

BULGARIAN FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM: SHIFTING THE BURDEN
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Introduction

Baba “Svetla”¹ lives with a dilemma. She is 79 years old and her husband died in 2003. Baba Svetla now lives alone with her dog in a modest apartment in Sofia, Bulgaria. After having worked for 38 years as an accountant for a bank and twelve additional years doing freelance accounting for various other companies, Svetla now receives a slightly above average pension. Baba Svetla maintains a very tight budget. The following chart is a comparison of Baba Svetla’s pension and expenses;

<u>Item</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Currency</u>	<u>Dollars²</u>	<u>Annual</u>
Pension	Monthly	150.00	Leva	\$ 100.00	\$1,200.00
<u>Expenses</u>					
Food	Monthly	200.00	Leva	\$ 133.33	\$1,600.00
Electricity	Monthly	12.00	Leva	\$ 8.00	\$ 96.00
Telephone	Monthly	10.00	Leva	\$ 6.67	\$ 80.00
Medicine ³	Monthly	12.00	Leva	\$ 8.00	\$ 96.00
Heat	Monthly	40.00	Leva	\$ 26.67	\$ 320.00
Total Expenses	Monthly	274.00	Leva	\$ 182.67	\$2,192.00

Living very frugally, Baba Svetla’s expenses are over 180% of her pension. Baba Svetla’s pension verses expenses chart illustrates the fact that it is not possible for a widow to live in Sofia, Bulgaria with a pension as the sole source of income.

Baba Svetla, however, is one of the fortunate ones. A cousin in Vienna sends her 100 Euros (\$130.00 or 195 Leva) regularly and a niece in London sends 50 Euros (\$65.00 or 93 Leva) regularly. Even with this assistance, it is very difficult for Baba Svetla to make ends meet. Because she cannot afford everything she needs, in the winter months Baba Svetla is forced to choose between having heat in her apartment or having enough

¹ Baba (Grandmother) Svetla has been a member of Church of the Nazarene since 1995 but her name has been changed for this article. The information about Baba Svetla was gathered through two personal interviews; the first conducted on December 17, 2006, and the second on February 21, 2007. Baba Svetla has given permission to include these details in this article, however the name substitution was adopted to reduce any possible repercussions.

² Based on a Leva to Dollar exchange rate of 1.5 to 1.

³ Baba Svetla is a borderline diabetic and is currently taking Bulgarian medicine to treat the ailment.

food. Svetla has chosen to turn off all the heat⁴ in her apartment, but she is still required to pay for the heat that radiates from the pipes that go through her apartment to heat the apartments above her. As she gets older, Svetla is facing the inevitable need for more medicine. She will soon have a more difficult dilemma; to buy needed medicine or to buy enough food.

Baba Svetla's story is not uncommon. Thousands of Bulgarian pensioners live with similar dilemmas. 72%⁵ of the attendees of Sofia 1st Church of the Nazarene are pensioners, and 42% exist on a monthly income equal to or less than Baba Svetla's pension of 150 Leva. Below is a chart of the available data on the average monthly pension in Bulgaria from 2000 to 2005.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Pension</u> ⁶	<u>Currency</u>	<u>July 1 rate</u> ⁷	<u>Dollars</u>
2000	86.00	Leva	2.0635	\$ 41.68
2001	n/a	Leva	2.295	n/a
2002	n/a	Leva	1.9751	n/a
2003	110.00	Leva	1.7042	\$ 64.27
2004	127.00	Leva	1.6128	\$ 78.75
2005	133.00	Leva	1.61746	\$ 82.23

In July of 2006, the Bulgarian Ministry of Labor announced a change in the process for calculating the rate of pensions. As of Jan. 1, 2007, the minimum social pension for the elderly was fixed at 45% of the official poverty line.⁸ The situation for pensioners living on a fixed pension set by the political leaders is only worsening. The rate of inflation in Bulgaria has been brisk. Below is a chart of the rate of inflation in Bulgaria from 2000 to 2006;

⁴ Sofia, Bulgaria has a centralized heating system (hot water) which is generated in several regions across the city and piped into apartments across the city.

