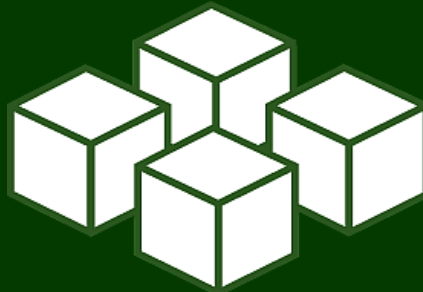

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CHARITY DETOX

by: Robert D. Lupton

Prepared by:
Excellence in Giving



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Executive Summary of

Charity Detox

What Charity Would Look Like If We Cared About Results

Robert D. Lupton

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Charity Detox

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Excellence in GivingSM is a full-service philanthropic advisory firm designed to increase the joy of the high-capacity giver through a personalized process of discovery, evaluation, participation, and celebration.

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CHAPTER ONE
The Bad News About Good Works

The premise of this book states that one can never really *help* people out of poverty through charity.

The Doctor Will Kill You Now

Most efforts of charity in poor countries and societies end up making those helped poorer or completely dependent. Until germs were discovered as causes for disease, blood letting, in order to drain out bad blood was considered the only cure for a variety of diseases. Resistance to this new discovery was rampant and yet it was the doctor who was killing the patient and he didn't even know it. Toxic charity is similar in that it harms more than helps and this thought is met with similar resistance.

Just Following God's Orders

The church is one of the most chronic offenders in creating dependency on charity with its many social action programs. However, it is crucial to distinguish between, "crisis and chronic need" (9). While, crises like natural disasters need intervention, once the immediate crisis is over, charity then needs to shift focus and concentrate on rebuilding lives and not on making dependents, "The strategy of crisis intervention must then shift to a strategy of development" (9). Unfortunately, this is a long drawn out and involved process, for which there are very few who give and even fewer who volunteer.

Converting to Results Based Charity

Charitable organizations are beginning to realize that poverty alleviation can happen only through development and not hand-outs and sops. Examples of such a paradigm shift can be seen in centuries old Gospel Rescue Mission and KARM (Knoxville Area Rescue Mission). These missions make sure each resident in their shelters contributes in some way to the operation of the mission, thereby "earning" their free stay. The mission also provides financial management classes, clothes for job interviews, etc. The measurement of their success lies in not how many meals were served, rather how many of their residents were able to get back on their feet and live drug-free, productive lives. The main premise behind this shift is, "...that everyone has some God-given capacity to help both self and others" (15).

Moving the Poverty Needle

Poverty spawns devaluation and erodes self-worth among other things (17). Lack of education, and therefore jobs, and a seemingly endless cycle of poverty, leads to hopelessness, and "poverty of spirit" (17). Ways to alleviate poverty should include, "educational advancement and improved self-sufficiency" (18). However, to truly tackle poverty is to get involved in economic and community development. (18). An escape from

poverty while it might begin with a good job, it certainly does not end there. There needs to be community development that goes hand-in-hand with an individual's escape from poverty—a true measure of holistic help.

Capitalism and the Kingdom

Among the many economic systems in the world, capitalism has its flaws and detractors, and even though it is generally seen as self-serving; benevolent capitalism is probably the best foil to poverty. Creating businesses that can generate income for entire communities in poverty stricken areas can truly help lift those communities out of the grip of poverty. This is done effectively by Dylan and Anna Wilk who launched a beauty and cosmetic company in the Philippines by sourcing all natural ingredients indigenously and then selling those products cheaper than imports to the local markets. The company apart from offering jobs, also trains people in other areas of commerce in order to maximize the profits of the locals.

This model of social action that creates sustainable jobs will need a major shift in the way charitable institutions function. The chapters that follow will explain how to make this shift possible.

CHAPTER TWO

Partnering with Business

After countless hours of service to the poor one of the lessons learned is that when acts of charity are done for people who technically can help themselves, more harm than good is done.

