

Healing for a Broken World:

Christian Perspectives on Public Policy

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A Video Series Study Guide for Group Leaders and Participants

Introduction

Welcome to this video series based on my book, *Healing for a Broken World: Christian Perspectives on Public Policy*. It is primarily designed to be used in classes or small group discussion sessions, where people can bounce ideas and reactions off each other. I recommend that it be used with my book, but it can also be used separately, as a stand-alone source of ideas and insights.

The video consists of 12 segments, or chapters, of about 10 minutes each that correspond to the 12 chapters in the book. Following an introductory chapter, there are four chapters that introduce four basic biblical principles that will help us to think through and react to today's public policy issues. The next seven chapters apply these basic principles to seven different public policy areas.

The purpose of this series is to help all of us, guided by Scripture, to think in a more biblical, Christian manner about the controversial public policy issues our country is facing. Don't expect either my book or this video series to tell you whether to support or oppose any specific candidate or political party, or whether or not to favor any specific proposed law that is before Congress or one's state legislature. It aims to do something much more important than that. It aims to help today's Christian citizens to think about current public policy issues in a Christian manner, based on biblical principles.

I recommend that, if possible, each member of the group read the chapter from my book that corresponds to each session's topic. Then at the start of each session the group should watch the corresponding 10 minute video chapter together. Each video chapter concludes by posing 2 or 3 discussion questions. This study guide supplies follow-up questions and suggests some additional discussion questions. It also helps the leader by highlighting the central idea or theme of each video chapter and by providing an outline of each.

I suggest that each class or group discussion move through six steps:

1. An opening prayer in which the leader asks God to be present, to guide that meeting's discussions and reflections, and to help those present to lay aside preconceived ideas and look anew at God's truths and how to apply them to current public policy questions.
2. The leader very briefly states from this study guide the central idea or theme of the chapter to be considered at that meeting.
3. A playing of the video chapter.
4. A group discussion of questions at the end of the video, with the leader making use of the follow-up questions if the discussion should lag or get off track. As time permits, additional discussion questions in this study guide can be used.
5. At the end of the discussion the leader ideally would summarize what points he or she sees the group having agreed on and what points they disagree on. (And remember,

disagreements are OK!) This will often be hard to do and could be skipped, but if the leader feels he or she can take a stab at it, it would be helpful.

6. A closing prayer, asking God to bless the discussion, to forgive any unkind words spoken, and to help all there to distinguish between the basic, unchanging truths of Scripture and our often fumbling attempts to apply them to today's public policy questions.

My deepest prayer is that the book I have written and this video series will be used by God to help us as Christians and citizens to be more faithful to him and to his Word. As we grow in faithfulness, we will be better prepared for use by God as salt and light in our communities, our nation, and our world.

Chapter 1. Thinking about Public Policy: Our Starting Point

The Central Idea: To understand and react to today's often puzzling public policy issues and controversies we as Christian citizens need carefully to think through relevant biblical principles and how best to apply them to today's public policy controversies. As we do so we will no longer conform to the political patterns of this world, simply reflecting the opinions and ideologies that surround us.

Outline:

- A. Many Christians today are frustrated by the political world.
- B. Most persons adopt their opinions on public policy issues based on their family background, their income group, the political ideologies that surround us, etc.
- C. A better way is to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, as Paul in Romans calls us to do.
- D. William Wilberforce is great example of this and a model for us as citizens today.
- E. We are to be "conservative radicals" as we think about today's public policy questions.
- F. A quick preview of some of the topics this video series will be considering in later segments.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. This video talks about the danger of our opinions on today's public policy issues being simply shaped by our personal backgrounds and today's ideologies of the left or right, instead of by Biblical truths. To what degree is this true of you and your opinions?

Follow-ups: Think of a specific public policy area, for example, environmental protection or taxes: Is how you think about these areas shaped more by things like your family background and your friends or more by your thinking through relevant Biblical principles and applying them? Can you think of one or two Biblical principles that might be relevant to these two public policy areas?