⁵ Statistics taken from the Questionnaire conducted for the Sofia 1st Congregational analysis conducted in December 2006.

⁶ Taken from various articles from Novinite.com: Sofia News Agency. <http://www.novinite.com>. (accessed March 3, 2007).

⁷ Leva to dollar exchange rates taken from FX Converter, <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>. (accessed March 4, 2007).

⁸ Sofia Echo English Newspaper, "Bulgaria to Change Pension System," July 11, 2006.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rate of Inflation⁹</u>	<u>Adjusted Pension</u>
2000	10.3	86.00
2001	7.4	94.86
2002	5.8	101.88
2003 ¹⁰	5.6	107.79
2004	6.0	113.82
2005	5.0	120.65
2006	6.5	126.68
		134.92

The column “Adjusted Pension” displays that in real terms of purchasing power, Bulgarian pensions have not increased since 2000. After taking into account the rate of inflation, the purchasing power of the average pension of 86 Leva in 2000, is basically the same as the purchasing power of the 2005 average pension of 133 Leva. Furthermore, it is widely anticipated that Bulgaria’s January 1, 2007 entrance into the European Union will accelerate the rise of consumer prices at a faster pace than the rise of salaries and pensions. This is already beginning to be felt across Bulgaria.

Unfortunately, Bulgaria’s pensioners are casualties of the collapse of communism and of the rough transition to a free market, capitalist economy. Under the communist system, life was safe and secure. A person knew that they would have a job, a place to live, enough food, heat in the cold months, adequate health care with needed medicines, and free university education. The communist, state controlled, fixed economy, however, could not compete with the capitalist, market driven economy of the western world. In 1989, communism suddenly fell, and “freedom” came to Eastern Europe. The new freedoms brought new opportunities for unrestricted travel, private ownership of property, the chance to start a business with the possibility to acquire personal wealth, etc. Because of rampant government corruption, however, the fruit of these benefits are restricted to the privileged few. As Bulgaria makes the shift from communism to capitalism, wealth is lining the pockets of corrupt officials instead of building infrastructure in the country and establishing a safety net to help those who are unable to meet the basic necessities of their lives. For Bulgarian pensioners, safety and security is a thing of the past. For the current generation of pensioners the opportunities of new freedom are out of grasp. The stark reality is that to be a pensioner in Bulgaria is to live

⁹ Compiled from two sources. Data from 2000 – 2002 taken from http://www.worldwide-tax.com/bulgaria/bul_inflation.asp. (accessed March 4, 2007). Data from 2003 to 2006 taken from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3236.htm#econ>. (accessed March 4, 2007). Having lived in Bulgaria for the duration of this data, it would seem that the official inflation figures are quite conservative and understated.

¹⁰ The two sources for the report disagree on the inflation rate for 2003. The higher and more likely figure was used from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3236.htm#econ>. The inflation rate from http://www.worldwide-tax.com/bulgaria/bul_inflation.asp was 2.3%.

in poverty. As of January 1, 2007, the Bulgaria government fixed the official poverty line at 152 Leva per month.¹¹ This figure is above the average pension in Bulgaria.

It is no mystery, then, that there is a strong nostalgia among the pensioners for the days of communism. Every Thursday since the end of November 2006, pensioners have peacefully protested in the streets in front of government buildings.¹² As of mid February, the protests have grown in Sofia to 1,500 protesters. There are smaller, weekly protests in seven other cities across Bulgaria.¹³ Ironically, while the younger generations emigrate to other countries for higher paying jobs, the political power of the pensioners who stay in Bulgaria grows. This is a major factor which explains why the former communist party in Bulgaria currently has the largest voting block in Parliament. The President and Prime Minister are also former communists.

