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A Flourishing Kingdom: Rev. Dr. Don Davis and Ministry Among the Poor

Kaitlin Burden
Taylor University

Hank Voss
Taylor University, hank_voss@taylor.edu

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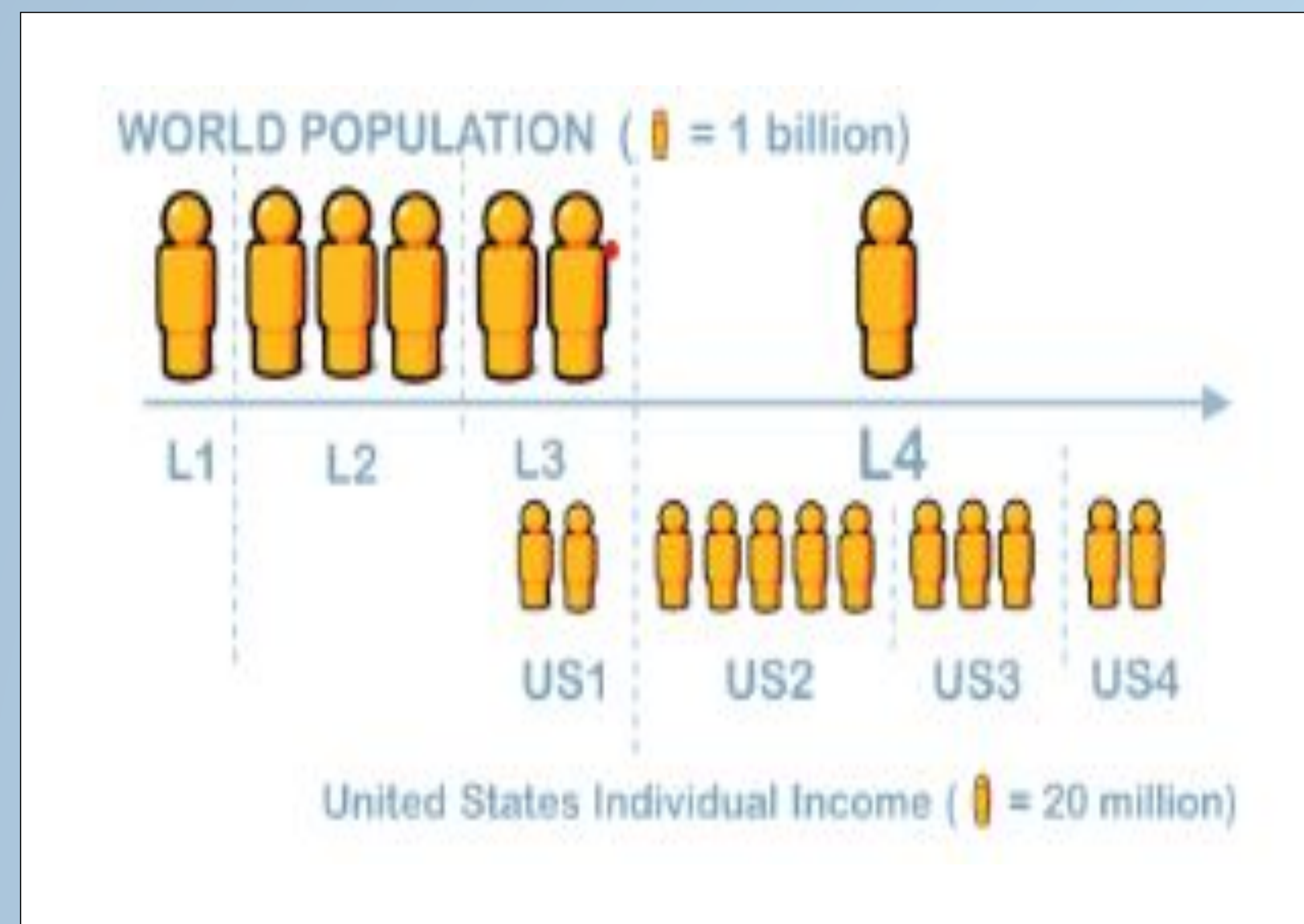
A Flourishing Kingdom: Rev. Dr. Don Davis and Ministry Among the Poor