2. How might understanding some basic Biblical principles that apply to public policy questions make it easier to be a responsible Christian citizen and voter? *Follow-ups:* Do you feel you are already acting fully as a Christian citizen should, or do you sometimes feel frustrated by not being sure how to live out your Christian faith as a citizen and voter? What frustrates you as you work to be a responsible, Christian citizen and voter?

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you think William Wilberforce can serve as a model and inspiration for us as Christian citizens today? *Follow-ups:* Have any of you seen the 2007 movie, *Amazing Grace*, that tells the story of Wilberforce and his fight against the slave trade? If some have, what did you think of it? What did you take away with you from it?
2. Do you sometimes find that demands such as those of your family, job, church, and simply helping others leaves little time or energy for becoming informed on public policy issues and questions? If so, how do you feel about this? Does it—should it—make you feel guilty? Do you think the plan of this book may help you to place public policy issues into a Christian perspective without having to commit more time than you have?

Chapter 2: Creation, Sin, and Redemption

The Central Idea: God created the world good, but it has fallen into sin, which lies in every person's heart and has corrupted all of creation, including the political world. But Christ's saving, redeeming work is as broad as sin's effects, and thus Christ has also come to redeem the political world.

Outline:

- A. God created a good and perfect earth and placed Adam and Eve in a Garden to keep, fill, and develop it.
- B. But Adam and Eve rebelled against God.
 1. This led to the corruption of all human relationships.
 2. This corruption is not located only in certain people or institutions, but lies in every person's heart.
- C. Jesus Christ, through his birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection, has set right all that has gone wrong due to human beings' sinfulness.

1. This includes us as individuals.
2. It also includes all human relationships, including the political.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. To what extent did Christ come to redeem the fallen political world, not only to save us as individual sinners? *Follow-ups:* We all believe that accepting Christ as our Savior changes—or at the least *should* change—the way we treat our co-workers, our spouse, our children. Can we conclude that this means Christ redeems relationships among workers, spouses, and parents and children? Does this mean we can also say that Christ has come to redeem such worlds as business, sports, and politics?
2. How does your answer affect how you view the political world? *Follow-up:* Does this suggest that we should approach such activities as voting and adopting opinions on public policy controversies *as Christians*?
3. Do you have hope that Christians can by their influence change our nation's public policies for the better? Or do you tend to despair of our making a difference? *Follow-ups:* What discourages you from thinking that you as an individual or even we Christians as a whole can influence our nation's public policies? And what encourages you to think that maybe we can? Is even the political arena one where we ought not to forget that since Calvary Christ—not Satan—is in charge?

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. The morning of 9/11 was a beautiful, sunny day, then great evil and death struck, but there were also others who took risks and even died saving the lives of others. Can you think of any other examples where the beauty of God's creation, evil, and bravery and integrity were all present?
2. As the video says, the world is no longer as it is supposed to be. What would the world and human relationships be like if there were no sin—if they were as they are supposed to be? What would the political world be like?

Chapter 3: Justice

The Central Idea: Justice is the God-established purpose of governments and the goal of the public policies they adopt. Justice means assuring that all persons receive what is due them as God's image bearers. When public policies are just, the common good is promoted. Yet this leaves many specific applications open for debate and discussion.

Outline:

- A. God has established governments
- B. The purpose for which God has established government is to promote justice: giving all people their due as God's image bearers.
- C. A government whose public policies are based on justice will promote the common good, not the good of certain individuals or of narrow interests.
- D. These are general principles and do not clearly tell us what in concrete situations is just or unjust, the common good or the good of narrow interests.
- E. Three examples of applying these concepts. (We as Christians need to struggle with questions such as these and sometimes different Christians will come up with different answers.)
 - 1. A large cross on public property in San Diego
 - 2. Environmental pollution as being unjust
 - 3. The structure of taxes (who pays how much) as a justice issue.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter: [Note to the leader: In these three questions do not try to get everyone in the group to reach agreement (probably impossible in any case!). The purpose of the questions is to get persons thinking about justice and to see that the application of even clear biblical principles such as justice is often not a “no-brainer.”]