A few years after the fall of communism in the early 1990s, my wife and I had the privilege of living and ministering in Moscow, Russia. We were intrigued to learn about life under the communist Russia of five years earlier. After developing a close relationship with Vera, a sweet middle-aged Russian lady, Teanna and I asked Vera to compare her life at that time with her life under communism. Vera smiled, her eyes sparkled, and she said, “My sweet Jay and Teannichka, for me and my family, there is no difference. My daughter Natasha loves bananas. In the days of Communism we rarely had bananas. Suddenly, bananas would appear without notice in the store. So I stood in line for hours to buy as many bananas as I could carry. And for a week or so, my Natasha would enjoy bananas. Now, in this new day, we see bananas everyday, on every street corner. But since they are so expensive I cannot afford to buy them very often. So the result for our family is the same; my Natasha rarely has bananas.”¹⁴

Into this amazing part of the world, and into this incredible time of history, into these complicated real-life dilemmas, the Church of the Nazarene is called to minister. The strategy of the Church of the Nazarene in Eastern Europe has not been to enter with high profile evangelistic campaigns. Instead, the strategy of the church has emphasized the development of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries programs to meet existing needs. This approach has been very successful in establishing credibility both with Eastern European governments as well as with the common people. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries – Bulgaria has intentionally tried to adhere to James 1:27, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after widows and orphans in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”¹⁵ According to this

¹¹ Sofia Echo English Newspaper. “Poverty Line for Bulgaria Determined,” December 15, 2006.

¹² Novinite.com: Sofia News Agency. “Bulgaria’s Elderly: There is Enough Money for Higher Pensions,” February 28, 2007.

¹³ Novinite.com: Sofia News Agency. “Yet Another Pensioners’ Protest in Bulgaria,” March 2, 2007.

¹⁴ Personal interview with Vera Podragova, c. 1995.

¹⁵ New International Version.

verse, the two arms of pure religion in God's sight are; looking after orphans and widows in their distress (i.e. Nazarene Compassionate Ministry programs), and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world (i.e. living, preaching, and teaching a life of holiness).

In an attempt to step into the distress of the widows of Bulgaria and the dilemmas which they face, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries – Bulgaria created a food distribution program. In order to prevent participants from developing a dependency on the program, it was decided that food would be distributed only during the cold months (October through April) during which food cannot be grown, and during which participants are burdened with the extra cost of heating. Individual donors as well as Sunday school classes funded the program. Local municipalities provided lists of names of the people in greatest need in the targeted neighborhoods. After applications were received and home visits conducted, applicants were accepted into the program. Every month the participants in the program receive around 20 Leva (\$13.00) worth of staple foods (rice, macaroni, flour, eggs, cheese, oil, sausage, beans, and sugar). In December, participants also receive oranges and an extra chicken for their Christmas celebration. The program concludes each April and restarts the following October with mainly the same participants. The program has been running since 1995, expanding to five centers across Bulgaria, serving over 120 people.

Reflective Observation

The response of the Church of the Nazarene to the problem of poverty in Bulgaria accomplishes something positive. People who do not have enough food are fed, and needs are met. However, the fact that year after year the same people participate in the food distribution program prompts one to question whether anything has changed. Has anything been transformed through the food distribution program? People are still unable to meet the basic necessities of their lives. Are they better off now than they were before they entered the food distribution program?

The wisdom of Peter Senge in *The Fifth Discipline* sheds light on these questions. Senge points out that, “today’s problems come from yesterdays ‘solutions’.”¹⁶ Past solutions evolve into new problems. Senge further notes, “Solutions that merely shift problems from one part of a system to another often go undetected because . . . those who ‘solved’ the first problem are different from those who inherit the new problem.”¹⁷

Senge’s assertion is clearly displayed by plugging the Bulgarian food distribution program into Senge’s “Shifting the Burden” archetype.¹⁸ (See Appendix 1). The top blue circle represents the Bulgarian Food Distribution program as it has existed for the past twelve years. This circle is a one year cycle; people need food, donors are found, food is distributed from October through April, there is a summer break (delay), and the

¹⁶ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁸ Senge, 103-112.

cycle resumes again. This approach treats the outer symptom of people not having enough food, but does not touch the underlying problem causing the outward symptom. Each year the program includes basically the same participants.

