

Dependency

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Dependency

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Preface

In this document, we try to give an introduction into the matter of dependency: what it is, how it is created, what are the effects and how it can be resolved. Some related topics are also discussed: partnership, accountability and paying of church workers' salaries from outside. We used our experiences but we based especially on literature. We discovered that we are not alone in these reflections. We have freely used various resources.

- The problem of dependency has nothing to do with doctrine or church order. Therefore, we have freely used articles from various ecclesiastical backgrounds.
- The mentioned literature represents various opinions on the subject. We have tried to represent them fairly while still giving our own conclusions. Yet we recognize that there is a (probably large) group of mission practitioners that is not represented in the literature, simply because they do not believe in strategies or do not take time to interact with literature. The practices of this group may deviate substantially from the 'common opinions' in the literature. However, mission issues are complex enough to warrant careful reflection and this renders this 'silent group' invalid for us.

Under the headings below we have tried to give a brief summary of the topic, while the remainder under each heading consists mainly of quotations. This brings the danger of quoting authors out of their context, but we have tried to avoid this.

1. Introduction and background

The problem of dependency in mission-established churches is a much debated and much discussed topic. The subject is related with many other topics, but especially with the discussion about missionary strategies. Here we briefly introduce the so-called indigenous principles of mission, the importance of money in missions and the various definitions of dependency.

1.1. Principles of church planting

The modern missionary movement (the start of which is usually defined as the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 by William Carey) had been going for half a century, when Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson developed their well known principles for establishing indigenous churches. From his position as secretary of a mission society Venn wrote his 'instructions to missionaries' between 1841 and 1872. In these instructions, the church that the missionaries should endeavour to establish was described as self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending. These principles have been debated and criticised (e.g. Beyerhaus 1979), but also extended into four-selves or six-selves. Whether or not the precise applications of these 'selves' are accepted, the broad idea behind them: – that a church should not depend on another church in an unhealthy manner in any aspect – is generally accepted, though terms have changed as discussions focus more on 'partnership' and 'contextualization'.

Venn also stated:

"The Mission is the scaffolding; the Native Church is the edifice. The removal of the scaffolding is the proof that the building is completed."

Venn, quoted in Shenk 1977

About 100 years later, Westminster missiology professor Harvie Conn complains about:

"(...) the old structures, mission boards have so much difficulty in discarding; the mission scaffolding they keep saying is only temporary, but never seems to go down."

Conn 1978

1.2. Money and mission

Missiology professor Gailyn Van Rheenen sends monthly missionary reflections in which he discusses various aspects of missions. Three of these reflections deal with money. In his introduction, he summarizes some of the effects money can have on missions.

"In the study of Missions it becomes apparent that the use of money is like a two-edged sword: It can empower missions on the one hand while hindering or destroying it on the other."

*Money can hinder missions by
(1) creating unhealthy dependence,*

- (2) *controlling churches which should be self-supporting*
 - (3) *creating jealousy between those supported by the West and those not supported*
 - (4) *unknowingly attracting leeches and con-men who hope for benefits, support, or a chance to study abroad*
 - (5) *over-support of missionaries who physically separate themselves from the people among whom they hope to minister.”*
- Van Rheenen 2002*

The five mentioned possible problems money can bring, are highly interrelated. All of them will be discussed in the chapters to follow.

1.3. Types of dependency

The topic ‘dependency’ has appeared in many mission magazines. Many different writers have voiced out on the subject, reflecting various views. With the danger of oversimplification, there are mainly two views on the issue: the ‘self-reliance view’ and the ‘partnership view’. A third view would be those who prefer not to have any disturbing discussions and just like to continue creating dependency.

The major voice on the ‘self-reliance view’ would be Rev. Glenn Schwartz, director of World Mission Associates, an organisation dealing particularly with the problem of dependency. Between 2002 and 2005 we have had email contact with him several times. Some major voices from the ‘partnership view’ would be Luis Bush, International Director of AD2000 and beyond and Daniel Rickett, director of a department of Partners International. Though these two views do not fully agree on every aspect, seen from our perspective and our situation, the differences are very much minor. Definitions of dependency are fundamental. Schwartz recognizes unavoidable dependency and avoidable dependency. An example of the former would be a disabled person who necessarily depends on his relation to help him function.

“When it comes to avoidable dependency there are also two kinds. One I’ll call self-induced dependency. (...) The other kind of avoidable dependency is what one might call other-induced dependency. (...) For the past ten years I have been concentrating on the problem of dependency among mission-established institutions. I have concluded that this most often falls into the category of “other-induced” dependency.”

Schwartz 1998b

Rickett says he ‘celebrates dependency in the body of Christ’. He distinguishes between ‘healthy dependency’ and ‘unhealthy dependency’. About healthy dependency, he says

“each [partner] maintains independence and capacity to instruct, correct and refuse the other (...) it is important in a partnership to not only give but to receive, to not only teach but to learn”

Rickett 2000

About unhealthy dependence he says

“Unhealthy dependency occurs when reciprocity and responsibility are ignored, overruled, or undervalued. If the accent is on the exchange of money or personnel and not on the complementary contributions each partner makes, the importance of reciprocity is easily overlooked. If resources are shared more for the benefit of one partner than for the purpose of ministering more effectively to others, the receiving partner’s responsibility is effectively sidelined”

Rickett 2000

His ‘healthy dependence’ is also called ‘interdependence’ by others (e.g. Vikner 1974, Howard 1997 and Taber 1997). This term is further discussed on page 44. Rickett’s ‘unhealthy dependence’ is the type of dependence Schwartz and like-minded writers usually describe.

It is also the type of dependency that we describe in the chapters below. This means that terms like ‘self-reliance’, ‘independence’ and ‘breaking dependency’ should not be seen as opposed to ‘reliance upon God’, ‘independent from God and man’, but opposed to ‘dependence on money’ and ‘dependence on man’; that is: ‘unhealthy dependence’.

2. Causes of dependency

What are the causes of dependency?

2.1. Spiritual dimensions

Schwartz is one of the few who discusses the spiritual dimension of the problem of dependency.

“Remember that changes in the area about which you are concerned represent part of the spiritual battle in which we are all engaged. The last thing Satan wants is a healthy church in Africa joyfully

standing on its own two feet. So let's ask the Lord to help us through the process".
Schwartz (email 03-02-2003)

"Anticipate spiritual opposition. An efficient, well-run, effective church joyfully carrying out the Great Commission is not what Satan wants. He will attempt to bring discouragement and many other obstacles."
Schwartz nd

"I just met a young missionary from Zambia who returned prematurely and rather discouraged about the situation in which he found himself. He came to the conclusion that the mission had assumed the role of provider for the church. Not Jehovah Jireh, but Mission Jireh! He believes that the mission stepped in between the bride (the church) and the groom (the Lord). It is as if the mission said, to the bride, this groom will not be able to meet your needs, we will do it for you".
Schwartz (email 30-06-2003)

2.2. World economy

One of the deep roots of dependency is the great economical inequality. This root cause is often assumed but not often mentioned in literature.

"In the face of enormous economic inequities, there is inherent pressure on Western partners to be the 'sugar daddy' of more 'needy' partners"
Rickett 2000

"An interesting underlying assumption on the part of westerners is that they need to earn as much as they possibly can so that they cannot only live comfortably but also have as much as possible to give away to others. An ironic part of this scenario is that sometimes what westerners acquire is at the expense of those who are less well off. And in the end those who are less well off become objects of charity as westerners feel compelled to help them with a handout."
Schwartz 2000a

However, he also admits that the economic divide in the world cannot be solely be ascribed to Western protectionism, trade barriers and other structural injustices.

We also believe that the economic inequality in the world finds its reasons as much in internal factors as in external. We do not follow a zero-sum idea about economy, but the Biblical values of 'contentment' and 'simplicity' deserve more emphasis in Western churches. Our 'guilt complex' about our riches should find less expression in playing the role of 'sugar daddy' and more in reflecting on Paul's words:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction"
1 Tim 6: 6-9 (NIV)

2.3. Western churches

Western churches are part of the problem of dependency. The image of mission work is based more on the idea of the 'Great White Missionary helping poor and naked heathen children'. There is not much willingness on the side of the Western church constituency to change this image neither is there much will on the side of mission agencies to change it, though the image is gradually adjusted to include the 'noble native' image of nationals who can 'even work with a computer'.

The problem is not only the constituency. The problem is related with the unjust division of wealth in the world. We feel guilty about our money and want to buy this off by giving gifts, for which we expect sincere 'thank you' addresses and letters. If such 'thank you-letters' or addresses include nice spiritual statements, we feel that our money has 'bought' this spirituality.

"One reason is that there is a great need on the part of Westerners to give away their excess resources, even if it creates or perpetuates dependency."
Schwartz 1998a

"Special mission envoys are dispatched, charged with the task of finding ever new ways to flood in financial support for various and sundry projects. What evolves from this guilt-laden relationship is what I choose to call the captivity of the Third World church."
Reichenbach 1982

Rhena Taylor wrote a paperback with stories about the 'rough edges' of mission work. She was severely criticised, not because the stories were untrue, but for destroying the romantic image of missions and missionaries and thereby causing the funds to decrease.

Glenn Schwartz says this about his organization that focuses on dependency in missions:

"I shall not soon forget his reply: 'No wonder you are having difficulty raising funds. North Americans like the image of the Great White Missionary, and you're trying to destroy it.' "
Schwartz 1999b

Rickett, from Partners International also sees the donor-mentality as one of the main causes for dependency. One sure way to create dependency is to:

"give resources based only on need. A partnership that sets out to satisfy needs soon finds itself running a race with no end. That's because needs alone are insatiable. Giving based solely on need creates a pipeline of supply that in turn raises the expectation of future need satisfaction."