- 1. Is a cross on public property a justice issue? Why or why not? *Follow-ups:* Would Christians in the San Diego area who revere the cross as a symbol of their faith perhaps be denied what is due them—what they have coming to them—if the cross would be removed? Would your thinking change if instead of a cross, a large crescent (a symbol of the Muslim faith) or a large Star of David (a symbol of the Jewish faith) were at issue instead of a Christian cross?
- 2. Is environmental pollution a justice issue? Why or why not? *Follow-ups:* If some one is a victim of a serious disease such as cancer or emphysema due to environmental pollution, is she receiving what is due her? On the other hand, if some one loses his job because of stricter environmental protection laws, is he receiving what is due him?
- 3. Are taxes and who pays them a justice issue? Why or why not? *Follow-ups:* Is it just if a person earning \$10,000 a year has to pay 15% of her income in taxes and someone earning \$100,000 has to pay only 10% in taxes? Does such a tax policy mean the low income person is receiving what is due her? But are high income persons receiving what is due them if they are taxed at a higher percentage than are low income persons?

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. Are the ideas of justice and the common good helpful guides that can assist you in deciding what public policy positions to support? *Follow-up:* Are they better guides than possible alternatives such as partisan loyalties or one's own personal betterment?
2. Try to think of two examples (either real life or hypothetical): one of a public policy that in your thinking is clearly unjust and one that is clearly just. What makes them unjust or just?

Chapter 4: Solidarity

The Central Idea: Solidarity is rooted in Christ's command to love our neighbors as ourselves and says we have a duty to be concerned for the well being of others, especially those in need. This concern will sometimes lead to supporting changed public policies and sometimes to changed private actions—and sometimes to both.

Outline:

- A. Two examples of solidarity.
 1. Diet Eman and her hiding of Dutch Jews during World War II.
 2. The Good Samaritan.
- B. Solidarity is based in the Bible's command to love others.
- C. The Catholic understand of solidarity.
 1. Pope John Paul II and solidarity.
 2. John DiIulio—it is showing love and concern and offering help to others, and especially to those in great need.
- D. Solidarity and public policy
 1. It is wrong to act primarily on the basis of how we, as individuals, are affected.
 2. It is wrong to think solidarity means we should *always* turn to government and its public policies to solve problems or that we should *never* turn to government to solve problems.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. How would individualism and how would solidarity lead someone to react to a TV news story of African children being made orphans due to their parents dying of AIDS?
Follow-up: [If people are saying they feel there is not much they can do.] Forget for a

minute whether or not there is anything concrete that you can do to help, what does solidarity say should be our attitude towards others in need such as these orphans?

2. When should we look to government to respond to concerns that solidarity has led us to have? And when should we look to ourselves, our churches, and Christian nonprofit organizations? *Follow-ups:* Does it make a difference how close at hand those in need are? Does it make a difference how great the need is and the amount of financial resources that will be needed to deal with it?

Additional Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you agree that Ronald Reagan was wrong to ask voters to decide whether to vote for him based on whether or not they were better off than they were four years before? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree with “Matt” when he says that persons who emphasize solidarity often make the error of looking too quickly to government to meet the problems of those in need? Or do you agree with some who say we do not turn to government quickly enough, since often government is the only way to deal with underlying conditions that are causing persons being in need?

Chapter 5: Civil Society

The Central Idea: Civil society institutions are a part of God’s will for societies, leading in Christian thought to the concepts of sphere sovereignty and subsidiarity. Public policies should take these civil society institutions into account, make use of them, and not ignore or undercut them.