One key component of poverty alleviation is finding and keeping decent jobs; and the only people who create decent jobs are the businesspeople. Free enterprise or the creation of wealth is key to lifting people out of poverty and yet capitalists are seen as greedy people by those not-for-profit organizations, despite the fact that these same capitalists underwrite the non-profits.

Charity's Bottom Line

Meeting with businesses and non-profits the disparity on how they viewed the goal of making profits and economic development, became evident. However, discussions led to an agreement that, "Wealth creation is the bedrock of economic vitality for any community..." (30). It is therefore important for both "for-profit" and "not-for-profit" to co-exist.

Trade is the bedrock of any economy and helps generate wealth as well as use human abilities, skills, and ingenuity. It also helps in moving people to work. It is not a good idea to subsidize non-work through welfare and similar programs. A healthy wealth generating and job creating society is more of a righteous pursuit than handing out sops to create unhealthy dependencies.

The Power of Self-Interest

Businessman Bill Mallory and his wife moved to Cebu, Philippines to set up manufacturing units. They hired a local workforce at fair wages, giving benefits, etc. and spurred ancillary businesses, that in turn helped grow that region. So while garnering profits they also did and continue to do a lot of good for the society with their earnings. Self-interest then becomes a high motivator and that should be high if a community has to climb out of poverty. This is best done through small to mid-size businesses that thrive and help create a middle class that in turn helps with economic development.

How to Thrive, Not Just Survive

Two small cottage industry type of businesses were working in Nicaragua to create jobs and help the economy, however, they were not really being able to reach their goal of poverty alleviation. The main reason was that the wealth creators were mainly ministers and not business people who understood what it means to set up production units for profit. So, in order for these micro-businesses to thrive and not just survive it is important for those ministering to include wealth creators to help them or maybe take on the work of making those business ventures viable and profitable.

Inviting Wealth Creators in as Partners

The need of the hour is to give a call to the MBA's sitting in the pews to use their expertise in creating business enterprises that are successful and profitable thereby creating jobs, and the ripple effect will help create and grow a viable self-sustaining economy.

CHAPTER THREE

Social Entrepreneurs

David Bornstein has coined the term *social entrepreneurs*; and their innovative solutions to social problems *social enterprise*. He suggests that they have started a “quiet global movement” that will find “sustainable solutions to the world’s perplexing social problems” (45). These are people who can inhabit both profit and non-profit worlds.

John Coors of CoorsTek, ventured into providing cheap stoves and electricity to sub-Saharan Africa. However, it soon shut its doors as the people were too poor to even pay the nominal amount for replacement of propane tanks and batteries. The only way it would have survived would have been for it to be heavily subsidized by American charity money. Coors did not want to do that and shut it down. The major take-away from the failed venture was that people need sustaining jobs that can then help the community move from its subsistence existence to a thriving life.

Coors eventually set up an investment fund to help businesses in Africa grow and become viable in order to offer jobs to their own people. Each family from the US investing in this fund, “...makes a three-dimensional commitment: relational capital that leverages family connections and reputation, intellectual capital that leverages their business and industry knowledge, and patient financial capital that provides the longer-term funding...” (50).

The Mission of Business

As the world recognizes that only stable and growing economies can move the needle of poverty, it is also imperative that church recognizes that within its ranks are successful wealth creators who can help grow stable economies. Several visionary businessmen have started and run successful companies in depressed areas of the world, using the local talent of the people. There is a movement toward “B-Corp” organizations, or “ethical businesses” that marry the benefits of non-profits with the money making of “for-profit” businesses, in turn benefiting economic, social and environmental areas of depressed societies.

