

# Book Review

# Social Analysis for the 21st Century

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Cimperman writes “Social Analysis: for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action” as an updated version of Joe Holland and Peter Henriot’s version of “Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice” or as it is commonly referred to as the little green book. Ironically, I am

reading the little green book for a course called Urban Community and Worldview Analysis. Thus giving plenty exposure to the ideology of the Pastoral circle. Generally, the model is used to identify the issues within a community, assess the impact this issue may have on the people residing in the neighborhood and develop a strategic plan to rectify the issue at hand.

The author's main purpose for writing the book is to elaborate on the Holland and Henriot model while simultaneously expressing the need for applying the framework of social analysis towards our lives, personally and within ministry. The text simplifies the methods used to resolve issues and effectively create systems that impact reform. She seems anchored in her work. She is offering additions to a pre-existing model that equips the individual or group to address ethical and social issues within the community.

Pastoral spiral is a system based on social analysis that includes sociological, economical, political, cultural, environmental and religious components. These steps are key within the *action* portion of the framework. "This book explores seeing, analyzing, reflecting, and responding toward the -more- that we sense God wants for the world through the process of what is known as the "pastoral spiral" (Cimperman, Location 328).

In a nutshell, God has called everyone to servanthood. Yet, here we are provided with a model that promotes structure. John 14:12 states, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. As new creatures in Christ we are his successors. Called to shift current injustices and do more with the time we have here on earth.*

She stresses that fact that foundational analysis is to identify the why of the what. In other words, the essence of good analysis is centered on the root of the issue. Not the resulting factors of an issue. Sociological analysis breaks down the study of behaviors based on the beginning and developmental stages while examining the effects of structures that support injustice. One must ask questions to identify the people who are involved. This includes those who are directly or indirectly affected. Plus, those who are in authority to make changes to the systems.

Economically, the model identifies the funds available. It's purpose is to paint a contrast among resources versus the issue at hand. Political analysis stems from the sociological sector that identifies those in authority. It questions the types of power and dynamics that are at play. Knowing this is essential because it will reveal the reason for the problem and possibilities to address any injustices. Cimperman speaks about the inclusion of culture. The beauty of culture is that it is filled with traditions, foods, shared language, shared values and morals that impact the way a person thinks. Family culture influences us. Mainly due to the fact that it is the first form of culture that we are exposed to.

Cimperman speaks about the impact of geographical location. Yet she seems void labeling or identifying the various subcultures among cultures. Such as communities that have mixed cultures, is intergenerational in which people are born and the demographics of the area in which a person was born or raised.

The way culture is portrayed via television, social media and the internet. Environmental analysis examines the availability of natural resources such as water, population and air quality. Religious analysis provides a moral standard on how moral concerns are addressed. As

ambassadors of Christ people must search the scriptures to know what God says about what God says about the issue. This is an asset to do the work of the Lord on earth.

In conclusion, a person must take an aerial point of view when assessing the different components of the pastoral spiral. Once a person is aware of the issue they must hear the concerns of the people who are oppressed and will experience the reform. It is imperative to hear the concerns of the people and have them take part in the changes happening within their community.

For example if the Biblical theme is based on poverty, compassion, and oppression. How would a person identify what God says regarding these themes? Theologically, God's word tells us to operate from a place of purity and have good intentions. Don't do anything with an alternative motive. A person should serve others as they serve God. James 1:27 can be applied. It states, *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* Formation concerning its urban context would be viewing the accessibility of resources and linkages to other networks available to the public.

### **Works Cited**

1. Social Analysis: for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action, published by Orbis Books, 2015 by: Maria Cimperman.

2. The Hebrew Bible: John 14:12, James 1:27