Outline:

- A. The example of a public school superintendent claiming control over children that God has given to the family
- B. Civil Society and its importance in God’s ordering of societies
 1. Abraham Kuyper and his idea of sphere sovereignty. Definition: There are various areas or “spheres” in society, and institutions in each of those spheres have a God-given autonomy (or sovereignty) to act free from inappropriate governmental intrusion and dictates. Important examples are the family and the church.
 2. Pope Leo XIII and his idea of subsidiarity. Definition: Society is made up of higher (larger, more inclusive) institutions and lower (smaller, less inclusive) institutions. Society should first turn to lower institutions (such as the family and local churches or nonprofit agencies) to meet societal needs and only turn to higher institutions (such as

state or national governments) when the lower entities are unable to meet a certain need.

3. Both stressed the existence of institutions between the individual and society-wide government that are a part of God's will for society and have God-intended roles to play.
- C. This idea of the importance of civil society in God's ordering of society is neither a liberal nor a conservative idea. Sometimes it will support liberal and sometimes conservative public policies.

Questions for Discussion

Questions for Discussion from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. What are some civil society institutions or organizations of which you are a part?
Follow-ups: [If people are having trouble coming up with examples, suggest some obvious possibilities.] All of you are part of a family, right? How many of you are members of a church? Do any of you have kids in a soccer league or in Little League baseball? Or do any of you belong to a service club? Or do any of you give money to or help as a volunteer at a nonprofit social service agency?
2. What are some examples of tasks or responsibilities God has given these civil society institutions and organizations of which you are a part? *Follow-up:* What are the responsibilities God has given parents and families? [Or take other concrete examples.]
3. Do the ideas of civil society, sphere sovereignty, and subsidiarity lead to liberal or to conservative public policy positions? *Follow-up:* In the video John DiIulio at the end says both conservatives and liberals are not completely happy with subsidiarity. Why exactly is this?

Additional Questions for Discussion:

1. If, for example, there is a nonprofit, faith-based drug-treatment center in your city, what are some ways that public policies might undercut or interfere with the good work it is doing? What are some ways it could strengthen and reinforce the work it is doing?
2. What is an example of a need or problem in your community that you think can be handled by individuals or local, grass-roots organizations? And what is an example of a need or problem in your community that you think can only be handled by the state or even the national government? *Follow-up:* If the group has trouble coming up with examples that only government can deal with, suggest something that requires area-wide action (such as flood control projects or the provision of water resources) or that is affected by the national economy (such as corporations moving jobs overseas or a national recession).

Chapter 6: Church and State

The Central Idea: Justice requires public policies to treat people of all faiths and of none in an evenhanded, equal manner. (This is sometimes also called equal access.) Christians should work for this, not for special advantages for themselves and Christianity.

Outline:

- A. Examples of two church-state controversies:
 - 1. The placing of a stone monument of the Ten Commandments in the Alabama state court building.
 - 2. The University of Virginia's refusal to fund a Christian student publication.
- B. Justice and solidarity
 - 1. Justice means governments should treat all persons, and all faiths, impartially.
 - 2. Solidarity means we should be concerned for our religious rights, but also for those of Jews, Muslims, and unbelievers.
 - 3. These lead to the conclusion that the University of Virginia should fund the Christian student publication on an equal basis with the secular student publications.
- C. Judge Michael McConnell supporting equal access.
- D. Another church-state controversy: prayer in public schools. Are three possibilities:
 - 1. Teacher-led prayers.
 - 2. A moment of silence at the start of the school day.
 - 3. Student-led prayers during non-school hours.

Questions for Discussion

Questions for Discussion from the End of the Video Chapter:

- 1. Do you support the government's display of Christian symbols, such as the Ten Commandments? How do justice for all and solidarity enter into your position? *Follow-up:* Would your position differ if our nation had a majority Muslim population and most of the religious symbols that would be on public display were Muslim symbols?
- 2. Do you favor:
 - teacher-led prayers in public schools?
 - a moment of silence at the start of school days?
 - allowing religious clubs to meet in public schools during non-school hours?

Follow-up: Urge persons to defend their positions on the basis of justice for all, solidarity, and equal access (equal treatment).