Rickett 2000

2.4. Missionary strategies

In 1910 the first great mission convention was held in Edinburgh and it was partly the triumphalistic tone of that meeting that led Roland Allen to write his book *Missionary methods, St Paul's or ours*, in which he contrasted the methods of Paul with contemporary methods (1912). Though Allen predicted that his message would only be heeded after his death, his book didn't completely go unnoticed. Allen has rightly been criticized for his comparisons, because Paul was a bicultural who based his mission mainly on preaching in synagogues, including the proselytes and God-fearers, building on considerable knowledge of the Thora. Another critique on Allen's work is that he has little emphasis the role of anthropology and the need for contextualization. Yet, even though we may not be able to fully compare ourselves with the apostle Paul, Allen's main critique still stands

"the first and most striking difference between his action and ours is that he founded 'churches' whilst we found 'missions'."

Allen 1912

Allen goes on to critique the idea of building mission compounds. Such 'missions' represent a foreign power and when a church is also founded, it creates dualism. In most cases, evangelism will be left by the national church for the mission.

We can distinguish three major aspects: the attitude of missionaries, the resulting expensive structures and the influence of the power that such structures represent.

Missionary attitude

Individual missionary attitude is important: how a missionary reacts when placed in a situation of (relative) poverty; how missionaries use money or give money to others. First of all, serious intercultural training is needed. Someone with a Western degree in theology may not at all be fit to serve in a completely different culture without appropriate additional training in the areas of anthropology, intercultural theology, contextualization and missiology. Penner looks one level higher and mentions lack of training on Board level as one of the causes of dependency:

"Lack of education on the part of busy mission executives regarding the effects and causes of dependency pushes the issue to the background in the face of administrative and fund raising concerns".

Penner 2002

Having good intentions in giving things or money, in building nice and needed structures, missionaries have often not thought through the long term effects of their giving, the relational aspect of giving, or the effects it has on mentality.

"How is dependency created?"

1. Usually through good intentions. North Americans have a great desire to 'do something.' This orientation emphasis often results in the development of dependency. Without a proper understanding of how to help, we end up doing things that nationals could do for themselves or which we think would be necessary should we live in their society. Guilt over our own prosperity causes us to try to give national churches what we have or what we think is essential. Our penchant for helping the 'poor benighted natives' causes us to give without thinking through the long-term consequences of our help. Our obsession with cleanliness and shelter causes us to solve problems that, within a society, may not be perceived as being priorities."

Penner 2002

"They are almost always shocked as they see hundreds of people crowded into poor apartment buildings or shanty towns of urban centers or living in clap-board or mud-walled, thatched-roofed houses cooking food over an open fire. What frequently grips them on these first forays into poverty-stricken areas is not the lostness of people without the Gospel or the power of the Gospel to overcome the bondage of sin but the great disparity between the rich and the poor. Missions thus is increasingly driven by a response to poverty rather than by an understanding of lostness. The American response, inbred by a pragmatic heritage, is to naively cast small doses of money to new converts to help and encourage: Local preachers are quickly put on American salaries, service ministries created which can be maintained only by Western economic help, and Western-style training institutions developed."

Money then becomes the tool by which Western control is superimposed over missions churches.”
Van Rheenen 2002

Levi Keidel researched the psychological and anthropological aspects of gift-giving and concludes that the dynamics of gift giving are too often neglected in missions:

“How can I help people whose dignity and potential are being denied them because of dependency arising from paternalistic giving? First, I need to terminate any benevolence towards them that fosters dependence on me. This will give rise to accusations that “you don’t love us any more.” (In our part of Zaire, such disappointment was coined in a proverb of dismay, using the name of a missionary pioneer famous for his generosity: ‘Love died with Kuonyi Njila.’) (...)

Wherever generosity of giving, teaching, and helping is of an unconditional character, the recipient must be able to return the gift or some equivalent in order to remain his own respectable self. Otherwise, he will begin seeing himself as inferior to the giver; his personal sense of worth is downgraded, and instead of being grateful, he will be bitter. This set of forces is very much misunderstood in many missions programs today. (...)

If I suggest the person give me something in return, it is not to memorialize myself. Rather, it is to help preserve the person’s dignity and self-worth.”

Keidel 1997

“How does one deal with the question about not caring which I mentioned earlier? The most caring thing one might do is to think so highly of the gifts, abilities and privileges of local leaders that the outsider wouldn’t under any circumstance want to interfere.”

Schwartz 1998b

Expensive structures

Missions done from Western countries often uses the cultural and philosophical principles of secular Western society. In group-oriented societies individualism was stimulated, in societies where the spiritual took precedence over the material the power of money was overwhelmingly proofed. When Jacob Loewen in a young church in Central America asked what had become the most important aspect in their lives now, that they had become Christians, they said ‘money’ and went on to explain that they saw this as most important in the missionaries’ lives. Penner mentions “The western belief that money can solve almost any problem” as one of the roots of dependency.

“this bedazzlement with money and expertise has right from the start subverted true indigeneity in the church (...)

Our affluence has led us to develop the ecclesiastical analog of capital intensive methods of work.’ We accept without question the capitalist premise that in any operation the dominant factor is and ought to be the capital input...”

Taber 1997

“the Western church made the mistake of girding the Eastern David in Saul’s armor and putting Saul’s sword into his hands.”

Merle Davis 1947 (Quoted in Taber 1997)

“The Western temptation is to conceptualize and organize the missionary task on an economic level that can only be sustained by Western support and oversight.”

Van Rheenen 2002

Bonk has described the influence of Western affluence in missions extensively. He contrasts this with the incarnation of Christ as a different model in missions. His critique is not only toward mission bodies and institutions, but also toward personal lifestyles of missionaries.

“The money- and power-based strategies and statuses generated by the institutional and personal affluence of Western missionaries contradict principles that are at the very heart of Christian mission as prescribed in the New Testament. The incarnation and the cross of our Savior are models for apostolic life and ministry. For those of us who insist on clinging to our prerogatives as privileged Westerners, the missiological implications of the incarnation are clear.”

Bonk 1989

“And what sort of missionary strategy are we modeling as Western missionaries and mission agencies? Is it not a model which is too expensive and too cluttered with technology to be emulated by any but the very rich in most parts of the world? It would seem to be so, judging from the tendency on the part of Western analysts not to notice missionary activity in the third world unless it is conducted along Western lines.”

Bonk 1986

The result is often that the same expensive structures that characterize the church in the West are exported to the young and newly founded. It gives some of us a good feeling if they do things the same as we do. Of course, such structures were not imposed on the young churches; they wanted it themselves... They were only modelled.

*"The missionaries made the church Western and thereby dependent."
Chikazaza 1997*

Even Donalds, one of the few defenders of paying church workers' salaries from outside complains:

*"One must admit and deplore the fact that in many instances overseas churches have been too closely linked with foreign or Western culture. In earlier days in India it was not uncommon to meet Indian Christians who proudly proclaimed they were Canadian Presbyterians, Welsh Baptists or members of the Church of Scotland. This attitude, fortunately, has mostly changed, although there are still signs of Western traditions in some places that are jealously guarded as part of a 'sacred heritage' (...)
Our problem in India is that we do have full-time pastors and these pastors need support. Perhaps the Lord wants to show us the error of having built up traditional organizations that are now hard to maintain, when his purpose never was for a full-time paid ministry, but that is another subject."
Donalds 1977*

*"'Where will the money come from for the work of Christ in Third World nations?' is the question many ask. Money for national churches to maintain the expensive Western superstructures which have been erected will not be readily available. But then, are most of them necessary? Have some become idols which need to be destroyed?"
Clark 1971*

*"Western missions, by their example in the past, often convinced nationals that all pastors, missionaries and evangelists should be paid professionals and often paid them out of their mission funds. Once started, this cycle is very hard to break."
Penner 2002*

*"In fact, in our modern missionary endeavors we have been doing for our converts what they well may never be able to do for themselves (...) pay big salaries and build big buildings. A church does not have to have a building, it does not have to have a paid preacher. Who taught them otherwise? These are Western concepts which are not necessarily biblical. Ideally, those of us who do missionary work in foreign places should be giving our new converts a model they can imitate, not one they may never be able to match (...). If an ax must fall upon the root of this problem it must be placed at the feet of American missionaries."
Cook 1997*

Dons Kritzinger worked in South Africa in mission-established Reformed churches. He became concerned about the dependent mentality in the churches he served, especially when he contrasted these with the nearby AIC's: African Initiated Churches (originally: African Independent Churches). He comes to the conclusion that the dependency is highly connected with expensive structures.

"The expensive way of functioning is causing many a church to become part of the problem of dependency, a deadly disease that makes it virtually impossible for the church to fulfil its calling as witness to the life giving Lord."

He asks: what makes the church so expensive?

His first answer is: the institution called 'the ministry'. He contrasts full time and part time ministry (which is usually the system in AIC's), including costs of training and transport. He concludes that middle size poorer churches may never be able to pay all these costs.

"In contrast, the young candidate for the ministry, coming from the school, has no way of self support. Worse even, these students have usually accumulated all sorts of debts which have to be paid. These people not only expect the church to support them, but expect it to be at a level commensurate with the (academic and ecclesiastic) status they think they attained. Poor church!"

The second expensive aspect of church life is the erection and maintenance of 'suitable church buildings'. He complains about the pervasive 'temple theology', which links today's church building with the Old Testament temple and therefore argues that church buildings require high style and expensive materials to be made a holy place.