The church in America contributes \$10 billion a year to religious tourism with short-term missions contributing one-third of that amount. However, this money, unlike regular tourism does not help economies. Short-term missionaries bring bags of free clothes, and shoes for the needy. However, most of those “free” things end up flooding the local market thereby unwittingly undercutting the fragile subsistence economy. Religious tourism can help sustain a larger economy like Israel, however, in order for that to happen a creative approach to mission trips should be taken that would help generate and undergird microbusinesses.

Using Social Enterprise to Become Better Missionaries

A mission trip would have greater impact if we could offer business acumen to the underdeveloped community who have the resources but do not have the training or the capital needed to build a business. “Making money *with* the poor, after all, is the highest form of charity” (62.) It would be worth while for churches to look at putting together an “investment trip” rather than just a missions trip. A church like Phoenix Community of Atlanta has built a successful coffee business that not only gives jobs and income to the farmers in Central America, it also generates income for the church and for other partner churches. It is imperative that the church, “intentionally engage the business-gifted saints in the mission” (65).

CHAPTER FOUR

Return on Investment

The world abounds with heart-warming stories of how charity helped meet a need of someone at the right time. These stories while nice to listen to are few and far between as it is a well known fact that the poor are getting poorer. Charity is motivated by the way it makes the giver feel over and above what the desired outcomes may be.

Soup-kitchens to homeless shelters to Christmas toy drives, tend to, “offer pity instead of opportunity,” as they tend to devalue the individual and the community rather than empower it (68). The success of these programs is not measured in terms of the moving of the poverty needle (69). Businesses record their success with Return on Investment (ROI) calculator. The idea is to answer the questions whether the investment made is profitable or not and what the rate of return is? (69) Taking this into the charitable work, one way to monitor the “ROI is by monitoring self-reliance” (69). This means taking unskilled workers and giving them skills enough for them to get a sustainable job.

A second way of assessing ROI is checking on the quality of the relationship between the giver and the recipient. It should in some way be a bartering sort of relationship. A relationship that is mutually beneficial (70).

A third way is to see the number of conversions and growing church attendance to the spread of the Gospel through charity.

All of these and other assessment criteria require relationship building and time, which no volunteer can commit to for the long-haul. Technology could be used to help keep data on distribution of goods and services by pooling all the data of all the charitable causes in a community together; but this can prove to be a herculean task.

Everyone deep down are born with a desire to be useful, and even if menial work may not lift some people out of misery, work does give one dignity and that should be the best ROI.

Activities or Outcomes

Return on Investment can be measured by what is most important—activities or outcomes? Asking the pastor of a successful mega-church the question, “...would the community miss the church if it shut down?” got the pastor thinking of his church’s impact on the community. The result of major research, creative thinking and planning to meet the goals of racial reconciliation and increased member volunteerism became just another series of activities that the church would involve itself in rather than look at its outcomes.

Differentiating between Activities and Outcomes

The measurement of outcomes is very important even though these are not as tangible in community impact and poverty alleviation. Outcome measurement helps in accountability, in being focused, in making plans and dreams practical and doable, and they help in creating strategies of what works and what doesn’t.

Some ministries in tough environments like juvenile halls and prisons, or drug rehab centers call for long-haul relationships that may or may not reach the desired goals and in such cases measuring outcomes could become very difficult. Yet those relationships and the efforts made should be consistent and long term. The “ministry of presence” that simply means being a good, engaged neighbor in the community can have a far greater impact than thousands of volunteers doing charity as that then is the key difference between another church activity or something that is a measureable outcome.

CHAPTER FIVE

Meeting Market Demands

It is often seen that in the poorest of poor societies, when a well-meaning church group or service organization provides a way out of squalid conditions, or meets a perceived need like giving of a blanket when there is none; the community or the individual will usually go back to their squalid conditions or sell the blanket. The question often is asked is, "What is wrong with them?" Instead maybe its time to look at what is wrong with our own methods. It is important then to know what the poor want and when they want it, and not give them things on our perception of their need. It is essential like any marketing strategist will tell us, to listen to the consumer and meet the need.