An Additional Question for Discussion:

1. Do you believe justice and solidarity demand that we as Christians work for equal access or equal treatment for all religions and for unbelievers? Or do you think Christians should have certain special recognitions and privileges?

Chapter 4: Life Issues

The Central Idea: Biblical principles teach that human life is precious and must be protected, when necessary by public policies. They also teach that persons and families facing crisis pregnancies or severe disabilities or illness deserve our help, again when necessary by public policies.

Outline:

- A. Two examples of threats to human life.
 1. Diane Coleman of “Not Dead Yet” and active or passive euthanasia.
 2. Rebecca and abortion.
- B. The sanctity of human life is fundamental and public policies should protect it.
- C. But that is only half of the story: Public policies should also offer help to those experiencing problem pregnancies or disabilities and severe, life-threatening illnesses.
- D. What public policies should we pursue?
 1. Sphere sovereignty, subsidiarity, and civil society suggest families, churches, and nonprofit organizations have a large role to play.
 2. But government with its financial resources may also be needed.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. Do biblical principles oppose abortion and assisted suicide, and—in equal measure—support giving help to those in crisis pregnancies or who are severely disabled? *Follow-up:* Do you think our first priority should be to work against abortion and assisted suicide laws and to provide help to those in crisis pregnancies or the disabled as we are able?
2. In giving help to mothers or to the dying or disabled who have chosen life, how much should government do and how much should individuals, churches, and nonprofit

organizations do? *Follow-ups:* Does it have to be one or the other? Do government *and* individuals, churches, and nonprofit organizations perhaps have roles to play?

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. As long as our nation's laws permit abortions, can you think of ways in which we can encourage women experiencing crisis pregnancies to "chose life" over abortion?
2. Does the sanctity of life mean we should always use all possible means to prolong the life of someone who has a terminal illness? Or does there come a time when we should end medical efforts to prolong life?

Chapter 8: Poverty

The Central Idea: Christians are commanded—in keeping with solidarity—to be concerned about and to help the poor. In deciding how to live out this command, justice means that both the poor and society have duties. Also, both civil society and public policies have major roles to play.

Outline:

- A. An example of poverty overcome.
 1. Patti Holden's story of moving from poverty to self-supporting employment through government help.
 2. But not all of the poor are as deserving as she was.
 3. We ought not to lump all poor people into one category.
- B. God commands us to be concerned for and to care for the poor, but this leaves many questions how we are to live out this concern today.
- C. The Old Testament gleaning laws suggest that justice means that both those with much and those without have certain responsibilities.
 1. Those with much and society as a whole have a responsibility to offer help and training to the poor.
 2. The poor have a responsibility to take advantage of the opportunities they are provided to become self-supporting.
- D. A remaining question: Should the help to the poor that justice demands best be given directly by government or by individuals and nonprofit agencies?
 1. The example of Arloa Sutter and Breakthrough Urban Ministries in Chicago
 2. Sometimes government and nonprofit agencies working together is the best answer
 3. This is civil society and subsidiarity in action

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. What do the gleaning laws of the Old Testament say about our responsibilities to the poor and the poor's responsibilities to us and society as a whole? *Follow-ups:* Why do you think the Bible did not instruct the Israelite farmers to harvest their crops completely and then simply give some of them to the poor? In what way were both solidarity and justice satisfied by these laws?
2. Should the government or Christian and other nonprofit organizations have the larger role in combating poverty? *Follow-ups:* How do you react to Breakthrough Urban Ministries in Chicago which receives 80% of its funds from private donations and 20% from government sources? Do you see this as a good model, or do you have problems with it? Under what conditions do you think we should rely largely on the government and when largely on nonprofit organizations to give needed training and help to the poor?

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think Christians in the United States are sufficiently concerned about the poor? Are they obeying the clear commands of Scripture to be concerned for the poor? Or do these commands somehow no longer apply to us today?
2. Many persons in the United States today are poor because they engaged in wrong, self-defeating behavior at one time in their lives. What do you think this says about our responsibility as Christians to offer assistance to them?