The bottom green circle proposes a possible change in the approach to the problem. Instead of treating the outer symptom of lack of food, the bottom green circle attempts to address the underlying problem of poverty. The first step is to research what options are available and what possibilities exist. Are there organizations already effectively addressing the issue of poverty in Bulgaria? Is it possible for us to join with them, or do we need to begin the process from the beginning? After researching these possibilities, we will seek to partner with an existing organization or establish a new micro business seed project. After an ample time period, the new venture will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the program in addressing the issue of poverty. If the program seems to be viable and effective, we will seek to expand it. If it is not, we will study ways to make it so.

Most troubling, however, is the large yellow circle to the right of the diagram. Both the blue and the green circles are actually stations on the yellow circle. The blue and the green circles affect each other. The longer the blue circle functions, the more difficult it will be to transition to the green circle. After treating the symptom for so long, it will be harder to respond to the underlying problem. People who have been receiving food for several years will be less willing to transition to a program which requires them to work to earn money for their own food.

Senge's "Shifting the Burden" archetype is a visual illustration of the old adage, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will have food for a lifetime." The problem with the food distribution program is that we have not empowered people to fish for themselves. We have not helped them develop the economic tools which will help them meet the basic necessities of their lives. What we have been doing for the last twelve years is giving out fish.

Jesus, of course, literally did give out fish in the great stories of the feeding of the five thousand¹⁹ and the feeding of the four thousand.²⁰ In both of these events Jesus responded to the immediate need of the people. Having enjoyed being with Jesus as long as they could, the crowd of people simply ran out of food. The difference between the biblical accounts and the modern day dilemmas of Bulgaria pensioners is that Jesus was not addressing long term poverty, but rather responding to an immediate need.

The early New Testament church, however, did indeed have a food distribution program.²¹ Most likely, the New Testament program was an outflow of the sense of commonality among the early Christians of Acts 2, "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone has

¹⁹ Mark 6:32-44

²⁰ Mark 8:1-9

²¹ See Acts 6:1-6

he had need.”²² We are introduced to the New Testament food distribution program because of a problem that developed; the Greek speaking widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Beyond this, Scripture gives little detail about the program. Unfortunately, we are unable to interview the seven Spirit-filled, wise men who were given the responsibility to run the program. How long had the program been running? What were the pluses and minuses of the program? Did unhealthy dependencies develop over time? Did they eventually transition the program to deal with the underlying problem of poverty? Would they agree with Senge that yesterday’s solutions can become today’s problems? We simply do not know. We cannot take this passage as a biblical imperative to begin food distribution programs. We are called, however, to look after the widows and orphans in their distress.²³

John Wesley, of course, had much to contribute to the discussion of how to deal with poverty. Wesley defined the poor as those who lacked the basic necessities of life.²⁴ He understood the necessities of life to be “sufficient food, decent apparel, and proper housing.”²⁵ Anyone who had more than these necessities, according to Wesley, was rich.²⁶ Because of this, Wesley personally committed to not enjoy the comforts of life while others did not have the necessities.²⁷ This led him to challenge the Methodists to “gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.”²⁸ Unfortunately, Wesley’s effort to establish this radical economic principle on a wide scale did not succeed.

For Wesley, ministry to the poor was connected to identification with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Paul Chilcote notes the Eastern Fathers’ influence on Wesley through Wesley’s discussion of the incarnation of Christ, “He intentionally immersed himself in the hurting places of humanity. He sought out those who were least and last and lost. He became what we are (as the great fathers and mothers of the early church would say) in order that we might become what he is. He took onto himself all the brokenness and fullness of life as we know it, with all of its joys and triumphs, with all of its pain and defeat. He lived out God’s solidarity with us all.”²⁹ We are called to continue the incarnation of Christ by identifying with the poor and marginalized.

