in 2009 CBPM was renamed Citizen Voice and Action.

CV&A initiatives are now being implemented in 43 countries encompassing over 400 (almost 25%) of World Vision's Area Development Programs. These include some of the more difficult and challenging settings in the world such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. World Vision now regards CV&A as its leading model for local-level advocacy by communities.

The full story of how World Vision came to embrace CBPM, to contextualise it as CV&A, and to mainstream it as a long-term global project is told elsewhere (see [World Vision's Approach to Social Accountability—Citizen Voice and Action](#)). The underlying story of the intercessory prayer process of Engaged Spirituality, which has supported it from the beginning, is less well known.

III. The Emerging Model of Engaged Spirituality

The emergence of a new model

Alan Wright is the principal pioneer and author of Engaged Spirituality. Its conceptual foundations are derived from his experience and thinking during his lifetime journey of spiritual reflection and activism. In his mature years, Alan felt called to consistent intercessory prayer with Llew Evans, a spiritual companion and fellow educator and activist. Following prayerful reading and discussion of theologian Walter Wink's work, *Engaging the Powers* (see the next section), Alan and Llew formed a two-member prayer group to 'engage the powers through intercession'. They whimsically called themselves 'Oldies for Intercession' (OFI). At that stage, they were unclear what the focus of their prayer should be and they knew nothing of CBPM nor did they have any direct contact with World Vision.

Meanwhile, four unfolding processes converged, as follows:

- Jamie Edgerton led the refinement of the CBPM approach while working for the World Bank in Washington DC. He returned to Australia in 2001 and continued consulting on CBPM with the World Bank. He also renewed contact with Alan who had been a long-term mentor.
- Bill Walker concluded eight years of World Vision Australia advocacy on the Jubilee Debt Campaign in 2003. In the process of exploring new areas of advocacy that could help make the debt relief delivered by the Jubilee Campaign more effective, Bill became aware of and interested in CBPM. He was surprised to discover that Jamie was now living near Melbourne.

- Bill and Jamie met in early 2004 and began collaborating to convince World Vision Australia to pilot CBPM. In order to examine its viability, Jamie and Bill undertook an initial visit to East Africa to ascertain the interest, readiness and capability of World Vision partners and communities in CBPM.
- Before setting out with Bill for East Africa, Jamie invited Alan and Llew to partner with him as intercessors for CBPM. Besides being known and respected by Alan and Llew, Jamie was already convinced of the value of such prayer. Jamie briefed Alan and Llew on the emerging vision and strategies for CBPM.

Jamie's invitation to Alan and Llew happened within a month of their decision to form OFI. It proved to be a 'kairos moment', especially for Alan, as it built upon and affirmed a lifelong preparation for such a venture.² Regular bulletins (mostly by email) from Jamie kept OFI's prayer commitment real and vital. Bill, who was by then coordinating World Vision's pilot CBPM program, soon joined in this prayer partnership. The stream of updates from Jamie and Bill enabled Alan and Llew to engage with the issues and visualise the situations as they prayed, thus holding the two 'practitioners' and their unfolding situations in regular prayer accompanied by active scriptural reflection.

Soon the four partners began to realise that their engagement as prayer partners was releasing a host of unexpected consequences or 'synchronicities'. When they received an email from Jamie giving an account of the first CBPM pilot activities in East Africa, saying that the work had been 'flying on the wings of prayer and providence', Alan and Llew were almost incredulous and realised that their prayers were making a real difference.³

Meanwhile Camilla Symes and her husband were working as Anglican missionaries in South Africa. In 2005 they had a strong call from God to return to the UK. They obeyed, not knowing what this call meant. Camilla met the head of WVUK on the same day that WVUK obtained major funding for community empowerment and accountability work. She was offered oversight of this project, thus confirming the call to return to the UK. Later, moving to WVI, Camilla hired a small team of staff who in partnership with WV offices and communities have since increased the total number of countries using CV&A to 43, including many of the world's poorest.

OFI's understanding of spiritual growth (set out below) provides insights into why World Vision's CV&A processes are strategically important. CV&A lays a foundation of creativity and hope; this is strengthened as the process helps communities to understand the governance system of their country and to engage in collaborative dialogue with appropriate people in the power structures. CV&A thus promotes the dignity of the marginalised and facilitates the spiritual journey fundamental to abundant life for all people.

