

# City



**STARVED.** A man begs for food on the side of the road.  
Picture: Stock.xchng.



**POVERTY.** Slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Picture: Stock.xchng.

## Source for reconciliation

**MISSION:** UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S COMMITMENT TO COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING

» **Robert Calderisi** explores how the Catholic church has aided in world development.

**Genevieve Vieira**

**W**hen commissioned to write a book about the Catholic Church and world development, Robert Calderisi was incognizant to the correlation.

"Why put the two together?" he asked himself. The Catholic Church is possibly the most controversial organisation in the world. Frustrated by its obstinacy on matters like clerical celibacy, the role of women, and birth control, as well as child abuse, with 1.2 million members, it is also the largest and most influential.

Delving in, Calderisi, a committed but critical Catholic, travelled through Africa, Asia and Latin America, talking to cardinals, nuns, priests, and no least, critics. In his exploration, and not overlooking the church's myriad

sins, he began to uncover the radical role the church has played in global development over the last 60 years, predominately in the developing world.

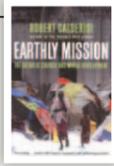
Expecting to find people who would denounce the church, he was surprised by the role faith leaders played in people's lives. Calderisi weighs the church's missteps against its positive contributions, looking back as far as the Spanish Conquest in Latin America and the arrival of missionaries in Africa and Asia, indicating that "The Catholic Church has probably lifted more people out of poverty than any other organisation in history."

An economist and writer, Calderisi has over 30 years of experience in international development. He is the author of best-selling *The Trouble With Africa* and has lectured widely on Africa, development and foreign aid.

His findings expressed in the book, *Earthly Mission*, couldn't have come at a more opportune time. With the election of Pope Francis and his proclamation for the elite to care and serve the poor, *Earthly Mission* is a fascinating description of what this should mean. He draws on stories

**Conversation starter**

**Earthly Mission: The Catholic Church and World Development**  
Commentary



★★★★★

**Author:** Robert Calderisi  
**Publisher:** Yale University Press  
**ISBN:** 9780300175127

*Earthly Mission* does not make for easy reading. It addresses some chilling issues in light of the Catholic church, exploring the tensions and paradoxes within. It has some inspiring stories and statistics, others less so. It is an eye-opener, which is likely to create debate among people who are interested in what's happening in the world. – Genevieve Vieira.

from his interviews with people around the globe, as well as some statistics, stating that "I wanted to demonstrate what I had uncovered, rather than just assert it.

The stories I share in this book remind us that the church is in fact human."

"There are two sides to the Catholic coin," he says, "and this requires an open mind." Though many will find his criticism unsettling, his praise will be similarly discomfoting. Finding a balance, Calderisi shows that organised religion still serves a purpose. While the church has a top-down structure, it also has a commitment to collective well-being and an openness to work with those concerned.

Highlighting situations where the church has used its vast resources, in terms of education, basic services and medical aid, to generate real change in the lives of the poor, Calderisi aims to promote reconciliation. In fact, he points out that the Catholic church spends most of its money and services to assist non-Catholics and is responsible for distributing at least one third of all anti-retro virals in the world.

Though a book about the Catholic church, Calderisi says, "It is for the general reader, all faiths and none."

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**CD SOUNDS**  
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**Similar structures**

**The Graeme Watkins Project – Soldier On**  
Dance Rock



★★★★★

**Released by:** Sheer  
**Tracks:** 11

This new project from a band that is always impressive live confirms two things: they continue to set the bar high in terms of their musicality; and they have a tendency to release groups of songs in minor keys and with similar structures, which makes for a somewhat same-y listening experience. *Fight When We're Young* is an immediate stand-out, improving on the formula practised with so much success by *Thirty Seconds To Mars* in the US, and *Stand Here By Myself* is a potential club anthem. The beats used throughout confirm that this is music made to be danced to, and on that score, the Graeme Watkins Project always delivers. – Bruce Dennill

**Retrospective**

**Vineyard UK Worship – Come Now Is The Time: The Platinum Collection**  
Worship



★★★★★

**Released by:** Christian Art  
**Tracks:** 30

The Vineyard church movement has been a leader in producing new contemporary worship since the Seventies, but at the end of the Nineties, there was a sudden spike in inspiration which saw the writing of songs now regarded as foundations of modern worship, including *Come Now Is The Time To Worship*; *Hungry (Falling On My Knees)*; *Humble King*; *Lord Reign In Me*; *Hallelujah (Your Love Is Amazing)*; *Surrender and All Whow Are Thirsty*. Between the turn of the century and now, there have been other great songs written, which have not caught on to the same extent but which are no less pleasant to listen to. This is a pleasing listen and an excellent resource. – Bruce Dennill