We tend to over-promise the outcomes of short-term mission trips to our young people. It needs to be told that the mission trips, especially for the youth are more for them than the ones they are going to serve. They also need to be told that handing out free stuff promotes begging, but as mission tourists they need to actually spend money in that community and pay for lodging and services and buy local products. The young people must go prepared by reading and learning about the country and community they are to be inserted into for a few days.

Marketing of these mission trips needs integrity and done well they can be a source of training for future full-time missionaries.

Misallocation of Funds

Full time missionaries are at a "hundred-year low" (99). Yet it is interesting to note that the missions' budgets are at the highest they have ever been. A large chunk of this budget is spent just on airfares for approximately two million short-term missionaries every year. Unfortunately, there is little tangible fruit to show for all the money spent. Handing out freebies only makes the poor dependent and does nothing in terms of poverty alleviation.

On the other hand, misappropriation of funds, different ethical standards, and lack of trust, often discourages churches in the West from handing over the money directly to the indigenous mission partners. However, this can be overcome with effective accountability structures, and technology like Skype can help keep and strengthen those long-distance relationships.

How to Meet Market Demands

Missions pastors are faced with a fine balancing act of complying with the church's missions directive, while also realizing that more harm than good is being done through these so-called mission trips. Yet, the demand to provide "mission" activities, while being convinced that the job of missions is to meet more complex, deeper spiritual needs is a problem that needs to be dealt with deftly. It is imperative for the missions' pastor to re-educate and re-tool the missions committee, as well as the church in light of the current discussion presented in books like *Toxic Charity*. Missions needs to be about spreading of the gospel and poverty alleviation could be a conduit for that as it cannot and should not be

the primary focus of a missions pastor or a program. Changing the narrative will take time, but it needs to be done and done urgently.

CHAPTER SIX *Reciprocal Exchange*

Food

In a food crisis like a famine or natural disasters, starvation becomes a matter of life and death for large numbers of people, at that point free food distribution as soon as possible is crucial and necessary. Hunger on the other hand is a different story and needs to be dealt with differently. Dealing with hunger in the United States has to be on a different level than dealing with starvation. The US has many subsidies and government programs to help hunger, so handing out free food harms more than helps. People in America may have “food-insecurities” but it is not a crisis as some organizations would have us believe. The need for food is a basic human need and its lack elicits a heart-response; however, in order to help people become food secure, one needs to help in heart-changes. This usually is not a result of distributing free food. Heart changes help a person truly depend on the Lord for provision and not just look out for oneself but others also. The kingdom of God is much more than free food.

Innovative Models of Exchange

Everyone likes to get something for free, however, time and time again it is seen that the moment something is free its value diminishes. Instead of becoming a source of help, free distribution of food and clothes often dissolves into chaos and a feeding frenzy.

“Legitimate *exchange*, however, is different. ...One person has something of value that is desired by another. Each hopes to gain from the deal...When a fair exchange is negotiated, both leave with a feeling of satisfaction. That’s how the market works” (116). With that as a basis, many non-profits and churches are creating co-ops or organizations that give food and other services for a highly subsidized price and use the gifts and skills of those same people to run these programs. Harvest Food and Outreach Center in Florida, Birch Community Services in Portland, are a couple of examples of this legitimate exchange. For fifty-dollars a month and an investment of volunteer hours, a needy family gets food, clothing and financial training (119). Everyone has something to offer, it takes a bit of time, effort and innovation to engage people in this way (117-122).

How to Change the Program?

To change what the churches have been doing for decades and to tell their congregations that their charity is harming more than helping is an uphill task. Any pastor and church leader of integrity will have to face this issue at some point. Giveaway programs tend to be more for the givers to feel good rather than for those who are being helped. In order for change to happen, it would be good to get all leaders to read books like *Toxic Charity* and start discussions on how change can be brought about. It will also be helpful to show the leaders organizations like Birch Community Services and then encourage some to attend Christian Community Development Association’s annual conference that assists ministries in empowering the poor (126). Finally, it may be a better

idea to overlap the new with the old and slowly phase the old out. By that time, most stakeholders will see the value of the new program and the change will not be so volatile.