Wesley employed several approaches to dealing with the issue of poverty. As early as 1741, Methodists were asked to give a penny a week to a fund for the relief of

²² Acts 2:44-45

²³ James 1:27

²⁴ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Poor and the People Called Methodists.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁹ Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesleys’ Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 108.

the poor and weak.³⁰ Wesley set up a small cottage industry in knitting for “the women who desired to work and establish a method for visiting the sick.”³¹ The idea of lending stock was developed to “enable the poor to acquire for themselves the tools and materials to develop their own businesses.”³² He was also an advocate for free health care for the poor.³³ Wesley dealt with the systemic causes of poverty; the distilling business, the emergence of big farm policies, and high taxation to support wasteful government spending, to name a few.³⁴ This also included protesting against concrete forms of injustice.³⁵ Heitzenrater summarizes Wesley’s concern for the poor as “the hallmark of the Methodist movement.”³⁶ Theodore Jennings compliments this, saying, “Solidarity with the poor is not one program among others, however important, but is the norm of all activity of the people called Methodists, of those who seek to embody scriptural Christianity.”³⁷

Wesley emphasized the value and necessity of direct, personal involvement with the poor. Jennings captures the importance of visiting the poor for Wesley, saying, “Apart from this practice of visitation, no real experience of the plight of the poor is possible. Without it, the nerve of compassion is cut and the possibility of a pertinent and transforming praxis is lost.”³⁸ Jennings continues quoting Wesley, “it is far better ‘to carry relief to the poor, than to send it’ not for their sake but also because this was ‘far more apt to soften our heart, and to make us naturally care for each other’ (Journal, Nov. 24, 1760, III:28).”³⁹ Jennings further explains, “thus the practice of visitation was directly necessary for developing the sort of compassion that, for Wesley, was the heart of true religion. . . [visitation of the poor] was a means of grace to be ranked alongside private and public prayer or the sacraments themselves (“On Zeal” VII:60).”⁴⁰

Why did Wesley elevate visitation of the poor to such a high level? In visiting the poor, we, more than the poor themselves, are opened to transforming grace. Jennings summarized, “In visiting the marginalized, we invite them to transform us, to transform

³⁰ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 128.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Theodore W. Jennings Jr., *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 61.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 68.

³⁵ Ibid., 71.

³⁶ Heitzenrater, *The Poor and the People Called Methodists,* 27.

³⁷ Jennings, 66.

³⁸ Ibid., 53.

³⁹ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

our hearts, to transform our understanding, to transform us into instruments of divine mercy and grace.”⁴¹

This brief reflective observation helps us understand that in order to bring about lasting transformational change, we must begin to address the underlying problem of poverty in Bulgaria. The best way to accomplish this may be through partnering with other organizations who address the issue of poverty in Bulgaria, and by being directly involved in helping those who do not have the economic means to meet their basic necessities of life.

Intervention

The Bulgarian Food Distribution Program is a program of the Bulgarian Nazarene Church led by the District Advisory Board. The above writing reflects the thought process that has been occurring in my mind after having been exposed to the course material. The District leaders have not had that same exposure. I suspect, however, that the board members may have similar concerns to varying degrees.

The first logical step of intervention, therefore, is to explore the existing mental models among the District Advisory Board concerning the program. Certainly everyone on the board is not at the same point in their thinking and understanding of the program. To discover these mental models, I would like to employ a brief questionnaire at the next District Advisory Board meeting scheduled for April 14, 2007. (See Appendix 2). Gaining a better understanding of these functioning mental models will be helpful in knowing how to proceed with the analysis of the food distribution program.