*"Some of these things already imply certain requirements for the administration. Overhead like meetings, synodical and ecumenical structures, Western style, become high. With all these overhead costs it is understandable that there are often no money or energy available for mission projects, the aspect which makes the church's existence worthwhile. (...)
If this kind of dependence is inevitable for the church, then a big question mark should be put over its existence. I am wondering whether the African Independent Churches (AICs) cannot show the way to the (older) 'mission' churches (...) They seem to have found a more affordable way of doing things. I don't think that they set themselves to develop alternative structures to those of the other church traditions. They just went about their business in their own practical way. What is remarkable is that they spontaneously returned to a simple model not unlike those we find in the biblical record".*

All quotations above from Kritzinger 2000

John Gatu from Kenya described what such a situation usually leads to after all projects and structures might have been handed over:

"Many of us took over the leadership from the missionaries and continued with whatever projects were there and as long as the money kept coming from the mission board overseas, all we needed to do was to fly to London, Edinburgh, New York and Geneva to convince our counterparts that we are equally as competent to continue with the structures and projects that we inherited. For that reason, when a Bishop, a General Secretary, Moderator or any other Church leader returned from an overseas trip, the success of the trip was measured in terms of how much money he or she had been able to raise during the visit!"

Gatu 1996

A great danger of such expensive structures and methods of ministry which hardly fit in the local context, is that the need for money to maintain these, brings the temptation for church leaders to look at the church as if it were a business to raise money: if churches do not bring enough money, they should be closed; the main reason to plant churches or to work on their development is to create jobs for full time clergy; lay involvement is discouraged because it will reduce the demand for full time ministry.

Power structures

The link between colonialism and missions has been defended and denied. But the fact that expensive missionary structures do influence power-balances can hardly be denied. Clark laments about what he calls 'colonial treatment':

"A white young missionary is immediately put in a position of power, to be shown deference by 'locals' not because of age or experience but simply because of his white colour."

Clark 1971

The power of the structures is often linked with the presence of expatriate missionaries, even if the missionaries do not have a direct communication link with donors.

"A church leader from Central Africa once said, 'As long as there is one white missionary present in the meeting, we will vote the way he wants us to vote, even if he doesn't say anything. We will watch his eyes and we will know how we are supposed to vote'."

Schwartz 1998b

"One solution to this carry-over of the colonial era would be to dismantle all foreign mission compounds as well as to break up concentrations of foreign personnel having authority over the people who are being served. At the latest, 1975 could be set as the target date to implement this action. Concentrations of foreigners and the old type mission compound would be an anachronism by the end of the '70s."

Clark 1971

We are now in 2005 and still feel the remnants of it. Clark also discusses the effects of such power imbalance. He quotes leaders (in an age of nationalism) saying:

"Oh, Lord," agonized one brother, "deliver us from the missionaries!"

"Oh, God," cried another, "break their pride and smash their palaces!"

Others pray more humbly: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Clark 1971

2.5. Word and Deed – a sociological reappraisal

Mission is to be done in Word in Deed. Everyone would agree with this statement. The Lausanne committee reflected much on the relation of the two and affirmed the necessity of both. John Stott once made the statement that evangelism without social action is a ghost, while social action without the gospel is a corpse. We do want to affirm the necessity of both and the primacy of the Word.

Both cross-cultural missionaries, new converts and newly established churches have this command to share in God's mission in word and deed.

The problem of 'rice Christians' is also a known and generally acknowledged one. Many a church is struggling to get away from it's imago as 'yam church', 'maize church', 'rice church' or whatsoever.

These two topics: 'word and deed' and 'rice Christians' are highly related and this relation is the topic of this paragraph. If the 'deed' aspect of missions is taken as 'sharing goods', than the problem of 'rice Christians' will invariably arise, as Schwartz also notes:

"When outside money and other material things accompany the spread of the Christian Gospel, sometimes people get the wrong impression about the Gospel itself. For example, if those to whom the Gospel is preached begin to receive material things that come with the Gospel, they may become more interested in those things than in the Gospel itself. (...)

When people come into the Christian faith for the material possessions they get, something goes terribly wrong in the spread of the Gospel. That might be the single most important reason why the dependency problem so often cripples the Christian movement and why it is so urgent that it be avoided

or dealt with where it exists.”
Schwartz 2000b

In this paragraph we want look at conversion as an objective of mission work, from a sociological perspective. One of the goals of mission work is conversion of people. Of course, the final goal is the glory of God and the establishing of churches comprises more than conversion of people. Still, this is the basis. Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, which He works by means of his Word.

In sociology, conversion is usually distinguished in two levels: adhesion and conviction. At the first level, one changes his formal affiliation from one group or religion to another group. The deeper level of conversion is conviction, where the opinions of the new group or religion are really internalised (Nock 1933 cited in Gaventa 1992). We would like to define this second level of conversion as ‘being a dedicated and committed Christian’, leaving the theological judgment about the ‘trueness’ of the conversion where it belongs: to God. This description of the conviction level expressly includes the cost-aspect of being a Christian.

It is clear for us, that in mission work, this second level of conversion should be our goal, since the first would tend to nominalism.

Looking at factors that motivate conversions, difference can be made between various social (or socio-cultural) factors on one hand and religious factors at the other hand (Ikenga-Metuh 1987). In social studies social reasons are often brought forward as explanations of conversions and often they do carry weight. Religious factors, denied by many as causes of conversion, relate to the contents of religion. For example certain aspects of Christianity, like the ‘Oneness of God’ or the eschatological perspective of our belief, or ‘the release from bondage and fear’ can attract people.

We want to suggest that the distinction between social and religious factors is connected with the distinction between adhesion and conviction; the two levels of conversion. Social factors lead to adhesion and religious factors lead to conviction. This connection may not hold in every case. Religious factors can lead to only the first level: adhesion, but social factors will hardly lead to the level of conviction.

With the same distinction it can be suggested that external motives easily lead to the first level, but only internal motives will lead to the second level of conversion.

From the perspective of incentives for conversion, we suggest that ‘money’, ‘power’, ‘status’ offered can be incentives that lead to adhesion, while ‘exemplary living’ and ‘contextualized evangelism and preaching’ are incentives that lead to conviction. This is another way of saying that rice-christians are often weak and nominal Christians.

If we accept this division of incentives, it follows that the change from adhesion to conviction (as defined above) is often a difficult one. If one changed his basic affiliation to Christianity because of social factors and incentives, which for the person often have a ‘receiving’ character, to change to conviction, which includes accepting the ‘cost of discipleship’-aspect, including its ‘giving’ character’, means not only changing his old mindset (which was not really changed during the first level conversion), but also changing a newly learned and adopted pattern of behaviour and set of expectations. This means that in this case the transition from nominal Christian to dedicated Christian is harder than the transition from non-Christian to dedicated Christian.

We stated that the second level of conversion is the aim of missionary work. We also saw that social factors and material incentives usually lead to only the first level of conversion and that the transition from this nominal level to become a dedicated Christian is difficult.

So called ‘attachments’ of mission work: ‘welfare’, ‘relief’, ‘diaconate’, ‘development’ may then all be noble goals, but are to be grouped under the incentives that at most lead to first level conversion, while evangelism, discipling, preaching, teaching and pastorate are among the other category and will more likely constitute religious factors for conversion. This leads to the conclusion that with ‘establishing a church of dedicated Christians’ in mind, so-called deed aspects of mission work as they are commonly practiced, do not lead easily to this goal but rather hamper it.

This is not to say, that the gospel preached should be a ‘pie in the sky by and by’ type of gospel. Relevancy or contextualization includes addressing areas that need to be viewed from God’s perspective and may surely include a prophetic voice against poverty and injustice and for development. Godly examples include a diaconal attitude, but then in such a way that it can indeed serve as an example, which the new disciples can in turn exemplify to their own disciples, unhindered by differences in race, colour or economic status.

The above is a sociological approach. We still want to repeat that true conversion is and remains a work of the Holy Spirit, for which He uses His Word.

In summary

Conversion	
Adhesion	Conviction
Factors	
Socio-cultural	Religious
Motives	
External	Internal
Incentives	
Money, power, influence, position	Example, persuasion, relevance
Mission	
“Deed-aspect”	Word-aspect

3. Effects of dependency

3.1. The seriousness of the effects:

Several authors raise the seriousness of the problem of dependency. Two Nigerian voices:

“One church in Nigeria that used to receive huge amounts of money from overseas has grown to the place of blindness to the scriptural reasons for the existence of the church.”

Kato 1972

“A group depending upon outsiders to pay for their bills will not function as a true church.”

Awo 1995

Ingebretson from International Stewards, a ministry that seeks to develop and teach curricula on stewardship throughout the world in order to break the cycle of dependency, describes dependency as the legacy left by many Western missions: the great omission.

Bill Kornfield in his article ‘What has our Western gospel wrought?’ describes the dilemma:

“Increasing financial paternalism and the accompanying Westernization of the gospel are the two most critical issues facing us in world missions today. We have a choice to make: either push these issues under the rug and hope they will go away by maintaining the status quo, or face them honestly with confession, repentance, and the search for better ways. The cause of our Great Commission demands that we do the latter.” (...)

When will we realize that more Western money will only stagnate the growth of the church around the world?”

Kornfield 1991

We feel with Kornfield that putting the matter under the carpet is not a valid option, even though both the receiving church and the giving church and donors feel good about the current situation.

3.2. Theological

The gospel is absolute. Not relative. It is culture-relevant, not culture bound. Because of this it is of the highest importance that the gospel is contextualized in every context or culture where it comes. The gospel is absolute, cultures are absolutely relative. Already in the New Testament we can see this contextualization taking place. Christian friendliness is commanded by Paul in the cultural form of a kiss to one another. We have replaced this with our own cultural format: a handshake (or in Western churches sometimes not more than a stiff nodding of the head). When Paul preaches in various contexts, he preaches relevant messages for each of these contexts. A loose definition of theology is ‘seeing things from God’s perspective’. Which aspects we include in such a study and in which order is culturally determined.