Kaitlin Burden and Dr. Hank Voss

Taylor University



Background

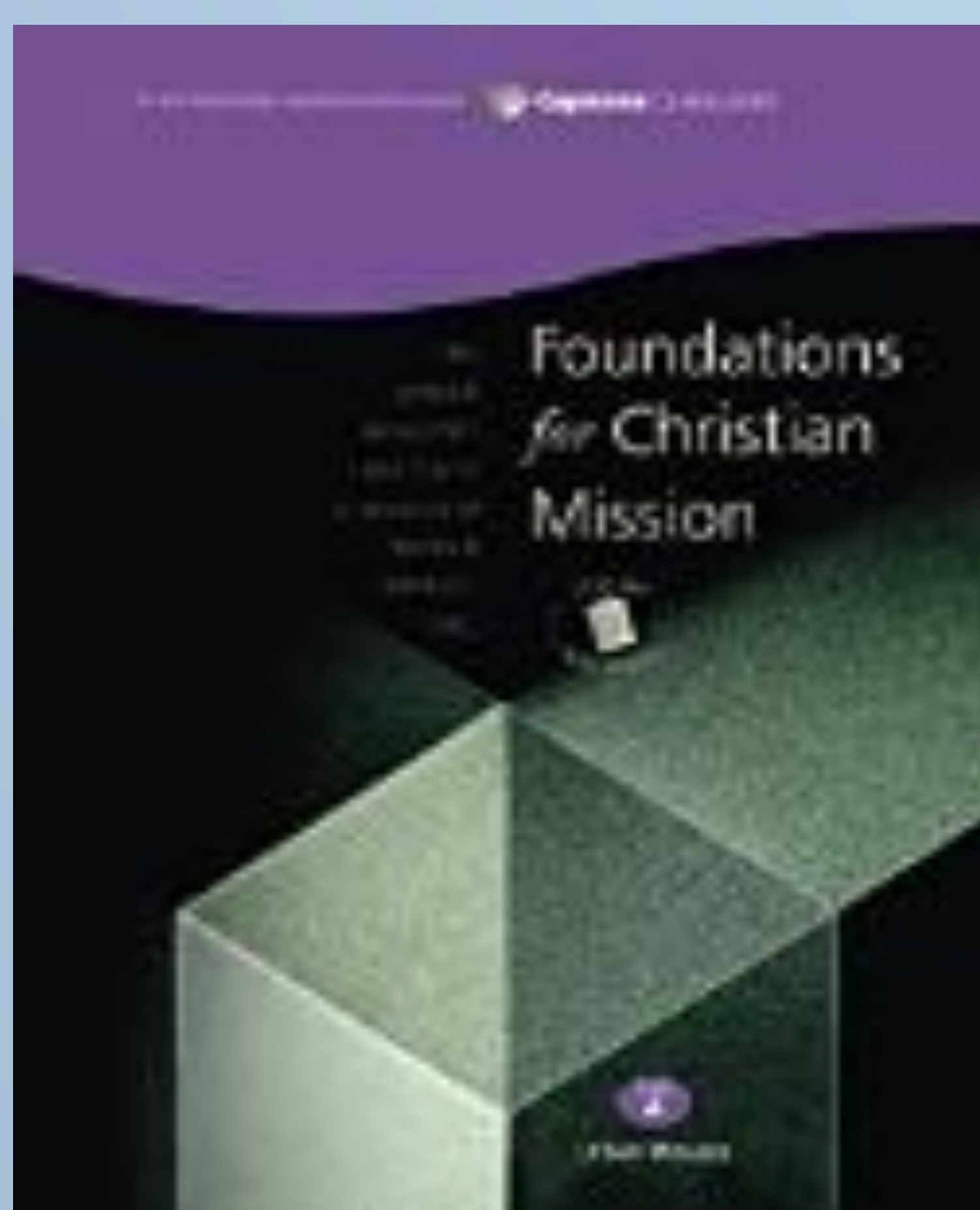


Global Poverty:

- **L1** – 1 billion people live in extreme poverty (less than \$2 per day)
- **L2** – 3 billion people live on anywhere between \$4 - \$8 per day
- **L3** – 2 billion people live on \$8-\$32 per day
- **L4** – 1 billion people have \$32+ per day

U.S. Poverty:

- **US1** is L3 anywhere else in the world (less than \$10,000 per year).
- Majority of those living in US are considered “wealthy” in global context.



Barriers Facing Congregational Leadership among the Poor

- **Class** – “Wealth-as-Requisite for Leadership Training.” God has deemed the poor as “rich in faith” (James 2:5), “for theirs is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20). A person’s class should not prevent education.
- **Culture** – “Invisible Middle-Class Cultural Hegemony.” When ministering to poor, urban communities, the middle-class norms and expectations should not be the standard. What one church needs may be very different than what another church needs. If we project our “overly-abstract, expensive, and culturally-distant models” into urban communities, a curriculum is likely to be irrelevant (Davis).
- **Church-Amnesia** – Davis believes the local church should be viewed as an embassy of God’s kingdom. TUMI celebrates the centrality of the church and its indispensable role in Christian leadership development.
- **Content** – “Programming Irrelevance and Impotence.” Curriculum for leaders working among the poor must be contextually relevant but also biblically sound and faithful to the Great Tradition (as expressed in the Nicene Creed).
- **Commission** – “Non-Entrepreneurial Investment.” Davis emphasizes “equipping people for ministry” rather than “covering the intellectual ground” of the latest cultural fads (Davis).

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- Snow, Nathanael. “Poverty in a North American Context.” Sacred Roots White Paper 3. November 2021. Accessed: 9 Jan 2023.
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Definition

Rev. Dr. Don Davis defines the poor theologically as: “those whose need makes them desperate enough to rely on God alone.”

Our Response

1. The poor are to be treated with absolute respect.
2. The poor are to receive love, compassion, and justice. God’s people will be held responsible for demonstrating love, compassion, and justice.
3. The poor should hear the good news of the gospel. As adopted children of God, they are called to be witnesses of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.
4. The poor are expected to do great things. They are especially the ones God has chosen to bring shalom and the flourishing of the kingdom to the world.

Rev. Dr. Don Davis