The second step of intervention is to review the current food distribution program with the District Advisory Board using a lightened-down version of Senge’s “Shifting the Burden” archetype. Specifically, several questions will be discussed; do the participants enter the program the second or third year better off than they were when they entered the program initially? Why or why not? Is there a deeper issue or problem that prevents the participants from meeting their basic necessities? Are there ways that we can address these deeper issues to empower them to be able to provide for the needs in their lives? What do the members of the board think about Wesley’s insistence on the necessity of personal, direct involvement with the poor? How can each of us identify ourselves more with the poor?

The third step of intervention, then, is to explore the possibilities of a micro business seed project. Many of the ladies in the program have the ability to sew, knit, and make crafts. There are three options that I am aware of in Bulgaria and the board members could add to this list. What the board decides to do could include any or all of the following options.

The first micro business option is to partner with the Ten Senses Company currently functioning in Bulgaria. This organization was begun in 2005 as a result of the

⁴¹ Ibid., 57 – 58.

collaboration between a few evangelical denominations.⁴² Ten Senses is a branch of the international free trade organization Integra. As such, Ten Senses seeks to create opportunities for economically disadvantaged providers in an attempt to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.⁴³ Ten Senses works directly with disadvantaged producers across Bulgaria and provides a direct market for their products at their shop in the center of Sofia.⁴⁴ The producers are given a “fair price” for their products. Ten Senses has the goal of using the profits of the shop, after covering business expenses, to fund humanitarian projects across Bulgaria including an orphanage in Gorna Banya. Unfortunately, though, Ten Senses has not yet been able to generate enough revenue to cover its business costs. The company is willing to work with more disadvantaged producers across Bulgaria. The people in the food distribution program would be eligible to participate in this venture if they were able to produce quality items that would sell.⁴⁵

The second option for a micro business seed project is to partner with the Traditzia foundation. Traditzia began as an idea of the former British Ambassador to Bulgaria (1998-2001), Mr. Richard Stagg and his wife, Mrs. Arabella Stagg. On October 19, 2001, Traditzia was inaugurated by HRH Prince Andrew, the Duke of York.⁴⁶ Traditzia’s mission is “to stimulate and support the continuous, sustainable development of social institutions established for the care of the socially excluded and disadvantaged, especially the young, and artisans working in remote rural locations by providing them with direct access for their goods to a market place previously inaccessible to them highlighting Bulgarian culture and skills in the arts and crafts.”⁴⁷ The foundation works directly with over 400 producers from across Bulgaria, 70% of which are artisans and 30% of which are socially excluded and disadvantaged.⁴⁸ The producers’ products are displayed and sold at Traditzia’s shop in the center of Sofia.⁴⁹ Traditzia has been financially viable, but has experienced a sales downturn in recent months. Traditzia is open to working with new producers. To be considered, products must be submitted to a committee which determines the market possibilities for the products.⁵⁰

⁴² The evangelical churches which collaborated to form the Ten Senses Foundation were an independent charismatic church named Blagavest (Good News) and a portion of the Baptist Union.

⁴³ “*Fair Trade: a good bargain for all.*” Pamphlet distributed by the Ten Senses Company, 2007.

⁴⁴ The Ten Senses Company is located at 41 Fritior Nansen, Sofia, Bulgaria 1000.

⁴⁵ Personal interview with Ralitsa Ivanova on March 5, 2007.

⁴⁶ “*Traditzia: Bulgarian Crafts.*” Pamphlet distributed by the Traditzia Foundation, 2007, 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Personal interview with Ekaterina Petrova conducted on March 5, 2007.

⁴⁹ The Traditzia Foundation is located at 36 Vasil Levski Blvd., Sofia, Bulgaria 1142.

⁵⁰ Personal interview with Ekaterina Petrova conducted on March 5, 2007.

The two options above are attractive because we could join with an existing organization and avoid the hassle of starting from nothing. Partnering with either of the above organizations would involve minimal risk and little or no overhead costs.