Acts 15 is a major decision in the history of the church: people can become followers of Jesus Christ without taking on the culture of the Jews. The gospel is supracultural indeed. And, as Campbell remarks:

“Just as Gentiles can now receive salvation as Gentiles, so all peoples have a right to be followers of Jesus without having to become Western (...)”

Campbell 1999

When churches are dependent on Western donors, they tend to stress the exact cultural formats of those Western churches; their theological questions are to be imported and the answers they gave are as authoritative as Scripture itself. This side has serious repercussions for the validity of the young church’s message.

But there is a much more serious effect when the Biblical message is not contextualized: burning, pressing questions may and probably will go unanswered. The ‘real doctrine’ does not have a place for it. The conclusion often taken is that these parts of life do not belong to Christianity and can therefore be solved in the traditional way: through a diviner, medium, spirit-doctor or whatever.

“Some aspects of the ‘theology’ brought to them by gospel messengers from the West seemed irrelevant at best, and some burning religious questions in their own lives and culture were not addressed. The theology was not always arranged in a fashion that seemed natural and understandable. This made Christianity look foreign and inadequate. (...)

Indigenous Christian theology, therefore, is theological reflection organized in local categories and addressing local questions. (...)

When a witch is devouring your life force, the church doesn’t want to hear about it. Better go to the diviner. (...)

A church dependent on foreigners for its ideas can never feel good about itself, stand fearlessly in its own environment, go ahead on its own, or claim the allegiance of the local culture. (...)

The Bible has the answers, but no one culture asks all the questions. (...)

The churches of the West will always have an incomplete (and hence distorted) view of the Bible’s teaching unless they are enriched by the insights of Christians from other backgrounds, and vice-

versa.”

Fuller 1997

When culturally relevant questions are relegated to the sideline, the worst form of syncretism develops. There are examples of people, who knew that Arminianism wasn't orthodox, but who supported the invitation of a higher-level witch doctor to their village to finally discover who the witches making juju's against others were. Jesus' power was restricted to judgment on Arminians but did not include supremacy over the principalities and powers, because this had not been included in the Western theology that had been taught to them.

“The facts seem to indicate that along with outside funding comes the Westernization of the Gospel. By westernization I mean the tendency to buy into the major values of current Western civilization: consumerism materialism, and an over emphasis on individualism. (...)

[Quotes a leader:] ‘I was very proud of my education, but now I realize that it won't work among my own people unless I contextualize it to their felt needs. One of my professors used to say, ‘You are getting the same thing that I teach in America. The only difference is that I have translated it into Spanish’(...) Some Western missionaries have gone so far as to present a new group of believers with their mission's doctrinal statement, without contemplating the meaning of that Western, linear-ordered form to a mindset which is contextually and holistically oriented. As a result, in some parts of Africa Christianity has really had little to say about African Traditional Religion in the way of serious judgments of value. Consequently, the African Christian operates with two thought-systems at once, and both of them are closed to each other.”

Kornfield 1999

3.3. Ecclesiastical

The Western-type and often expensive structures that the young churches adopted made them dependent and the dependency in turn stimulates the church to strictly adhere to the adopted patterns. The reasons may be twofold: because the inherited structures may be used as argument that money is needed to maintain these in the proper way. Secondly, adhering to the minutest details of church order can be done as a way to assure the partner church that the church is not deviating and therefore still worthy of support.

“[The results have been] weak, national ‘welfare type’ churches who depend on U.S. churches for funding and U.S. missionaries for decisions”

Cook 1997

“The first consequence of the Third World captivity of the Western church is people greed. Both instances reveal the greed for personnel without any real evaluation of the existing needs. So long as the personnel came gratis, the requests were made and the offerings accepted. The national church apparently felt under no obligation to consider realistically its true needs-as it undoubtedly would have done had it been responsible for the funding of this person-or to conduct an adequate assessment of its present resources. Acquisition of personnel seemed almost an end in itself.”

Reichenbach 1982

“Another problem with our Western financial paternalism is that it implies that the church cannot grow, or in some cases even exist, in its own native soil apart from Western money.”

Kornfield 1991

3.4. Personal

The most serious consequences of the dependency syndrome may be found at the personal level. Some donors are not at all interested in reality outcomes of the funding they pour in. Other donors are interested and try to find out the effects that their funding has. However, not many donors include in their assessment the effects of their funding on the attitude level. Outcomes in terms of structures, statistics, buildings, accounts, etcetera may be favourable while the effect on the attitude of the receiving side may be quite harmful. People's self-initiatives may have been killed, their dignity diminished, their willingness to be responsible and generous givers vanished. These aspects are not easy to measure but they have to be taken into consideration while looking at other outcomes.

Allen already called for evaluation of giving on this level:

“Finance is in itself of little importance, but its effects on minds and attitudes is of utmost importance.”

Allen 1912

Robert McQuilkin, who wrote a dust-raising article in *Christianity Today* under the title ‘Stop sending money’ also asks attention for the effect giving has on mentality. He lists four questions to be asked when money is given. One of these questions is:

“Does the giving nurture generous givers?”

McQuilkin 1999

“When allowed to grow to full maturity, economic dependence cultivates a spirit of entitlement. ‘They owe it to me.’ ‘I deserve their money’. “

Allen 2002

[Reactions from African church leaders about the dependency syndrome:] “They referred to it as an addiction – ‘the more you get, the more you want’ - and they admitted making compromises in order to get more funding when it is needed.”

Schwartz 1999b

Also from the partnership view the same argument is raised. Donors should not just look at what will be accomplished but as well to what fosters responsibility and reciprocity.

“Favorable exchange rates and the relative access to money might make it easy [for donors] to underwrite projects, but it doesn’t make it right. Healthy dependency flourishes on the foundation of shared responsibility.

Funding decisions should be based as much on what fosters responsibility and reciprocity as on what might be accomplished.”

Rickett 2000

In a previous paragraph the relation with missionary lifestyles was already made, but when discussing effects on attitude-level, missionaries should be included once more, as Bonk disturbingly calls for.

“It did not take missionaries long to realize that their presence, while creating little hunger and thirst for righteousness, stimulated the African appetite for the material benefits enjoyed by the white man.”

Bonk 1986

He discusses the social and psychological impact of the power and money structures of missionaries and he traces the mentality problem among national Christians directly to the great disparity in lifestyles. He calls for a radical change toward simple lifestyles, starting with the home bases in the Western countries.

However, the negative effect of the dependency syndrome goes further. It weakens local initiatives. Local stewardship is not only not stimulated; it is directly hampered by the presence of outside funding. ‘As long as much money is coming in, our people will not be willing to give sacrificially’ is an often-heard statement. The church can hold collections for the Bible school, but with more than enough money coming in from outside, why should people even try to give. It is even more beneficial for the church to stifle local initiatives. The best is when local income is kept as low as possible so that the need for support appears the more clearly. In this way, the long term stability of activities is seriously hampered. Meanwhile, this may lead to a ‘dual solution mentality’: the current solution, based on outside support, is kept as long as possible. Needs are made clear to donors to stimulate them continue their funding. When this might eventually stop, the second solution comes into focus: a radical localising of the structure, so that the funds that are needed can be raised locally.

The temptation for the church in this case is to always present needs bigger than they are, to present themselves as weaker, poorer and less able than they are in order to continue or increase funding.

“Finance for grass-roots work and the food and clothing necessary for dedicated evangelists is often supplied by locals if they feel responsible and are not still suffering from a paternal handout of money. (...)

The introduction of foreign funds for church work has a debilitating effect and weakens local initiative.”

Clark 1971

“Motives to work toward self-giving are taken away. Rather, arguments toward sponsors that continuance (or rather increase) is really needed are brought. It is better for the churches to give very little so that sponsors continue to see that ‘we really cannot do it ourselves’.”

Ellison 1997

“Financial paternalism also stifles local initiative, usually in direct proportion to the length of time such assistance has been given.”

Kornfield 1991

“Busy national leaders, seeing the eagerness of westerners to help and the vast amount of money available, conclude that is easier to raise money from overseas than locally.”

Penner 2002

“Foreign funding can easily stifle local initiative by creating the assumption that believers need only rely on distant benefactors rather than learn to give sacrificially. It can cause pastors to become preoccupied with raising foreign funds, and fail to be creative in maximizing local resources.”

Rickett 2000

The table below is adapted from Penner and contrasts a healthy and a dependent church.

A healthy church is:	A dependent church is:
<u>1. Self-imagined</u> It views itself as the Body of Christ in its local situation, independent of the mission.	<u>1. Mission-imagined</u> It views itself essentially as an extension of the foreign mission/denomination.
<u>2. Self-functioning</u> It is capable of carrying on all of the essential functions of a church: worship, fellowship, preaching, teaching, evangelism, pastoral care, deaconate, etc.	<u>2. Semiautonomous-functioning</u> It functions autonomously within guidelines from the outside and subject to watchful scrutiny and correction. Looks to the outside for funding for both essential ministries and programs that it assumes are necessary because of the example of their founders. Worship styles, evangelistic methods, etc. tends to imitate that of the West.
<u>3. Self-determining</u> It can and does make its own decisions	<u>3. Unable to make most decisions</u> without the go ahead of the mission or the overseas donor-church. This is true both in terms of (applications of) church order and ecclesiastical decisions and in terms of decisions on how to plan budgets and direct funding.
<u>4. Self-supporting</u> It carries its own financial responsibilities and finances its core activities. Even in non-essential programmes of the church, the church's contributions are primary.	<u>4. Outside-supported</u> Is on permanent life support from outside sources. Does not believe that they will ever be able to accomplish what God wants it to do without outside funding. The outside source designates how the funds will be used.
<u>5. Self-propagating</u> Sees itself as responsible for carrying out the Great Commission.	<u>5. Directed-propagation</u> Believes that it can only carry out the Great Commission under the condition that outside funds are provided for it. Plans for outreach are based on means that will appeal to outside supporters.
<u>6. Self-giving</u> Knows the social needs of its community and endeavours to meet those needs with what means it has. Individuals in the church recognize and participate in financially supporting the ministries of the church	<u>6. A contact for outside support</u> Identifies local needs and then makes the need known to outsiders for funding. Looks for projects that they know will appeal to outside sources, rather than on real needs. Individuals in the church typically give less to the church than they are capable of, because outsiders support the church.