The paradigm shift is from “doing *for* the poor” to “doing *with* the poor.” The outcomes of these will then make for shifts in other areas as well like a major re-look at short-term mission trips.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Three R's of Community Development

Alleviation of poverty and community development have varied programs that attract a variety of advocates, from increasing of minimum wage to government subsidies of all kinds to various other ideas. Education is one of these ideas that is seen as a way out of poverty. While it does pave the way for individuals to move up in life, it does not do much for community development as those who are now educated and find better jobs move away from the poor communities they grew up in. In order then for communities to benefit on the whole, young people have to be given a vision that extends beyond them to the whole community.

John Perkins the founder of Christian Community Development Association has challenged several families to live in communities that are depressed. His belief is that just being a good, engaged neighbor has far greater impact than any form of charity. It is from this that the three R's of community development emerge.

Reneighboring

Living in poor neighborhoods, with its lack of resources, perpetuates the cycle of poverty, dependency, and isolation. It is important to have mixed-income neighborhoods as those bring in ideas and clout as a conduit of change. Programs do not help raise the profile of neighborhoods, only people who live there can change them. Inserting new middle income neighbors into deteriorating ones, infuses the community with new life and should energize it to improve its schools, get rid of drugs and crime. This, however, can only happen when the relocating neighbors are engaged in every aspect of the community life, like neighborhood watches, PTA, community government etc. In order for a neighborhood to flourish it has to have, "indigenous leaders (*remainers*), attract fresh leaders (*relocators*), and draw achievers (*returners*) back to the community" (137).

When life is lived on a daily-basis within a neighborhood and it is shared on a deeper level on a daily basis, it is then that transformation happens.

Reconciliation

Living in neighborhoods that include economic, cultural, language, and racial diversity can be a conduit of reconciliation and breaking down of barriers. This is a place where give and take of ideas and a learning from each other can help in building of bridges that can change communities. Diverse neighborhoods that have a buy-in from all its neighbors can also act as a corrective and help rid it of its dangerous and illegal activities. For example, a drug dealer neighbor was confronted jointly by his neighbors to shut down his activities because they did not want their children caught in a cross-fire if a deal went bad. The drug-dealing stopped and the neighbor went on to become an active member of the neighborhood. This is a very practical outworking of being salt and light in the world.

Redistribution

The basis of this “R” is that everyone has something to offer and therefore it is good to exchange rather than give free. Living in a neighborhood where people are engaged with each other makes it possible for one to call on the other for help and assistance in various ways. A car mechanic living near by can help with a car that won’t start, even the “hangers-on” at a corner storefront can be of help by keeping an eye on the goings-on in the community. Living in mixed neighborhoods can be a problem for some who have less than others. This then is where true stewardship and letting go of possessions takes place. Borrowing and lending is part of the way the poor survive and in mixed neighborhoods this can become true exchange where charity then becomes a two-way street. Both the giver and the recipient learn valuable lessons as they forge relationships.

Practicing The Three Rs

To see the success of reneighboring one has to take a look at the East Lake development project of Atlanta. A once elite neighborhood lost its shine and with a government housing development built where a golf course used to be turned into a notoriously dangerous neighborhood. Tom Cousins, a real estate developer with a creative plan decided to restore the 1920’s golf course, tear down the government housing, instead build mixed income apartments where those in the projects would be given the opportunity to live in the subsidized housing. Having to overcome many obstacles, Cousins managed to revive the neighborhood with such dramatic outcomes that the government tore down all its other housing projects and is building mixed-income apartments instead.