The third micro business seed project option is to enter the flattened world. It remains to be seen, however, if the world has flattened enough for Bulgarian pensioners to participate and benefit. This option would put up a web page on the Internet with pictures of all the craft items and solicit purchase orders. Items could also be available in each of our present locations for Work and Witness teams and the other numerous guests.

After discussing the available options, the fourth step of intervention is for the Bulgarian District Advisory Board to vote on a plan of action. Assignments for further research will be given out along with a date to report back to the entire board on the information gathered.

The final step of intervention is to implement the action determined by the advisory board. The target date for the beginning of the new program would be in the fall of 2007, after we return to Bulgaria from home assignment.

Projected Application/Limitations/New Learning

I expect the District Advisory Board will agree with the logic that Senge's "Shifting the Burden" archetype suggests; we must deal with the underlying problem of poverty and not just the outer symptom of lack of food. However, I anticipate that the board will not want to disband the food distribution program completely. I suspect that they will want to add the micro business seed project to the existing program. I anticipate that the District Advisory Board will want to do all the options listed. The most attractive option will be to partner with the Ten Senses organization because this will give us the opportunity to work closely with other evangelical denominations.

The attempt to deal with the underlying issue of poverty through a micro business seed project does have its limitations. The first is predicted by Senge's "Shifting the Burden" archetype. The top blue circle has been in process for twelve years. After such a long period of treating the outer symptom of lack of food, I do not think the current participants in the program will be willing to shift to the bottom green circle process. Some of the participants do not have the skills needed to produce items that would sell. For them to participate, they will require new training. It is doubtful that people in their seventies will be open to the idea of new training or working to acquire a new skill.

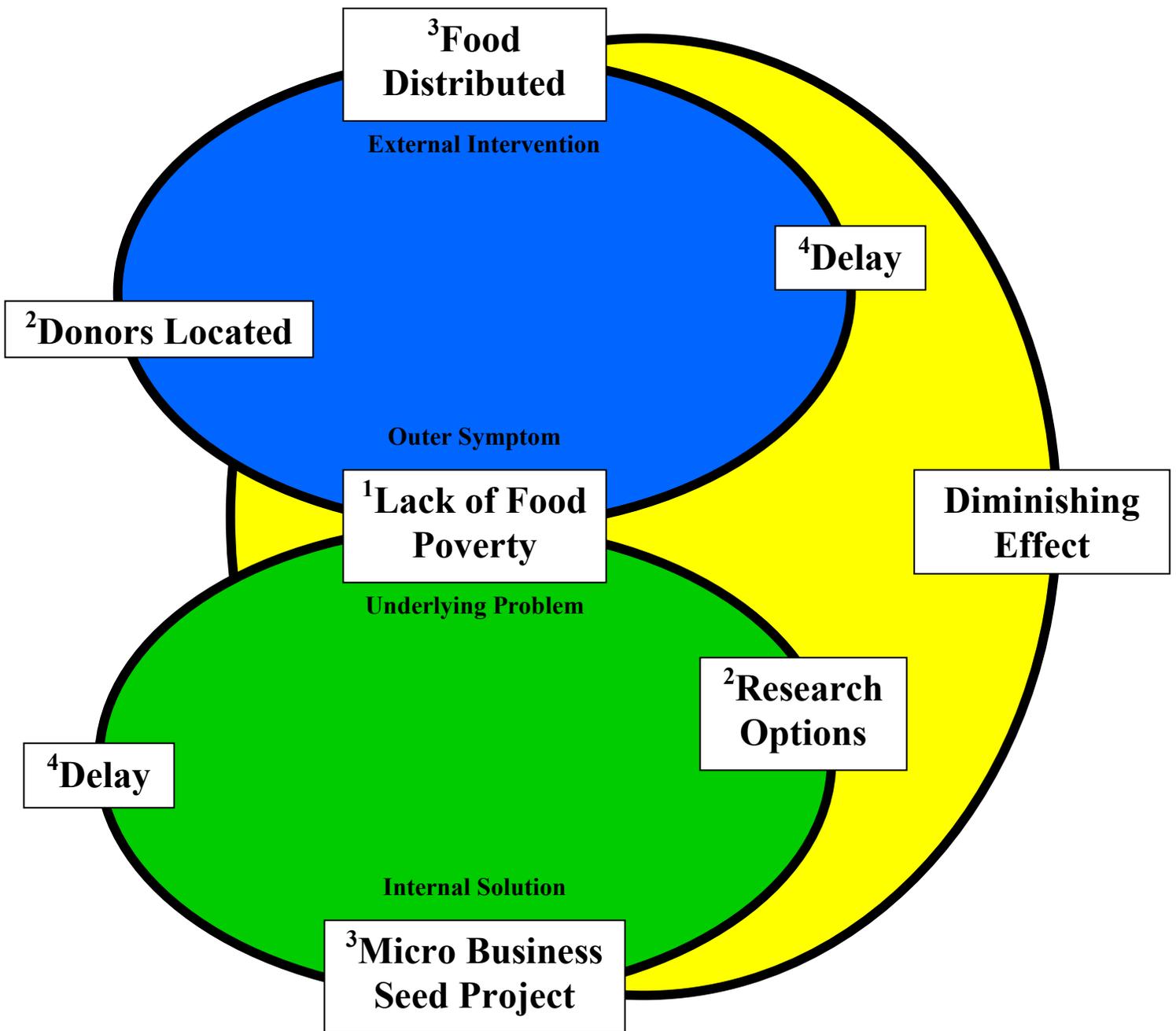
Another limitation is a personal one. I am not a business person and I am hesitant to lead our people into a business venture. This is outside my gifting and calling. Fortunately though, some of the micro business options do not require much business savvy. For the more involved business ventures, it would be necessary to locate a gifted Bulgarian or a NIVS to lead the program.