Chapter 9: Caring for God's Creation

The Central Idea: God created and upholds the earth and we are given the task, as stewards, to develop and use it in a careful, respectful way. Doing so is in keeping with solidarity and justice. Individual action is important, but public policies are essential. In deciding which public policies to support we must recognize there typically are trade-offs.

Outline:

- A. The "What Would Jesus Drive" campaign.
- B. God takes a delight in his creation and cares deeply about it.
- C. Justice and solidarity require that all of God's creatures receive what is due them and that we care for how our actions towards the environment affect others.
- D. The seriousness of not caring for the creation.

1. It affects the health of many and even causes the death of some.
 2. It leads to the extinction of species God has created.
 3. Global warming has huge potential consequences for harm.
- E. Public policies are often needed to stop the destruction of the creation, since our individual actions have a very limited effect.
- F. But crafting just public policies is not easy: Often in the short run there will be trade-offs between protecting the creation and the loss of jobs, higher prices for goods, or higher taxes.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. How does being a steward or caretaker of the creation differ from using the creation purely for one's own enrichment or pleasure? *Follow-ups:* A biblical view holds that God has given us the creation for our use and enjoyment, but not for us to exploit and destroy. How can one tell on what side of this dividing line a contemplated action lies? On what side of this line does driving a large SUV fall when you could get by with driving a smaller, more fuel-efficient car?
2. Do you favor more protections for the creation, even if it means some persons may lose their jobs, some things we buy might cost more, or some taxes might go up? *Follow-up:* Are there things we as a society can do to reduce the burden of lost jobs or higher prices that might fall largely on some persons?

Additional Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you agree that any one person's making changes in his or her lifestyle will, by itself, have very little effect on the environment? But does this make these changes unimportant? What does this say about efforts to influence the environmental policies our government adopts?
2. The consequences of global climate change are not fully known, yet if we wait until they are fully known it will be too late to do much about them. In light of this uncertainty what do you think the principles of justice and solidarity say about our duty towards those persons who are most likely to be hurt by global climate change?

Chapter 9: Violations of Human Rights

The Central Idea: There is widespread religious persecution and slavery in the world today, and solidarity and justice demand that Christians be concerned. Christians are already doing much, but there remain key questions concerning the type of public policies we should urge our government to pursue.

Outline:

- A. Pastor Getaneh: An example of religious persecution.
- B. Religious persecution, often directed at Christians, is common around the world.
- C. Sex trafficking in women and young girls who are held as slaves in brothels is also common.
- D. Christian responsibilities.
 - 1. Christians, as citizens of a country with worldwide influence, has a responsibility to be concerned and to act.
 - 2. American evangelicals played an important role in the passage of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act.
- E. But public policy questions remain.
 - 1. The proper role of the American government versus the proper role of nonprofit, often Christian, nonprofit agencies.
 - 2. The use of threats and pressure versus building bridges and persuasion.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

- 1. Do you identify with the suffering of Christians being killed for their faith and young girls being forced into prostitution and held against their wills? Or are such problems so far removed from your everyday experience that you find it hard to identify with them? How *should* you feel? *Follow-up:* Does the fact that those suffering these violations of their God-given human rights live thousands of miles from us make a difference in our level of concern? *Should* it?
- 2. Should our government work to stop religious persecution and present-day slavery by threats and pressure or by encouraging contacts with other countries and then working for gradual change? *Follow-ups:* Which of these approaches do you think is more likely to be effective? Is there a moral problem in allowing religious persecution and sex slavery to go on in a certain country, perhaps for years, while our nation continues to trade with that country and pursues a policy of gradual persuasion and change?

Additional Discussion Questions:

- 1. Some persons believe that the United States ought not—as they put it—to be a moral busybody going all over the world trying to right every wrong we see. We have enough wrongs in our own country that need correcting. Others believe that with the enormous worldwide influence God has given us, we have an obligation to use that influence to try

to right especially serious human rights abuses. Which side do you tend to favor? Which side do you think is more biblical? Why?