Over time, the OFI partners discovered hidden treasures in giving themselves to this ministry of intercessory prayer; unexpectedly they realised that their own lives were being enriched. As they prayed, their own consciousness was enhanced with a deeper awareness of God. A restfulness emerged from being confident that whatever happened they could not 'fall out of God's providence': God *working with* them for good. In a very real sense, OFI and the practitioners found themselves simply aware of being in a creative partnership with the Spirit as they fostered what Jesus called the kingdom of God on earth. It became clear that to them that God was indeed walking with them: moments when they knew this in very specific ways,

² Key elements of Alan Wright's spiritual journey are documented in his book: *A Chaplain Remembers: Lifelong Reflections on the Educational and Spiritual Values Shaping the William Carey Chapel*. Darren Cronshaw's review of the book can be found at [Cronshaw review of A Chaplain Remembers by Alan Wright](#).

³ This happened days before Llew died at 92. Daphne Holden took his place in OFI.

and at just the right time. Their experience of these often unexpected, small or bigger, moments of blessing when God 'brings everything together at the right time' in their walk with Him prompted OFI to call them 'synchronicities'.

In hindsight the partners see God's perfect timing and sovereignty in bringing together a partnership of people who were previously unknown to each other and who have cooperated with God and each other to bring a new wave of community empowerment to the poor. Subsequently, they realised that engaging the powers that trap the poor was releasing a host of synchronicities; God has been providentially answering one prayer after another! As they reflect on almost a decade of CV&A, some shared foundations to the spirituality underpinning CV&A and the intercessory ministry that started in Melbourne are apparent.

Engaged Spirituality and Spiritual Growth

The understanding of human spirituality intrinsic to the Engaged Spirituality model is deep and universal, and crosses all boundaries. The following are the three main foundations of this understanding:

- Humans are made in the image of God. We are self-conscious beings with memory (instant replay); rational/reflective minds; imagination and creativity. We also enjoy freedom—the capacity to choose 'the better way' (or not to do so) based on whatever has been 'shown' to us.
- Humans also have within them a root or seed of the divine.⁴ The same Word (*Logos* in Greek) that was fully made flesh in Jesus is within every human as 'the light within'. It is an underlying deep impulse towards loving and being loved, and towards 'making a difference for good'. We all have such deep longings, even though they may have been crushed or buried by long-term adversity.
- All human growth towards moral and spiritual maturity consists of 'waking up' to these fundamental gifts, potentials and 'promptings of our hearts', and making the appropriate choices. Thus we become what we contemplate and choose.

All people have access to these dimensions as well as to the 'underside' of them, which is based on 'looking after number one'. Rejecting higher promptings in favour of self-interest is driven by the individual ego—despite the fact that we make inauthentic excuses for it by dressing it up in virtuous motives. The temptation to engage in such 'ego-games' confronts us all, and overcoming this is the key to growth in spirituality. There is no substitute for 'walking humbly with God' (Micah 6:8), cultivating 'presence', and remaining aware of providence: 'God *working with us* for good' in a sacred partnership.

The work⁵ of the late theologian, Walter Wink provides a crucial contribution to the Engaged Spirituality model by extending these insights beyond the personal to the universal level. The OFI partners came to understand that the 'ego-games' we all play are also the essence of the 'principalities and powers' (Eph. 6:12)—i.e. domination systems in which God's rule is effectively overwhelmed by human sinfulness. Ego-games spoil and undermine all relationships, organizations and human endeavour for good. *It is only God's light in us, and in our operations together for him, which dispels the darkness of local and world domination systems.*

⁴ John 1:-1-14.

⁵ See Wink's acclaimed trilogy of biblical exegesis on the principalities and powers: *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (1984); *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Powers that Determine Human Existence* (1986); and *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (1992). Fortress Press is the publisher of all three books.

Wink's climactic conclusion towards the end of the third book in his trilogy, *Engaging the Powers*,⁶ was particularly striking:

History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being.⁷

But there is more to Wink's thesis than the statement above, which might appear to put the centre of gravity in the intercessor not in God the Holy Spirit. The following are key quotations from chapter 16 of *Engaging the Powers*:

The phrases of the Lord's Prayer are not indicative but imperative ... It will not do to implore. We have been commanded to command ... to haggle with God for the sake of the sick, the obsessed, the weak, and to conform our lives to our intercessions.