A third limitation is our current legal presence in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Church of the Nazarene currently is registered as Bulgarian humanitarian foundation as well as a denomination. Neither of these registrations gives us the legal right to conduct business in Bulgaria. It may be necessary to register a new entity for this purpose. The red tape and cost involved may be sufficient enough to make this option impractical.

A final important question remains; what new learning has come through this process? Senge's "Shifting the Burden" archetype clearly and powerfully displays the danger of long term food distribution programs. Continuing a program for an extended period of time can be counter productive. The program treats the outer symptom of lack of food and never touches the underlying problem of poverty. Transformation does not take place.

I was also struck by Wesley's strong argument for the necessity of direct, personal involvement with the poor. We have drifted away from this practice and we need to get back on track. We have missed out on a powerful avenue of transforming grace.

Finally, what will all this mean for Baba Svetla? Because of her age, it may be too late for her. The lessons we have learned from the mistakes and successes of ministering to Baba Svetla, however, will help us become more effective in ministering to the Baba Svetlas to come.



The Bulgarian Food Distribution Program seen through Senge's "Shifting the Burden" Archetype

Appendix 2

**Bulgarian District Advisory Board Questionnaire
Views on the Food Distribution Program**

1. What is your involvement in the Bulgarian Food Distribution Program?

- Very involved.
- Occasionally involved.
- None.

Explain:

2. From your perspective, how effective is the Bulgarian Food Distribution Program?

- Highly effective.
- Somewhat effective.
- Not effective.

Explain:

3. How has the Bulgarian Food Distribution Program affected the lives of the recipients?

- High impact
- Moderate impact
- Little or no impact

Explain:

4. How has the Bulgarian Food Distribution Program affected the lives of those who distribute the food?

- High impact
- Moderate impact
- Little or no impact

Explain:

5. What would you like to see happen with the Bulgarian Food Distribution Program in the future?

- Keep it as it is
- Keep it as it is but expand it to include more people
- Replace the current program with a different program
- Keep the program as it is and begin a new program
- Discontinue the program
- Other:

Explain:

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