4. Alternative models

Not every author who writes about the dependency problem is of the same opinion. On page 2 it was already stated that there are mainly two views: the self-reliance view and the partnership view. Some other models have been proposed, but they can still be categorized in one of these two views.

4.1. Three stages model

Various authors propose a three stages model. Starting from a situation of dependence (the first stage), moves should be made to the second stage; that of independence. However, independence is not the end of the story. After this stage, relations should develop further toward interdependence. The term interdependence can be roughly equated with the term partnership.

In 1974, after Lausanne I it was felt that the time was ripe to enter the third stage: interdependence. The modern protestant missionary movement could then divided into three era's:

- 1793 – 1945 : from William Carey till World War II: era of dependence
- 1945 – 1974 : from World War II till Lausanne: era of independence (with nationalistic movements and calls for moratorium)
- 1974 – onward : era of interdependence.

Vikner described this in his article 'The era of interdependence' in 1974. His description of the stage of interdependence starts as follows:

- "1. Self reliance must be achieved and preserved.*
 - 2. The independence of all parties must be recognized."*
- Vikner 1974*

Howard takes over and accepts this division into three era's but as late as 1997 he complains that the era of dependence hasn't even died out. In 2005, we do the same.

Carter writes in 1998 about 'indigenous principles revisited' and proposes what he calls a 'coactive model', where two partners act together with the same goal. This is again roughly the same as 'partnership'. He proposes this model because he regrets the overemphasis on independence. However, he also bases himself on the three stages model as described above and sees the intermediate state of independence as a necessary step, which may even be the only step in focus seen from a situation of dependence:

“The indigenous church principle [the three-selves, WR] is designed to bring the national church from dependence to independence. This is a necessary step, and one which viewed from the standpoint of the beginning of the process, may be the only goal that seems meaningful. However, when a state of independence is reached, a more mature relationship can be contemplated--a relationship between fully autonomous agents characterized by mutual respect and cooperation. This is a relationship wherein neither has the superior position, but each contributes something unique and valuable.”

Carter 1998

The passing through the independent phase is necessary to realise the condition for the ‘more mature relationship’ that there should be ‘two fully autonomous agents’. This condition cannot be fulfilled without passing through a stage of independence.

There is a need for passing through a stage of independence before mature partnership can even be considered. In our situation of extreme dependency, we maintain that the differences between the self-reliance view and the partnership view are really insignificant.

4.2. Partnership model

Already in 1947, the International Missionary Conference at Whitby had adopted ‘partners in obedience’ as their main theme and Max Warren wrote in 1956 his book *Partnership: the Study of an Idea*. The Filipino theologian Nacpil gave an address in 1970 to a group of missionaries and called their ideas of partnership a ‘partnership of white supremacy’ and an Indonesian church leader once said about the theme of Whitby: ‘The partnership for you; the obedience for us.’ (in: Bosch 1978). A consultation on ‘partnership in mission – what structures?’ held in 1991 at Cameroon asked itself whether the word ‘partnership’ could be used at all with all historical baggage on the term in a situation of dependency. Lutz and Bush in their book *Partnership: The New Direction in World Evangelism* give a basic definition of partnership in missions:

“An association of two or more autonomous bodies who have formed a trusting relationship and fulfill agreed upon expectations by sharing complementary strengths and resources, to reach their mutual goal.”

Lutz and Bush 1990

This definition has since been accepted and is used by many authors (e.g. Van Rheenen 1996).

Two (or more) bodies enter into a relationship. These bodies are autonomous. This refers back to the need to go through a kind of independent stage before being autonomous. Daniel Rickett gives definitions of five different types of partnership. Four of these include ‘independent ministries’ as a description of the partners, while the fifth, complementary partnership, does not include this, but:

“By this definition, partnership involves making the partner an extension of your own ministry”

Rickett 2000

Van Rheenen discusses various models for relations in mission work. His fourth model is worth mentioning. It is a combination of the indigenous model (no outside resources are used) and the partnership model:

“4. The Indigenous/Partnership Model. First indigenous in the first generations, then partnership in the subsequent generations. Because the work is self-supporting during these formative years, early Christians come to Christ, not because of financial inducements but because of faith commitments. In the second generation, when...”

Van Rheenen 2002

Most authors discuss the importance of joint decision making, equality and mutual respect. William Taylor, who until very recently was the director of the World Evangelical Alliance’s Mission Commission has been a strong advocate for the partnership model. He wrote a worldwide overview about the lessons of partnership. One of his conclusions is:

“The lesson: Partnerships work best when there is shared ownership of the project, including finances.”

Taylor 1995

In 1993, the Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group II (MISAG II) wrote a report ‘Toward dynamic mission’ and proposed ten principles of Partnership. The first seven of these principles are:

“1. Local initiative: The responsibility for mission in any place belongs primarily to the church in that place. Thus the initiative for establishing a new missionary venture in any given place belongs to the local church. (...)

2. Mutuality (...)

3. Responsible stewardship (...)

4. Interdependence. We need each other. We are incomplete and cannot be called the Church of God if the diversity implicit in our catholicity is overtaken by a parochial, cultural or racial, homogeneity. (...)

5. Cross fertilization (...)

6. Integrity (...)

7. Transparency”

MISAG 1993

Rickett discusses mistakes that partners make and remedies on how to avoid or solve such mistakes:

“Mistake #6 - Forgetting to develop self-reliance. It is a mistake to underestimate the destructive potential of foreign aid. Self-reliance has three interwoven qualities: organizational self-determination, relational interdependence, and financial independence. A self-reliant ministry is capable of making its own decisions, collaborating with the larger Christian community, and surviving on indigenous resources (...)

Remedy. Include self-reliance in your goals for the partnership. A good rule of thumb is to provide no more than 30 percent of the partner's total income. A ministry that receives 70 percent of its support from local sources represents a healthy level of interdependence (...)

Mistake #7 - Running a race with no end. The easiest mistake to make in a successful partnership is to keep going with no end in sight (...)

Remedy. Have an exit plan before you start. Today it is a regular practice at Partners International to look at longstanding relationships and ask, "So what?" "What are we really accomplishing?" When the answer is, "Not much that could not be accomplished without us," we start the process of graduation. That's a polite term for withdrawal. It usually involves a gradual reduction of financial subsidy.”

Rickett 2001a

In an interview with Glenn Schwartz and Chuck Bennett of the same organization: Partners International in Mission Frontiers, Bennet confirms what Rickett states above:

“We typically provide only about 20% of the total income of an indigenous partner ministry, and almost never more than 35% except in disaster relief situations. If we withdrew it, they would slow down but not collapse.”

For partnership two autonomous partners, who can exist independent of each other, have to come together.

If this first requirement is not met, there is no need to look into the other conditions for partnerships.

A trusting relation is simply impossible between one autonomous organization and one dependent organization. Mutual goals are hardly possible when one organization cannot even exist in its current structures without the incoming funds of the other ‘partner’. Resources and strengths are not complementary if they fully depend upon one ‘partner’. Joint decision making is likewise impossible.

In short, the Indonesian church leader’s saying (Bosch 1978) may well be applicable to any partnership said to be existing in such a situation:

“The partnership for you, the obedience for us.”

Or:

“He who pays the piper calls the tune”.

Or:

“If you have your hand in another man’s pocket, you have to move when he moves.”

The problem is that from a state of dependency, partnership is only possible when first self-reliance is achieved.

Critics

For this reason, the partnership model has received a lot of criticism:

“However we are very good at changing words and continuing just as we did in the past. If we are talking about interdependence when all the money and personnel come from overseas, what is it that we in Africa are contributing to make our Interdependence a reality?”

Gatu 1996

“A presupposition of this article is that local churches, soon after inception, should be able to be self-supporting whatever model they employ. Partners should cease supporting stagnant, non-growing works that through the guise of partnership have really become dependent upon outside support for the needs of the local church. (...)

Partnership, like the indigenous model, has many pitfalls. For example, partnership could become another name for paternalism if outsiders control decisions and set agendas. Under the guise of partnership a subsidy system is introduced (...)

Van Rheenen 2002

“Western mission executives promote ‘partnership’ in a form that creates and perpetuates a situation where one partner receives and the other gives. True partnership is reciprocal and may not even include funding.”

Penner 2002

“A missionary goes out to plant churches using valid principles of self-support. He or she works hard to encourage local people to pay their own leaders, build their own buildings and manage their own affairs. After some years along come the so-called ‘partnership’ people who offer to pay salaries with outside funds. This results in good leaders being attracted away from self-supporting churches by the outside funding. That is what one might call ‘shepherd stealing’ - drawing away leaders by offering better salaries which can only be covered by outside funding.”
Schwartz 1996

Manpower, needed for pastoral care and evangelistic activities is now attracted to writing proposals for ‘income generating projects’ or ‘employment projects’, including the planning, budgeting, reporting etcetera that is required for such. Other promising persons are distracted from work by writing personal business proposals to donors.