Prayer is not a request to an almighty king who can do anything at any time ... When we pray, we are not sending a letter to a celestial White House where it is sorted among piles of others. We are engaged rather in an act of cocreation⁸ in which one little sector of the universe rises up and becomes translucent, incandescent, a vibratory centre of power that radiates the power of the universe. ... History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being. ... intercession, far from being an escape from action, is a means of focusing for action and of creating action.

All this about our role as intercessors in creating history is arrogant bravado unless we recognise that it is God rather than ourselves who initiates prayer, and that it is God's power, not ours, that answers to the world's needs. We are always preceded in intercession. God is always already praying within us. When we turn to pray, it is already the second step of prayer. We join with God in a prayer already going on in us and in the world ... (Rom. 8:26-27)

We learn to pray by stopping ... simply listening to the prayer already being prayed in us. ... Our task is simply to bring the Spirit's utterances to language, to consciousness, to awareness.
[emphasis added]

This last sentence provides both a glimpse and a summing up of the insights emerging out of OFI experience and the nature of Engaged Spirituality. The actual practice of the Engaged Spirituality model brings awareness that human beings are called into a *creative partnership* with the Spirit towards a better life on earth—the reign of God.

This sense of partnership with the Spirit became fundamental to the OFI method and developed out of meditation upon Romans 8:26-28 in the light of emails from the Practitioners. They came to think of the Spirit as a kind of 'Chief Operations Officer of the Godhead', the one 'connecting everything together' for good (providence) insofar as humans freely invite God to do so. This was a concept born out of experience rather than a theological statement about God. But it reflects the fundamental purpose of human life on earth: 'waking up' to who we are as 'sons and daughters' of God, and learning to become partners with God to usher in a better future. This is what Jesus labelled 'the Kingdom of God on earth'.

The processes of Engaged Spirituality

Engaged Spirituality is about Practitioners of kingdom activities and their Prayer Partners/Intercessors cooperating to address complex human situations in partnership with

⁶ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 1992, Fortress Press.

⁷ P. 304. This insight sparked the formation of OFI.

⁸ Wink's use of the term 'cocreation' may be problematic for some readers. However, when understood in the sense of co-working or partnership with the Spirit, the term accurately depicts OFI's experience of walking humbly with God until we learn to reach agreement on the way forward in complex situations, thereby in some way facilitating the Spirit's 'working with us for good' (Rom 8:28).

the Holy Spirit. Intercessors could be small groups⁹ (as in the OFI example), praying communities, or individuals.

There is no defined path along which the Engaged Spirituality process should unfold. The diagram below is not a blueprint but it charts OFI's eight-year experience of acting as prayer partners of World Vision's CV&A activities; it summarises the practices of Engaged Spirituality and provides clues for future development.

Preconditions for a productive prayer partnership include

- a shared vision of the kingdom of God;
- an agreed partnership between Practitioners (P's) and Intercessors (I's);
- development of mutual trust between P's and I's, and;
- regular communication between P's and I's (perhaps monthly by email, but whenever needed).

In the diagram below, both the upper (Practitioner) and lower (Intercessor) levels consist of a cyclical process of action and reflection ('praxis') and the two sets of unfolding activities are linked in the following ways:

- Regular communications (updates, reflections, and promptings) between the practitioners and the intercessors
- 'Enabling interventions' by the Holy Spirit in kingdom activities, resulting in synchronicities that are recognisable as divine interventions