East Lake was successful because it focused on six major things, namely— vision, focus, location, safety, justice, and quality education. It was very important for East Lake visionaries to convince middle to higher income relocators about the safety of the neighborhood, as well as to offer quality education. All these factors contributed in moving the poverty needle in East Lake and creating a healthy vibrant community.

Implementing the three Rs is not easy, it takes visionaries and families, many of whom are motivated by faith to live among the people they hope to serve and make a difference from within.

CHAPTER EIGHT *Gentrification with Justice*

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Everyone seems to be repeating the same mantra of “education” as a way out of poverty. While on the surface that seems to be a golden ticket of sorts, it amounts to nothing if economic development of the community is not connected to it. Poverty stricken neighborhoods tend to have inferior education and that in turn perpetuates the cycle of poverty. On the other hand, better education creates opportunities for the students to venture out to the outside world. The problem then is that those who leave seldom come back into the community. Lawndale Community Church in a rough neighborhood of Chicago is an example of rooting a church in the neighborhood so that it becomes such an integral part of the social fabric of its congregation, that even though many members could move out to better locales, they choose to come back and give back by volunteering as counselors and mentors. The church has created jobs, provided training, given scholarships for college, among a host of other things, “all the while instilling a vision for their community within a new generation of youth” (157).

The story of Opportunity Nicaragua is also one where economic development and education are helping in poverty alleviation like never before. With natural resources that rival any other central American country and a fledging tourism industry, Nicaragua lacked an educated task force to fill jobs in both these sectors of tourism and agriculture. This is where Opportunity Nicaragua opened a technical school that gives hands-on training in both these sectors and is equipping them for jobs that will help in the development of a community and a nation.

Education: Key to Poverty Alleviation

Education alone is not sufficient to fight poverty; just as social service programs alone cannot eradicate it (161). It takes an economically viable community to support education through sustaining jobs. The recent sad headline of the Atlanta Public School system’s focus on improving test scores at any cost made one wonder what happened to the public school system in this country that was so successful and created a highly creative and competent workforce that built this nation (163)? There however is hope as there is a gentrification happening as well as a younger generation of professionals who are embracing diversity (164).

How to Gentrify with Justice

There is a resurgence of derelict neighborhoods closer to urban city centers these days. Upscale apartments, restaurants and other cultural centers are attracting young upwardly mobile people to these re-done spaces. This “gentrification” does not necessarily move the poverty needle; however, if this gentrification is planned as a mixed-income community and the poor are not phased out of the new development; then this kind of gentrification has a positive impact (165). When the poor have a say in the revitalization of their neighborhood they benefit from it. New affluent residents mean new businesses,

restaurants, jobs and schools. It also gets the city to pay attention to crumbling infrastructure and fix it. Everyone benefits in this planned gentrification. With a new reordering of demographics of urban America, the more affluent who move into the re-done neighborhoods, bring with them an acceptance of diversity and better education. Only education that leads to jobs is the one that can truly help in gentrification as well as poverty alleviation.

CHAPTER NINE
For-Profit Missions

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are many external circumstances like wars, repeated natural disasters and misguided aid that keep a nation poor (169). However, there is no country and no people that do not have the potential to “rise out of poverty” with a little help (170). It was thought that microloans would help one out of poverty, however, it has just made the microbusiness individual indebted to pay off several of such loans. These loans are mostly used to buy consumer items as it is not easy to go from subsistence business to one that becomes commercially viable. This requires a lot of skills that the individual may not possess. Business skills require one to have had experience in the sector, as well as have access to capital and markets. Without these the “roadside” business remains just that and does not really make one thrive.

Local business growth helps provide jobs that sustain and help people thrive; helps grow the economy and the communities. A successful example of this is seen in Opportunity Nicaragua’s yucca production and processing that went from a twelve farmer buy-in to a one thousand farmer processing and shipping unit. Apart from “commercial” success it led to growing of leaders, improvements in housing and education and many other aspects of life (174).

Is Business Development Enough?