5. Two specific issues

5.1. Paying church workers from outside

The question whether church workers: pastors, ministers, evangelists, missionaries, etcetera from churches should be paid from outside deserves special attention. The practice is not uncommon and has been in operation in our situation since long. Sometimes, the question is answered differently for pastors / ministers, which should then be paid locally and for evangelists / missionaries, which could then be paid from outside funds. However, the difference is gradual (depending on the church order followed). If the above distinction is made, a church can easily decide to place ‘evangelists’ on churches that are 20 years old or more. Some arguments pro and contra are summarized below.

Arguments pro

Donalds in EMQ under the title: ‘What is wrong with foreign money for national pastors?’

“The author claims ‘indigenous’ is a bad word if it prevents Christians in one country from sharing with fellow believers in another country. Writing from the perspective of India, he says traditional self-support policies hurt and hinder the churches there.”
Donalds 1979

He argues that local churches should help each other pay their pastors if need be, no matter the distance between these churches. Yet he sees the need to move toward more realistic structures. He sees more solution in part time ministries especially in rural or poorer churches.

Penner gives another often-heard argument:

“Our desire to get the ‘best bang for the buck’ makes us think that supporting nationals (who are inevitably cheaper to support) must be a good investment.”
Penner 2002

The most vocative defender of this argument may be K.P. Yohannan, e.g. in his book *Revolution in World missions*. Western missionaries are expensive and often live far from the people. National evangelists live much simpler, live closer to the people, do not experience the cultural and linguistic barriers that Westerners do. Writing from an Indian context where holy men and spiritual leaders are respected for their voluntary poverty, he guarantees that the lifestyles of the supported evangelists will be extremely simple. In his book, a card is attached that the reader can fill with a promise to support a certain number of nationals.

K.P. Yohannan is a respected missions leader, director of Gospel for Asia. Mission experts comment his organisation for ‘a good level of accountability’. However, some serious arguments have been raised against his arguments by respected missiologists such as Ralph Winter (from US Centre for World Mission, Mission Frontiers and International Journal for Frontier Missions), Patrick Johnstone (from Operation World) and Bill Taylor (From WEA’s Mission Commission), Robert McQuilkin and Glenn Schwartz. Some of these arguments are summarized below.

Recently, K.P. Yohannan has apologized for a number of statements made in his books.

Arguments contra

Many authors have written and listed arguments why it is not wise to pay church workers’ salaries from outside. We just list those reasons that are relevant in our situation without always quoting the direct sources, since most arguments are repeated by various authors. The authors who list such arguments are: Ott, Paden, Schwartz 1996, Wayne Allen, Harvie Conn, Ellison, Van Rheenen, Penner, Howard, Taylor, Rickett and Davis.

1. Once started, this cycle is extremely hard to break

“Once a preacher or church leader is supported by outside Christians or agency, it becomes exceptionally difficult to transition to local support. The expectation is, ‘Once supported by outsiders, always supported by outsiders’.”
Van Rheenen 2002

2. It motivates the church to resist transition to locally paid leaders. The need for outside support is always presented as real. Ott calls this a ‘mercenary spirit’.

3. It brings the temptation for Christians to see the ministry as job-opportunity
4. Lay involvement is hampered and restricted, since it is competing with official evangelism. If donors would realise that evangelism can be done without outside money, this would be dangerous. Thereby the (unbiblical) chasm between clergy and laity is made deeper. Naturally appearing leadership tends to be suppressed (Ellison calls this 'the Saul syndrome') and initiatives for more sustainable structures for ministry are neglected.
5. It has no biblical support. Biblically, he who invests all his time in the gospel ministry should eat from what those he preaches to, can give.
6. Local giving, actions of spontaneous love toward the pastor and faithful tithing is hindered.
7. It affects church growth negatively. Wayne Allen wrote his DMin thesis about the comparison of church growth between districts where at a time outside funding for church workers' salaries was introduced and other districts where such was not introduced and showed that in the latter, growth occurred in each case, while in the subsidized districts growth stagnated or even declined.
8. It makes the worker less accountable to the church he serves
9. It makes the church worker less motivated to be devoted to his work
10. It makes it difficult for the national church to exercise authority over such workers or to take action, since removing him from the subsidy system means 'blocking one's progress' which is among the most grievous cultural offenses.
11. It creates or stimulates the idea that the church is a foreign organization and that church workers are actually paid agents of the foreign body. This decreases their credibility.
12. When transparency toward the church is limited, it can create the impression that church workers are rich people, whom you can go to for loans rather than to support them.
13. Western support of native workers is a model that national churches cannot reproduce.
14. Such a strategy is based on the assumption that the spread of the gospel depends on money.
15. This dependence on Western funds can reinforce feelings of inferiority.
16. It can rob the national church of the joy and blessing of being a truly missionary church and being part of the evangelization of the world.
17. It robs the dependent church of self-respect that comes from seeing God provide.
18. It hinders the expansion of the church, since this is now made dependent on outside funds coming in. Any decrease of money is translated into decrease of evangelistic activity.
19. If some do and some do not receive outside funding for their salaries it can create a great discrepancy between one pastor and the other and thereby jealousy. It can tempt the church to start looking for ways to also get the other pastors on the pay lists.
20. It exports and reinforces a materialistic mentality that is already rampant in the western church.
21. It discourages local initiative in designing culturally appropriate means and methods of evangelism and church life.
22. Outside funding may actually contribute to keeping dependent churches poor.

"During my years with WEF I travelled to 70 or 80 countries. I repeatedly would find that those who were supported almost exclusively from North America did not relate to the local church well. Their accountability was elsewhere."

Howard 1997

Taylor does not want to take a strong position but he quotes an Indian leader:

"If Americans want to send funds to non-Western missionaries, that may be fine in some cases. But do not rob us of the joy and responsibility to support our own people."

Taylor 1995

Rickett includes in his 'sure ways to create unhealthy dependence':

"Finance pastors and local churches. History has shown that foreign funding of pastors and churches has proven more often than not to hinder genuine indigenous growth. (...)

In the matter of funding pastors, the chances of creating unhealthy dependency are at their highest.'

Rickett 2000

"First, in each case churches did not receive direct outside subsidy nor were pastors paid with outside funds. This is a well-established principle of church growth.

The healthiest churches grow out of their own indigenous resources."

Rickett 2001

Harvie Conn, Westminster's missiology professor turns the argument upside down: 'what is wrong with national money for foreign church workers?'

"To all of these, I would add an idea equally or perhaps more foundational than any of the above. It flows from the affirmation of the apostle Paul that he had the right to ask 'for remuneration from those among whom he had sown spiritual things'. (Thus, not from the church which had sent him out). He said also, 'the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel' (I Cor. 9 - 14). (...) Putting it another way, is not the Pauline pattern one of support for the ministry (whether expatriate or national) from the church in which he labors? What's wrong with foreign (receiving church) money for

foreign (sending church) missionaries? Can we recover the Pauline concept of economic participation in the ministry as 'fellowship in the gospel' (Phil. 1: 5) by asking only for 'foreign money for national pastors' and not also ask for 'national money for foreign pastors'? ”

Conn 1978

Paying for training

A related question is the question of training church workers. If it is not healthy to pay church workers with outside funds, is it healthy to pay for their training?

“I will give another example from my own experience in theological education. In a seminary in Bolivia, the students paid no tuition, received their textbooks at half price, paid nothing for their room, and received all their meals at half the real cost. An expatriate missionary encouraged this kind of paternalism. Rather than fostering loyalty and gratitude, it resulted in students wanting even more benefits.”

Kornfield 1999

The result in Kornfield's case was strike and a closure of the college.

Davis emphasises that training ministries must also be structured (and paid) in a way that it can be taken over by the national church without outside input.

“To accomplish the task [of training] Western ministries must model training that Slavic Christians can emulate after outside assistance disappears. The multiplying of indigenous churches should not and cannot depend long term on outside personnel or money. If training costs \$6 per day, it will stop when the \$6 stops. This was the right way to start, but it is not the right way to continue. TEAM has learned from its 105 years of service worldwide that to pay the bill early will create dependency later. (...) The principle TEAM tries to operate on now is: only begin and do what the national church can carry on.”

Davis 1996

Although we do not enter deeply in this sub-theme, we do not state that outside funding for training is wrong as such. However, if theological training is regarded as essential for the church (which we do) than it should be structured in a way that the national church can handle, manage and support it. Maybe Davis' word applies: 'this was the right way to start but not to continue'.

5.2. Accountability

Accountability is usually discussed as one of the conditions for partnership. Most authors emphasise that without a form of accountability, no partnership can exist.

Rickett gives a Biblical background:

“It is important not only to keep financial integrity before God but also to be perceived as doing so by others. Deuteronomy 25:13-15; 2 Corinthians 8:16-24”

Rickett 2001

“Cross-cultural partnerships simply don't work without accountability. You may have a compelling vision, a congenial relationship, and plenty of resources, but the rapport won't last if you don't have an accountability system in place. (...)

Partners with clear systems of accountability are better equipped to handle the inevitable mistakes and misunderstandings that occur in cross-cultural partnerships. (...)

So the first principle is that accountability is a two-way street. This is the difference between partnership and paternalism (...)

Accountability works best when each partner's performance is assessed on actual outcomes.”

Rickett 2000

“Accountability does not imply mistrust. Accountability, as the flip side of trust, is built into these agreements. It is difficult to trust anyone who is unwilling to be accountable; while it is humiliating to be accountable to someone who does not trust us.