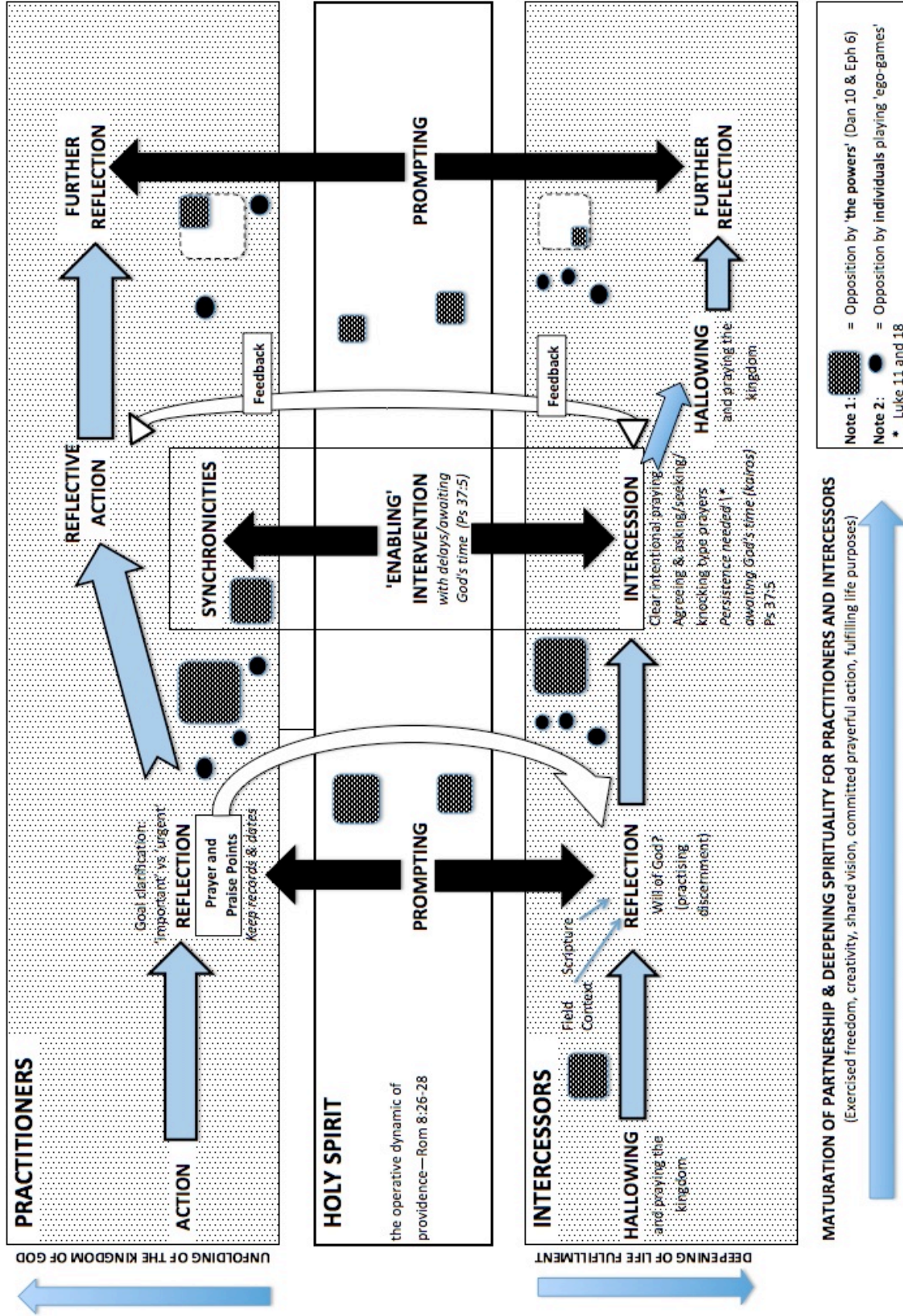
The underlying purpose of the regular communications is the clarification/discernment¹⁰ of the will of God in any unfolding situation. This process finds expression in different modes of prayer which amount to strategies for reaching agreement suggested by Jesus in Matt 18:19 and 7:7—his 'ask/seek/knock' formula. If we are clear about what the will of God is in our situation then we simply 'ask' and wait upon God for it; if we are not sure, we 'seek' wisdom/guidance; if the door is closed for any reason, then we 'knock', waiting either for the door to be opened again, or perhaps for a whole new avenue to open up that circumvents the closed door.

Within such conscious dependence upon 'God working with us for good' (providence), OFI has learned to deliberately hold up people and situations for the Spirit's intercession, aware that a significant activity was going on at a deeper level, and 'resting' in that. In this process of cooperation with the Holy Spirit, of 'standing in the gap' between the actual and the possible, the OFI/CV&A partnership seems to have fulfilled at least some of the conditions for divine intervention/synchronicities.

