

## Reversing Corruption

Eddy Ekmekji, [ydekmekji@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ydekmekji@sbcglobal.net)

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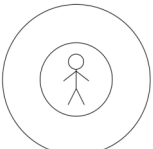
### Context

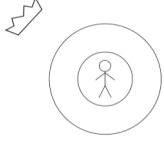
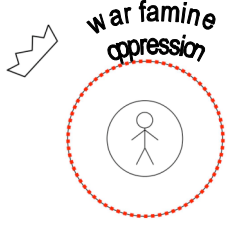
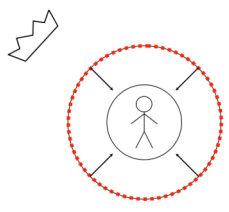
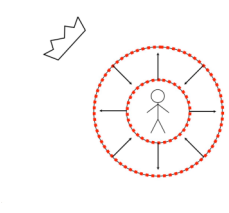
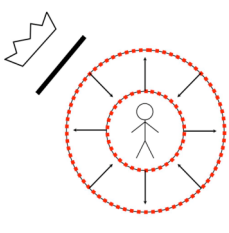
Since *No Ordinary People* at UCLA in January 2007, I spent some time reflecting on the lessons learned, particularly through York Moore's training at the beginning of the week. Until this past year, much of my gospel presentation used the Bridge Diagram as the illustration, partly because that was the only tool that I knew. I have experimented some using the Circles Diagram (developed by James Chung) and I like the way it incorporates God's heart to empower people to partner with Jesus in bringing transformation to the world. It's not just about crossing the line (which the Bridge Diagram seems to do), but also about being an agent of change in our world.

One of my reflections from York's training is how he communicates our sin that keeps us from God. He calls people to know Jesus "whose blood is the antibody for our sick souls". York has learned how to tell God's story through the story of justice. He tells the story of Jesus through the lens of justice. He called people to change the world by first knowing Jesus.

In developing the "Reversing Corruption" diagram, I was looking for ways to communicate the gospel and teach students to communicate the gospel by (1) expressing God's heart to change the world and (2) that we need Jesus to bring healing to our sick souls.

### Walking through the diagram

	This is a representation of us and our sphere(s) of influence...
	...The outer circle represents the world that we live in...
	... The crown is a representation of God's realm. So we have this picture of God's world, our world, and our

	<p>sphere of influence. God created humans and the world to be a reflection of who he is. God created the world for us to live in harmony with one another and with God...</p>
	<p>... How would we describe our world? The squiggly line or the red dots illustrate our broken world. Whether it is war, famine, poverty, conflicts, oppression, or injustice, we live in a fallen, broken, and corrupt world...</p>
	<p>... The corrupt world we live in affects us and our sphere(s). The arrows show the way we are affected by the corruption of the world. People who live in war zones, are displaced, injured or killed. People who live in polluted areas develop asthma. We do not live in a vacuum...</p>
	<p>... We and our spheres are corrupted by the brokenness of the world. Our hearts reflect the brokenness of the world. Just as a corrupt world corrupts people. Corrupt people contribute to a corrupt world. Corrupt people contribute to polluting our environment, starting wars and oppressing people. Our behaviors reflect our corrupt hearts...</p>
	<p>... God had intended us to live in harmony with one another and with him. Yet our corruption prevents us from doing that. It prevents us from living in harmony with one another and to live in harmony with God. God's presence is good and holy. There is a separation between a corrupt humanity and a perfect and holy God. The line represents that separation...</p>

<p>The diagram shows a stick figure inside a circle with radial lines. Three purple arrows point from the figure towards the text 'church charity sex drugs' located above the circle. A jagged line is drawn across the top left of the circle.</p>	<p>... Though we are corrupt, we want harmony. There are many way that people try to find harmony with one another and with God. Some people think that by going to church more will help them be good people and connect to God. Some people will be involved in charities either to do good by God or others. And others will seek various addictive behaviors (drugs, sex) to alleviate pain and seek harmony with others and with God. Ultimately, none of those things will connect us to God because it does nothing to address our corrupt hearts...</p>
<p>The diagram shows a stick figure inside a circle with radial lines. A black cross is drawn over the top left of the circle, and a jagged line is drawn across the top left of the circle.</p>	<p>... Though we fail to reach God, God succeeds in reaching us. By coming into our world in the form of Jesus, he bridges the separation between us and God. Jesus came into the world, to bring healing to our corrupt world. God is at work in our world to transform the world...</p>
<p>The diagram shows a stick figure inside a circle with radial lines. A black cross is drawn over the top left of the circle, and a jagged line is drawn across the top left of the circle.</p>	<p>... Just as Jesus brings transformation into a corrupt world, he offers healing to our corrupt and broken hearts, bringing transformation to our lives. Jesus' death on the cross (shown on the diagram) is the antidote for our corrupt world and our corrupt heart. We have the choice to receive Jesus into our lives and our sphere and to bring healing. The pencil is in our hands and we have the choice to extend Jesus' reach into our world.</p> <p>Jesus is bringing transformation into the world. Just as corrupt people contribute to a corrupt world, transformed people contribute to a transformed world. We are transformed and healed by Jesus to offer the same hope to a corrupt world.</p>
	<p><b>(Implied) Challenge Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you want to receive Jesus' healing into your life and your sphere?</li> <li>• If Jesus has brought transformation into your world, do you see yourself empowered to partner with Jesus to bring transformation to the world?</li> </ul>

*\* There can be several starting points for this diagram. One does not have to start the way it is stated above.*

## **Stories**

This diagram will be strengthened by sharing a couple of stories that embody this kind of process of conversion. Biblically, I think of the story of Zacchaeus, who has an experience with Jesus in Luke 19, which then empowers him to be a blessing to his community.

Second, sharing stories throughout the diagram of how we have been corrupted and are contributing to corruption, will bring the point home that we are in need of a savior.

Third, stories of Christians at work bringing transformation around the world will give people a tangible look about how when we are transformed, we contribute toward transformation. Stories of the work of The International Justice Mission (IJM)--a fantastic organization that embodies this theme—can illustrate well how God brings healing to us to be agents of change in the world around us.

## **Themes**

I have noticed that this particular diagram stresses several theological or Biblical themes, including:

- **Blessed to be a blessing:** Abraham is called by God. His relationship with God would eventually become a blessing to the people of Israel and beyond. God brings transformation in our lives so that we would be a transforming agent in the lives of others.
- **The Grace of God:** God is at work in our world, bringing healing and transformation. God initiates transformation. We respond to God's grace. As the Apostle Paul writes, "... while we were still sinners..."
- **God's heart for the world:** God is not only concerned about personal relationships, but he is at work to redeem the whole world. All of creation is groaning for God's redemption. And in Revelation, we see the fantastic picture of creation redeemed.

## **Conclusions**

No diagram will ever capture the gospel fully. In fact, this and all other diagrams are tools that should help us along in our witness and in loving people, not the end-all presentation. My hope is that this diagram would be another tool in our belt that empowers us to illustrate the gospel in a way that makes sense to non-believers. As witness happens in our relationships, we will have a clearer sense of which tool to use and when to use it.