Accountability is scriptural. No one could fault Paul for honesty and integrity. Yet he rejoiced that the churches had appointed 'a brother' to travel with him when he carried a substantial gift for the Jerusalem Christians who were experiencing hardship. Paul recognized the need for accountability, especially in the eyes of people who might suspect a misuse of funds.”

Lutz and Bush 1990

The question can be asked whether accountability is only needed because of the presence of outside donors. In a general sense accountability should be part of every church and organization. However, this question is more complex than it appears to be.

Some authors emphasise that accountability and transparency increase the willingness of church members to give. Stan and Donna Downes mention barriers for people in the church to give money:

- “1. Leaders aren't accountable [they argue for open reporting which encourages trust, generous giving and avoids suspicion and accusation].
 2. Poor denominational policies: too much goes up to the highest level, too little comes back down to grass roots level (...) The problem is that we see churches as serving the leaders rather than the other way around.
 3. Improper management (...)”
- Stan and Donna Downes 1994

This principle applies: transparency stimulates trust and willingness to give. However, we still maintain that the need for accountability is mainly linked to the presence of foreign funding, especially when this is excessive. To be more precise: the need for accountability as defined in Western terms with much paper work in worked out more years plans, annual plans, budgets, extensive administrative and reporting systems. Before an agreement is made that accountability is needed, accountability needs to be defined.

*“Start by asking your partners what accountability means to them. Discuss how it works in their culture and how it works in yours. (...)
In a small ministry where everyone knows intuitively what they have to accomplish and why, it's possible to operate without written goals and objectives.”*
Rickett 2000

Kritzinger about the African Initiated Churches:

“Usually none of the elaborate and sophisticated administrative systems and paper work is undertaken. The organization is done on a person to person basis. Records are kept in the collective memory. Instead of formal meetings and minutes, they keep personal contact and coordinate by means of visits and feasts. Only a very few AICs are such large organizations that more than this kind of administration is necessary. (...) Africa is not a continent for paper. It is populated by people of flesh and blood, who talk, sing, dance and feast. Africa's administration should be more oral and personal.”
Kritzinger 2002

Pirkko Poysti discusses the very different perceptions of accountability between Eastern and Western Europe. These and more differences also apply if we compare accountability systems in Africa and Western Europe. South-East Nigeria's culture has been called a 'culture of corruption'. This brings some very special challenges for churches. Because of deep-rooted traditions that easily lead to corruption, African Christians have quickly found that the common Western form of accountability is not only too much, but at the same time too little. All the paper work involves huge efforts and time investments, but it does not necessarily say anything about what happens in reality. Receipts can be obtained easily with whatever information one likes to be written on it. Signatures and approvals can be bought in almost any organisation, with the principle of reciprocity applicable. Many Nigerian organizations therefore, do not base their accountability based on checking of receipts and reports, but on reality checks. Has the job been done according to expectations? The moneys involved can be estimated by others within the organisations, because everybody knows the prices in the market. From these assessments an estimate can be made whether the person did his job well. Whether or not the person got some benefits from doing the job is usually not a question at stake. If he bargained smartly enough, some may be for him. But other stakeholders easily estimate how for this will reach. The main condition for such accountability to work is that the stakeholders must feel complete ownership and responsibility for the program and the money used in it. This form of accountability may not be the ideal form, nor is it the only form used in this part of Nigeria, nor does it exclude corruption from entering into the system. The main point is that in a culture where corruption is deeply rooted, setting a standard based on paper reporting, is setting a theoretical standard and putting a temptation to build a façade for donors who feel happy seeing nice papers. Many Nigerians do not even know that such donors do not even realise that reality is a quite different level than the paper. In government it works the same. Projects have plans, budgets and reports. Some nice figures appear, but the relation with reality may be minimal and in some cases the reality is completely absent. When government officials come for inspection, the main point is to make such inspectors feel happy. The organisation must quickly find out what it is that will make the inspector to feel happy. In many cases money, in some cases seeing paper figures, in some cases seeing part of the reality. A governor can inspect a new road, see the first kilometer and give his approval, while the road stops after five kilometers, leaving more thirty kilometers of the project without road. In Abakaliki, professional 'proposal-writers' offer to write proposals to major donors, especially about AIDS, since this attracts most money, like United Nations programs or WorldBank against five percent of the money received. Of course, this will be the first unreported cost of the project. UNICEF sponsors the drilling of numerous boreholes in the State. The condition is that they are drilled in communities. The local solution is that the organization carrying it out takes advance money from rich individuals who want boreholes in their compounds with a promise to pay back when UNICEF sends funds. This money is never refunded and the people whose money is thus taken cannot complain because they got the borehole illegally. The name UNICEF is of course not attached to those boreholes. The church in such culture has a huge challenge to be different. And generally is. Yet at all cost must it be avoided that the same attitude is stimulated to create two different levels: paper and reality. We do not propose a complete or ideal solution, but paper accountability could be reduced to the level that the church needs and wants internally or to some basics that donors absolutely need and reality accountability needs to be increased

to avoid divergence between paper and reality. The result of this may be that not all money is 'properly accounted', but that may not be a problem under the condition that there are internal control mechanisms. For this to be possible the condition is that outside funds are either absent or constitute a minor part (like Partners International: 20 – 30 % of a budget highest). This is the only method to ensure ownership and to guarantee that a project is not run purely because of the presence of donor funds.

However, what exact formats of reporting and accountability would be best is a complex question and one of the first to be discussed between two real partners.

6. How to avoid or resolve dependency

Not much will be said about avoiding dependency here. This can easily be implied from the paragraphs about the causes of dependency and the situation here is one of dependency.

Since the problem of dependency has two sides: the giving side and the receiving side, the solution must also work at two sides: the dependent church and the dependency-creating church.

6.1. Social justice

The great differences between economies in the world was mentioned as one of the causes of dependency. This problem cannot be solved by a single person or organisation nor will steps to solve this problem directly decrease the dependency in our situation.

However, the Western church still has the mandate to voice out against injustice and to raise a prophetic voice in the society about the inequality in the world.

The church should propose initiatives to lower international trade barriers and should be the first to support the government in taking such steps, even when this would be costly for her own members.

6.2. Moratorium

Moratorium means something like 'suspension' or 'agreed pause'. A call for a moratorium generally means a request to stop sending missionaries and money from outside the national church for a certain agreed period in order to give that church time and breathing space to take full ownership and to decide on priorities.

At the World Council of Churches' Commission for World Mission and Evangelisation (CWME) in 1973 at Bangkok, the historical call for a moratorium was brought by various delegates, most notably John Gatutu from Kenya. The meeting supported the call to stop missions in the structures thus far used, to have the younger churches find their identity.

The motives for a moratorium can differ. Liberal theologians may call for moratorium because they have abandoned the idea of conversion to Christianity. Only dialogue should take place and if conversion takes place it may be to either side of the religious spectrum. However, the Bangkok conference did not mean the call to moratorium to mean the end of missions in its Biblical sense, and the outcomes of the call were more balanced than a total cut-off of mission work.

The Nigerian Ogbu Kalu explains why he calls for a moratorium. He calls for:

"... demolition of a system which inherently works at cross-purposes with the Biblical pattern. It is this fact which underlies calls for moratorium, not in rejection of the Great Commission, but in explicit obedience to it.

Only when the young churches are given breathing room, when the inherently oppressive presence of the mission is removed or relaxed, can they find their true role in the ministry of the total body."

Kalu 1975

The Lausanne meeting in 1974 where evangelical leaders from 150 countries came together also discussed about moratorium and in the Lausanne Covenant, article 9 about 'The urgency of the evangelistic task', the following statement is made:

"A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelised country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelised areas."

Lausanne Covenant, art. 9

A moratorium can be called for from within. This was the case in the seventies and this has happened often afterward. A number of churches have followed this option to get rid of the burden of dependency. In this case, churches say to the money, donors offer 'No, thank you'. A known example is the Friends Missionary Prayer Band in South-India, where 20,000 members sponsor 500 full time cross cultural missionaries. They were offered outside funds, but rejected them in order not to lose the joy and blessing of being a truly missionary organization. Another, closer, example is the Anglican church in Nigeria. They accepted a resolution never to accept money offered by foreign churches and inserted the word 'self-supporting' in their vision statement. Their reason was to escape the 'unspoken strings' that were attached to accepting money, especially in the homosexuality debate in the Anglican church.

A moratorium can also be called for from outside. When donors start seeing the debilitating effects of their funds, they can make sudden or gradual moves toward a moratorium. However, this is usually more painful and can easily harm relations in the body of Christ. World Mission Associates, an organization that focuses on breaking the dependency syndrome usually does not discuss with donors, but rather with the dependent churches to prepare them to shake of the shackles of dependency.

In our own situation, the moratorium option has been discussed since the year 2000 under the name 'zero-option'. However, this was always placed as the least desirable option.

We do not want to call for a complete moratorium, but with the Lausanne Covenant, we feel that a great reduction of foreign input is necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance. This does not and should not imply that relations should stop. A moratorium or suspension of two years could do much in terms of taking ownership and setting priorities.

A moratorium cannot be the all-and-only solution to the dependency syndrome. Restructuring may be necessary at the dependent church's side and it may follow a moratorium automatically, but changes are also needed at the side of the Western church. It needs to change its paternalistic attitude and learn that sometimes it is more blessed to receive than to give. The Western church may be going to need the emerging church more urgent than it realises in a situation of secularism, individualism, anti-authoritarianism and post-modernism. Ultimately, a living, Spirit-filled, non-dependent African church may be the means God will provide to bring new blessings to the Western church.

6.3. Restructuring

When expensive structures that are set up are part of the cause of dependency, restructuring may be needed in order to break the bondage of dependency.