⁹ We tend to see the small group as 'the unfolding dynamics of the twos and threes gathered in my name', referred to by Jesus.

¹⁰ In the Bible, the language of discernment is connected with the spiritual practices of distinguishing, interpreting, separating or examining. It is the practice of recognising when a person, doctrine, spirit or situation is or is not from God; what God is saying; and what God is asking of people.

ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY: KEY PROCESSES FOR PRAYER PARTNERSHIPS



IV. Applying Engaged Spirituality at World Vision

Prayer has played a prominent part in World Vision since it began. This is reflected in its motto: 'Our vision for every child is life in all its fullness, our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.' (See Appendix 2 for an outline of current practices.)

Engaged Spirituality is a process for continual renewal—not only of human beings, but also of our institutions. The very heart of this is to *act upon what you are 'being shown'* (in your soul), as seen in Micah 6:8: 'to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God' (RSV). That is 'the way'.

Through Engaged Spirituality, World Vision employees can better contribute to God's purposes by giving expression to their unique human spirituality and inevitably growing in stature and effectiveness. The challenge is to learn to grapple together with the institutional forces that are at work and not just at the level of individual spiritual awakening (though of course that is at the heart of everything).

If World Vision gives priority to cultivating the spirituality of its staff on the above pattern as part of its culture, there will be a vitality and renewal of processes going on *all the time*. But this is very subtle; it would be easy to include *in World Vision publicity* but hard to achieve. Different *organisational units* will achieve different results; some leaders *may resist changes they perceive as challenging* their role, leadership style, or even their particular theology or church tradition—we are all human!

Some of the issues to be confronted will certainly prove to be contentious, for instance, in dealing with tensions between 'conservative/exclusive' and more 'inclusive' approaches to defining the limits of God's people and activity in the world. Jesus said, 'No one comes to the Father except by me'—a saying that can look exclusive to those outside the Christian tradition. On the other hand Jesus also said, 'I, when I am lifted up will draw all people to myself', and he also spoke of his 'other sheep'. If the work of Jesus being continued by the Holy Spirit is a continuity of the divine historical initiative of incarnation and redemption, then every human soul aspiring to come to God—even though they have never heard the name of Jesus—is coming via the way that has been made open by Him. The history of Christian mission is patchy, sometimes painful, but it also shows that God uses a wide variety of ways to draw people to Himself in very diverse circumstances. God's sovereignty means we cannot dictate to Him how He will work, but we know it will be consistent with who He has revealed himself to be.

The very nature of the divine is loving into fullness of life the divine potential of every human. This is hugely important, given the religiously based conflicts currently tearing our world apart. The unity of all humankind has its roots in God, the source of all being. Christians are commanded to 'pray the kingdom and do God's will on earth', not to build a Christian empire.

These are subtle but vital issues which need to be worked through patiently in many different ways, especially because World Vision often operates in largely non-Christian environments. But if staff increasingly learn to work with the Spirit, the possibilities are exciting. Engaged Spirituality is at least a hypothesis that needs to be systematically tested.

In all its work, World Vision has to deal with the powers that be—governments, bureaucracies, multinational corporations, centralised world financial systems, spiritual principalities and local power structures—all with a momentum of their own. As it builds staff capacity to work with Engaged Spirituality and strengthen the journey with prayer partners, World Vision might expect to see increasing evidence of what it is like to 'walk humbly with God', in the shape of unfolding, often unexpected consequences, or synchronicities.

Prayer Practice in World Vision's National Office in India¹¹

One of the best current prayer practices for spiritual engagement in the World Vision partnership is found in the National Office in India. The National Director Jayakumar Christian writes:

Right from the beginning there was a commitment to prayer to cover this discernment and strategic planning process. We informed all of our staff at every major step and requested them to pray, covering this whole exercise. It was clear in our minds this was a spiritual exercise of discernment and needed to be bathed in prayer. During the week when we came together we paired the participants into prayer teams, and during the day we set time apart for praying for this process. This kept the process and all of us dependent on God.