Business development needs to go hand-in-hand with human development. Numbers are important to measure business success, but on the other hand it is also important to gauge the positive, upward growth of the community. Is it rising beyond just subsistence? Is there an improvement in the quality of life? Are leaders emerging from within the community (177)? These are some of the questions that need to be answered. It is therefore important to have both for-profit and non-profit goals in order to truly see a community emerge from poverty.

It is important as well for the entrepreneur sitting in the church pew to be assured that creating businesses for profit that help communities and nations grow out of poverty is ministry unto the Lord, just like any full-time ministry like missions.

How Do We Run For-Profit Missions?

The word Shalom contains within it not just the idea of peace, but peace along with prosperity (184). It is time to send from our churches people with business skills who will grow for-profit commercial businesses that create jobs, are ethical, and take care of their workers. There are a new generation of young entrepreneurs who want to create businesses with a social benefit. While they may need start-up capital, they will be able to eventually generate enough to be able to sustain themselves and their families, thus becoming less of a burden on the sending church as opposed to traditional non-profit missionaries. It is time to, “reexamine our perceptions of wealth and to realign our

thinking with the divine design of shalom: peace and prosperity for all of God's family”
(184).

Conclusion

A compelling question to ask ourselves is, “Do we really want the poor to move out of poverty?” Whatever our compulsion in engaging with the poor, be it purely social need based, like building schools, or medical facilities or purely spiritual for the spread of the Gospel; it is done with a genuine love and desire to serve.

However, no one can, “serve people out of poverty” (187). The premise that we have long bought into is that, “our volunteer service alleviates poverty. We have accepted this as fact. This is wrong” (187). Only sustainable jobs that help in economic development of communities and nations are an answer to poverty alleviation.

Some things that churches can do are:

1. *Encourage religious tourism.* Short term missionaries need to spend money in the economy they are visiting to bolster micro-businesses.
2. *Stop undercutting local businesses by distributing suitcases full of clothing, shoes, candy, and other giveaways.* While this seems like a need that is being fulfilled, it ends up flooding local markets and killing the local production of textile and clothing.
3. *Support local self-sufficiency by offering technical training.* Chick-fil-A staff volunteer to help train local Nicaraguans in the food-processing plants.
4. *Provide business loans to entrepreneurs.* This should be done in a legitimate way by setting up accountability and a reasonable interest on that loan.
5. *Invest with locals in for-profit businesses.* A better form of charity is not just giving away money to the poor, but coming alongside to make money along with them.
6. *Hire unemployed/underemployed workers.* This means taking a little risk on people who may have had a blemish on their record but have either been wrongly dealt with or have had a change of heart (190).
7. *Start for-profit businesses that employ local residents.* Job creation is key to ending of poverty and it is time for churches to organize investment trips and commission economic missionaries (191).

About the Author

Bob Lupton HAS INVESTED over forty years of his life in inner-city Atlanta. In response to a call that he first felt while serving in Vietnam, he left a budding business career to work with delinquent urban youth. Bob, his wife, Peggy, and their two sons sold their suburban home and moved into the inner city where they have lived and served as neighbors among those in need. Their life's work has been the rebuilding of urban neighborhoods where families can flourish and children can grow into healthy adults.

Bob is a Christian community developer, an entrepreneur who brings together communities of resource with communities of need. Through FCS Urban Ministries—a nonprofit organization that he founded—he has developed two mixed-income subdivisions, organized a multiracial congregation, started a number of businesses, created housing for hundreds of families, and initiated a wide range of human services in his community. He is the author of the books *Theirs Is the Kingdom; Return Flight; Renewing the City; Compassion, Justice, and the Christian Life; Toxic Charity*; and the widely circulated “Urban Perspectives,” monthly reflections on the Gospel and the poor. Bob has a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Georgia. He serves as a speaker, strategist, and inspirer with those throughout the nation who seek to establish God's Shalom in the city.