Kritzinger, after describing the expensive structures of mission-established churches as compared to African Initiated churches concludes:

"There is no way in which a church within a poor community can survive financially without radically recasting the inherited structures of their well-to-do western 'mother' churches. The present structures could only be perpetuated through the influx of enormous amounts of 'foreign' money. Such a church is doomed to a dependent existence, with everything it entails."
Kritzinger 2002

Schwartz gives the following directives:

"Distinguish between what is the work of the body of Christ (and should be continued) and what was created for some other reason, such as a church-run business to compensate for low church giving. 2. If business projects are to be kept going, separate them from the parish or congregational structure of the church. Put them in the hands of business people in the church or community so that church leaders are not encumbered (see Acts 6)."
Schwartz nd

In what areas restructuring would be needed must necessarily be decided by the church, based on needs and priorities. The mentioned distinction between what belongs to the essence of the church and what does not is a helpful one. Another distinction that could help is between local church level and denominational level. Ministry aspects that are essential at the level of a local church are not necessarily essential at denominational level. Worse still, if ministries at denominational level take away the need to have those ministry-aspects at local level, they are hampering instead of helping the essence of the church. For example, youths need attention in the church. They need to be addressed in the specific needs, temptations, challenges and opportunities they have. But if a denominational ministry takes over this task from the local churches, these local churches lose an essential aspect of ministry.

One area where restructuring may well be needed, is the area of church planting and leadership. When a church is planted (either by a church planter, by a youth group or by another church), who takes care of that church and makes sure that essential tasks are carried out? Full time or part time ministry? Does the money come from the mother church, the church at large or the newly formed church? Should time spans be set for evaluation? Especially the discussion about part time and full time ministry may need to be opened again. Without entering into details here, we are convinced that both are needed.

6.4. Stewardship

Teaching about Biblical stewardship is indispensable if a church is to be non-dependent. The organisation International Steward focuses specifically on the teaching of stewardship as a means to breaking dependency. Allen (2002) sees a main role for theological training institutions to develop and teach courses on Biblical Stewardship in all curricula on all levels that are offered (also Ingebretson 2002).

However, teaching stewardship in mission-established churches is hard, because of the presence of outside funds.

"In other words, ownership must precede stewardship."
Schwartz nd

The Nigerian Methodist Awo discusses about money for planting new churches:

"The third source of finance is the members of the newly planted church. Many church planters, in their bid to gain outside financial support, normally plead that the believers are new in faith and are poor. But remember the story of Elijah and the woman of Zarephat (1 Kings 17:9-16). The prophet made this woman give all she had, which resulted in sufficient supplies for all of them. This principle is still working today...."

When people are not encouraged to give, with the excuse that they are poor, they are deprived of the opportunity to receive blessings from God. (...)

If the idea is to plant a healthy church, then you must think of raising a giving church from the beginning. Remember, the initial teachings and impressions will determine the type of church that will grow."

Awo 1995

Chikazaza defends stewardship and shows its link to the African culture of giving and hospitality.

"There has been talk that the African church is not a giving church and to some extent this has been accepted as fact. But I know for certain that the African is a natural giver. (...)

Such talk that Africa is a poor continent is not only false but criminal. (...)

Giving is in the root of African culture."

Chikazaza 1997

6.5. Teach Western churches

The dependency problem is a problem at two sides, as was already noted. Western churches need to be taught. The image of missions need to be biblically redefined. The first question is whether the Western church or mission organizations are interested or willing to be taught:

"For too long the Western church has been pouring men and women, material and money into the churches of the Third World without making realistic assessment of the impact of this influx.

It is true that there is verbal assent given to evaluation; missionaries, both returning and on the field, are told that their evaluations are welcome. But are these evaluations made, or really welcome, or actually heeded?

Can charitable organizations countenance reports that suggest that they should not send more money or personnel?(...)

evaluation must go beyond mere objective statistics that report physical occurrences. The evaluation must be a social evaluation. What impact has our giving of personnel and money had on the attitudes of the recipients?(...)

For the sake of those we seek to aid, let us stop and evaluate our position, progress and direction, lest the hand of Christian charity (agape) produce a work that is directly contrary to what is intended."

Reichenbach 1982

"Dealing a blow to long-term dependency must include changing the deep assumptions on which help is both given and received."

Schwartz 2000a

The interests are not only big for the receiving church but also for the giving church: the good feeling of doing good works, the image of Good White Missionary, the organisations (both at home and abroad) that we have set up, the nice level of giving from our constituency that may decrease if we change their image.

Fran Patt, from the US Centre for World Missions states boldly that mission boards will only change their mentality when the source dries up, because it is too tempting to continue pleasing the churches with the information they want to hear so that the funds continue to come. Therefore, he argues, the churches have to be taught. He may be pessimistic.

"What must we do to begin the process of educating the American church to circumstances and conditions in the emerging world and the growth of the church therein to help them to know what questions need to be asked to get to the heart of the matter and respond correctly? (...)

But, until we launch a campaign aimed at the American local church that will expose the fraud and spiritual immorality associated with condoning structures, practices and attitudes about the two-third world church that breed dependency, we have not really addressed the disease in a way that will eradicate it. (...)

Now we step onto sensitive soil, but I also contend that for many American agencies and missionaries, until the source of funding and motivation for these types of ministries dries up, it will continue to be a sore temptation and subversion for both. Missionaries and agencies will continue to be tempted to draw from the huge resources of the North American church if that entity is still committed to spending their funds in this way. If we are truly to end this cycle of abuse we must do more than "Just Say No." We must dry up the source of the drugs (money)."

Patt 1999

One major reason why the old image of missions is kept going and the Western churches are constantly urged to give more to dependent churches, is that it keeps their love for missions going. To break this or to inform them about realities like the dependency problem may decrease their love and enthusiasm for missions. This fear is genuine but need not keep us from presenting real problems. If people do not know the real problems and the weapons Satan is using to keep the church down, they also do not know what to pray for. Most prayers for missions are generally that God may convert the 'poor heathen'. Mission Boards may need to let their fear go that people will give less. Mission effort is not measured in

money given. As one song says: 'God can't cash out State cheques in heaven. He needs you...' Incarnational presence is much more important than money (Howard 1997).

*"The focus needs to shift from the collection plate to consecrated personnel, from decimal points to dedicated people, from financial programs to faithful proclamation, from money to manpower."
Blue 1982*

7. Breaking dependency is possible

To some it may seem that once the cycle of dependency is begun, it must continue forever. However, this is not the case. Glenn Schwartz makes it his work to provide examples of churches that were able to make the shift.

*"In spite of the availability of western funds I see momentum in the right direction. It may take time, and there may be setbacks along the way; but I sense that the trend is in the right direction in many places. I do not deny that there are still many who look to the West and feel that Africa will never be able to make it on its own."
Schwartz 1999b*

Mossai, Nthamburi and Tamang all give examples of churches that broke through their dependency. Rev. Reuben Ezemadu gives examples from Nigeria of churches dedicating ten percent of all their income for overseas missions. Or about four Nigerian friends:

*"Four Nigerian friends. One gave up his job and became a missionary. Three others pooled their salaries and divided into four to support."
Ezemadu 2001*

However, the price may be high.

*"there is sometimes a high price to be paid for moving from dependency toward self-reliance. Some local church leaders may need to say 'no, thank you' to the outside funding which has been supporting them and their families. This happened in East Africa about 30 years ago when local leaders asked the people overseas to stop supporting them financially. They were actually declining the funds used to pay their own salaries. (...)
Sometimes missionaries pay a high price for thinking new thoughts, and they have been involuntarily eliminated from continuing service."
Schwartz 2000b*

8. Factors that hinder breaking dependency

Breaking dependency is possible but there are factors that hinder moving toward resolution.

The cycle of dependency is self-enforcing. All around the cycle there may be resistance to break. Starting from the Mission Boards and the (ex-) missionaries:

*"Sometimes those missionaries are reluctant to see the outside support stopped because the projects they started might be closed down or fail to operate. (...)
Those responsible for creating dependency in the first place (like missionaries) may hesitate to see it change because they have been getting a good feeling from giving, even if it has created dependency and left others unable to stand on their own two feet."
Schwartz 2000b*

the Western church constituency:

*"there are some in western church and mission circles who do not understand what I am talking about. They are happy to be involved in meeting needs, regardless of whether their compassion and altruism might create or perpetuate the dependency syndrome. They are happy so long as they are not criticized or disturbed in the ministry which they find rewarding."
Schwartz 1999b*

and the dependent church

*"Is it not the continual flow of outside funding which reinforces the mentality and makes economic health in the local community a virtual impossibility?"
Schwartz 2000a*

*"Those receiving salary from overseas funds may be reluctant to see the system change. (...)
They have concluded that their people are too poor to support their own churches and especially their own development projects so they might as well let the situation continue. Unfortunately, such churches are unlikely to learn the joy of sending out their own missionaries. Some of them feel they cannot support their own pastors, let alone help to plant new churches beyond their borders. But, let's not*

forget, there is a cure for this kind of dependency. (...)
Schwartz 2000b

The ongoing presence and availability of funds is the most serious factor that will hinder breaking dependency. But there are those who have seen the problem. Howard quotes an African leader:

"The biggest problem we now have is the funding which is coming in from the outside causing problems for us inside."
Howard 1997

But no matter the factors that hinder breaking the bondage of dependency, the gospel of Jesus Christ sets free. If the matter of the Kingdom is our burden, this problem needs to have our attention.

For a healthy church
For a strong church
For a missionary church
For a church that will be a blessing to the whole world, including the West
For the salvation of many
For the glory of God

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