There were two features of our Bible study. First, we affirmed that our strategy needed to be rooted in the character and awesomeness of our God; to be a derivative of our understanding the mission of God; and to bear witness to the kingdom of God. Secondly, after each Bible study we spent time reflecting upon the growing understanding of the Kingdom of God together.

Then the strategic discernment exercise was pitched as a 'faith stretching' exercise. We challenged ourselves to seek God's mind to know what He wants us to do to force World Vision India to exercise our faith - since we recognized that it is our ultimate desire to please God and that we can only please God by faith (Heb 11:6). We sought strategies that would stretch World Vision India and not allow us to continue with business as usual.

We recognised that the World Vision India strategy has to be in alignment with what God is doing in our nation in this season of time. We recognised also that God is already active in our nation and that World Vision India is only a co-worker with God. We listened to experts and we listened to what was happening in the churches (our praying partners) in our nation. This information deepened our understanding to discern the hand of God in our nation. Finally we expressed 'anger' about our context. We did not simply do a cold analysis of the facts that were presented to us, although we had facts and rigour in our analysis. We went beyond this and asked ourselves: What about our current context makes us angry? It was a critical moment of discernment in our process.

Transparency and openness (with no agenda) through the whole process was critical for the success of the process. We saw the group as the tool to discern collectively the will of God. None of us had an edge over the other, or insights that gave us an advantage over the other. There was no space for lobbying from any technical specialist. We were transparent with all our staff teams and with all our partners. (Christian, 2010)

¹¹ The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions to this paper (including this box and Appendix 2) from Sarah Plummer, Director of Prayer Ministries, World Vision International. The material in the box attributed to Jayakumar Christian has been lightly edited.

Appendix 1 — The Core Principles of Engaged Spirituality

Engaged Spirituality involves listening to the Spirit's prayer already being prayed in us about situations in which committed people are engaged in making a difference for good under God. It is a process of spiritual awakening or renewal built upon the following foundational principles.

Start with experience ... act on what you are shown

We all need the opportunity to reflect upon our own and community experiences of real-life situations and 'investigate' and to be honestly and deeply engaged in learning as we explore our own insights with wise teachers. That way, all people can begin to 'act on what they have been shown', building not only their own self-esteem and spirituality, but also their competence for handling their life situations, as well as their 'idealism'. In the process, creativity, passion for social justice, and compassion for others are released.

Walk humbly with God

Only God's ways really work in human relationships and affairs—through integrity, justice, love, compassion, sensitivity, and wisdom. When we get carried away by ego-impulses, 'looking after number one' and following our passions in different ways, we create crises and destroy the beauty of our lives. We have to face this reality daily and learn to 'walk humbly with God' in the light. 1 Peter 1:22-23 sums up this whole process:

Seeing you have purified your souls by obeying the truth, through the [promptings of] the Spirit, unto unfeigned love, see that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently: being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (Webster's)

Trust in God's providence

As revealed supremely in Jesus' words on the cross, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do', God's perspective in all human affairs is to embrace us in understanding, love and forgiveness. The active work of the Holy Spirit is profoundly described in Romans 8:26-28:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. (RSV)

Exercise our capacities as being made in the image of God

This is the most priceless gift—our human capacity for self-conscious awareness, freedom and creativity. By the exercise of those capacities we grow in stature as human beings—and by the quality of the choices that we make, we humans 'become what we will be'; our potentialities unfold from within. God invites us onto this pathway of spiritual adventure with Him, but he insists that it must be our free choice. We can only grow in spiritual stature as we exercise those capacities, making life-discerning choices.

Recognise that God's method is intercession

God's intercession is always towards our 'waking up to ourselves'. As ongoing revelation continues to open our eyes, we learn to 'act upon what we have been shown' (Micah 6:8). It's all designed to help humans mature to become more like the divine. For those who have eyes

to see and ears to hear, let them see and hear. Correspondingly, God's method depends on us becoming co-creators with the Spirit of the better future. As we learn to consciously cooperate with God through intercession, the Spirit is enabled to connect a vast array of people and situations and to orchestrate 'synchronicities' that lead towards the kingdom of God on earth.