2. Can there ever be such great evils being carried out by another government that the United States is justified in using military force to put a stop to those evils? If so, what are some situations where you think military force would be justified on biblical grounds?

Chapter 11: Africa

The Central Idea: The church is growing rapidly in Africa, yet Africa is facing tremendous problems, including HIV/AIDS, other diseases, and poverty. American Christians have a duty to do what they can to help. The most effective approach is likely to consist of actions by private nonprofit organizations and the American government working together.

Outline:

- A. The enormous growth of Christianity in Africa.
- B. The enormous problems of disease and poverty in Africa: The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in many African countries—about 2 million dying each year from AIDS.
- C. But there is also hope for Africa.
 1. Africa also has many human and natural resources.
 2. Christ is active and working in Africa.
- D. President Bush’s PEPFAR [the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] initiative to combat HIV/AIDS.
 1. Peter Okaalet and MAP International as an example of a faith-based agency and the US government working together.
 2. The example of Rick Warren and his calls for the church to be involved.
- E. These are examples of the vital role civil society can and should play in meeting African needs—they involve civil society organizations and the US government working together. This is subsidiarity in action.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. Does solidarity say American Christians have a special duty to respond to the needs of Africa? *Follow-up:* Is your answer influenced by the enormous growth of Christianity in Africa? Is it influenced by the great needs of Africa?

2. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes if the additional money largely went to on-the-ground, faith-based programs that were helping to save lives in Africa? *Follow-up:* What if the money was going to be spent directly by the American government for its own aid and relief programs?

Additional Discussion Questions

1. As persons become aware of the many problems Africa is facing, they can react by despairing of their ever being able to make difference. Do you tend to react this way? *Follow-ups:* Try to think of some ways you can perhaps make a difference. Think in terms of what you can do both as an individual Christian and as a citizen of the United States.
2. American Christians, and especially evangelicals, played a key role in encouraging President Bush to propose and Congress to pass PEPFAR. What does this suggest to you about the potential for us Christians, working through our government, to have an influence for good in our world?

Chapter 12: War and Terrorism

The Central Idea: To understand the struggle against militant, violent terrorist movements we need to understand the role of sin in the world and in ourselves. Justice means that the American government has a right and duty to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks. But in doing so it must itself not act unjustly.

Outline:

- A. Terrorist attacks: 9/11, Bali, Madrid, and London and American responses in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- B. These attacks demonstrate the reality of sin and evil in our world.
- C. Government's God-given role of pursuing justice forms the basis for using deadly force against terrorists.
- D. But the American government should place and observe certain limits on itself as it fights against terrorism.
 1. The example of President Bush and his sweeping statements after 9/11—were these appropriate in light of biblical insights?
 2. Since Christians do not need to fear death as others do, we are in a position to urge the American government to put certain limits on what it will do in its fight against terrorists. We ought not to act out of a spirit of hatred and vengeance.

Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions from the End of the Video Chapter:

1. Even terrorists, such as Osama bin Laden are created in the image of God. How should that fact affect how our country fights against them? *Follow-ups:* Should our attitudes and motives be affected? Is it OK to act on the basis of hate and vengeance? What dangers do we run if we act on the basis of hate and vengeance?
2. In fighting against terror, what are some examples of means that our country ought not to use because doing so would be unjust? Is the use of torture one such means we ought never to use? *Follow-ups:* Would it be OK for us to imprison a hundred people, only a few of whom are probably terrorists, if we are unable to determine who the terrorists are? If we observe limits, aren't we fighting terrorists with one hand tied behind our backs and putting innocent people at risk?

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think President Bush was wrong to describe our war on terror after 9/11 in very sweeping terms (“ridding the world of evil” and stopping “every terrorist group of global reach”)? Are there dangers a country runs when it thinks in such sweeping terms?
2. Forgiveness is a Christian virtue. How do you think it would change the world situation, if it would be more faithfully followed by us as Christian citizens, our nation, and other nations?