Hallow God in our hearts

The first focus suggested by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer is, 'Hallowed [holy, consecrated, sacred, or revered] be your name'. The first step in the practice of Engaged Spirituality is to cultivate 'quality time' with God by hallowing the divine Spirit in our hearts and learning to give expression to it in everyday life—i.e. becoming attuned to God's heart and purposes. In a way, *everything* flows out of that.

Pray the kingdom

After hallowing, the next focus of the Lord's Prayer is to invite/command God's will to be done, and His kingdom to invade our earthly domain. This invasion is a challenge to any current spiritual powers and principalities and as our battle is not against flesh and blood they will therefore put up resistance.

Take into account the opposition of the powers

Humans get locked up in ego games, pursuing self-interest and building empires and systems of domination to preserve those self-interests and subdue other people, tribes and nations. These are 'principalities and powers'—demonic spiritual forces that resist the rule of God on earth. Such 'ego-power games' are frequently played by 'good' people, apparently full of integrity. They are among the forces operating to frustrate the reign of God on earth and to prevent real care for those who are oppressed and often crushed by adversity. Without intercession (a conscious learning to enter into a partnership with the divine in human affairs) we are totally inadequate for the magnitude of the sacred task of personally and corporately 'praying the kingdom'.

Learn to wait upon God

The powers' opposition to God's reign often results in delays in the apparent responses to our committed intercession as well as to any work focussed upon doing God's will. Understanding and accepting God's 'kairos time' for events is an essential dimension of 'walking humbly with God'.

Learn to work with providence and expect synchronicities

So far as we are faithful in seeking first the kingdom of God and aware that we are called to cooperate with the Spirit, the action of providence will increasingly show itself to be operative in our lives—i.e. God 'working with us for good'. Our lives and our God-driven activities will increasingly unfold, sometimes with the help of hitherto unknown people whose contribution could never have been predicted.

Appendix 2 — Current Prayer Practices in World Vision

The posture and culture of prayer within World Vision is evident in its practices of daily devotions, weekly chapel meetings, times of discernment in strategic planning or community development, and an annual day of prayer. As an organisation we reflect upon the question: 'What are we asking God to do in our prayer requests?' Over time, prayer content has grown to addressing key well-being issues facing children in the communities which WV serves. In prayer and action our staff become agents of God's love in addressing the critical needs around them.

The model of Engaged Spirituality represents a paradigm shift whereby *initially* Christian staff members and prayer partners understand their prayer activity as a key role in their work.

WV's prayer requests are currently shared with praying partners through many diverse platforms. For example: @WVpray on Twitter; the online magazine *Vision*; monthly prayer guides; the prayer application for iPhones; pastors' prayer breakfasts, and established relationships and events already existing in each national office.

WV's spiritual engagement occurs in the three areas in which it works:

Development

This is a vision of journeying in prayer together at the local, national and regional levels, engaging spiritually on issues of justice and aligning with God's heart for children in communities. In many communities church leaders come together for prayer breakfasts or prayer rallies. But WV wants all members of congregations to engage with God and each other in prayer over the critical needs of community transformation, as well as to build prayer partnerships that see God's restorative, renewing hand in the transformation of nations. Transformational development is God's activity and we need to rely and depend on God to shape this and combat the powers and principalities that seek to diminish, decay and destroy life in all its fullness. God calls us as co-agents in this activity in which prayer and the word of God is foundational.

Relief in major emergencies

This is a vision of engaging spiritually in the major emergencies that face communities and countries. With one voice the WV global community can call out to God to meet the needs of those who have suffered trauma and brokenness because of a major emergency. God is the God who heals, and those who have faced such devastation need God's strength, wisdom and comfort for healing and hope.

Advocacy

This is a vision of engaging in spiritual advocacy before the Lord and together promoting the unfolding of the kingdom of God, *thus* aligning a small part of the world with God's purposes and plans. Advocacy teams operate in such a way that prayer, meditation and biblical reflection form a foundation for their advocacy. They have an IT platform called 'courageous conversations' that has become tremendously empowering as they discover that they do not advocate on their own. The vision is for this activity to inspire people movements through an Engaged Spirituality model with prayer, advocacy and resource mobilisation.

Prayer is a God-given gift; it is a grace-filled response that calls upon God to bring His kingdom to bear in this world as it is in heaven. It is a privilege to work in an organisation that attempts to live out a life of prayer with such integrity.