

Dr. Brian Fikkert

Guest Speaker

CITYSERVE

The First Step in Poverty Alleviation



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**2.6 billion
people live
on less than
\$2/day.**

approximately 40% of the world's population

**1.4 billion
people live
on less than
\$1/day.**



The poverty rate in the U.S. is the highest in 50 years.



The average North American is one of the richest people ever to walk the face of the earth.



I John 3 : 17-18

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.



Exercise

Imagine it is fifteen months after the earthquake in Haiti, and you want to give money to help with the rebuilding of the country. You begin to conduct research to find the best organization to which you will give your money.

What are some questions you would like answered about the potential organizations before you give a donation?



What is Poverty?



Most Americans define poverty in material terms:

Lack of money

Lack of food

Lack of housing

Lack of healthcare



How We Define the Cause of Poverty Determines the Solutions We Propose

The Cause of Poverty

Lack of knowledge

Oppression by powerful people

Personal sins of the poor

Lack of Material Things

Proposed Solution

Education

Work for social justice

Evangelism and discipleship

Greater access to material things



Moldova

For a poor person everything is terrible illness, humiliation, shame. We are cripples; we are afraid of everything; we depend on everyone. No one needs us. We are like garbage that everyone wants to get rid of.

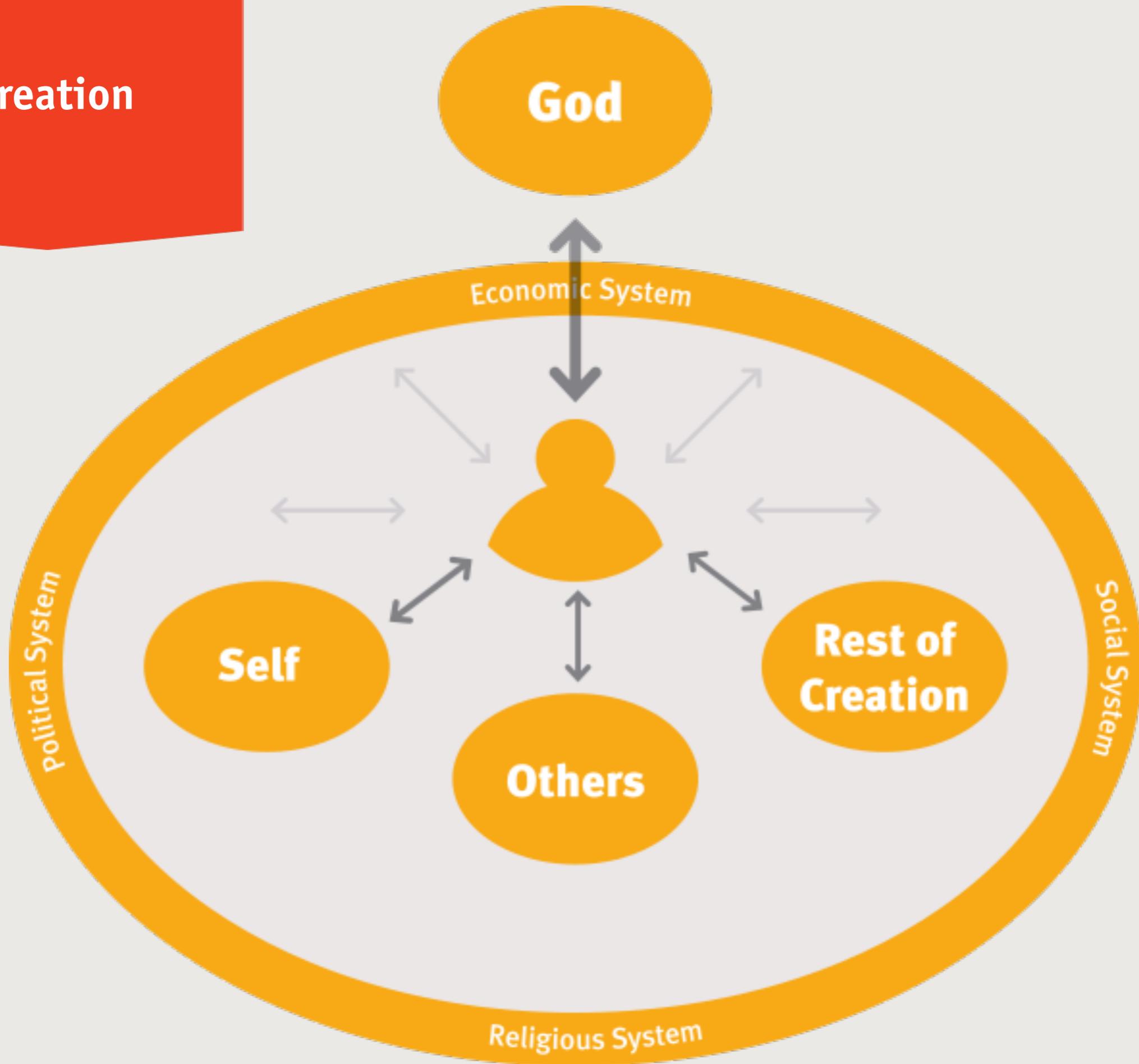


United States

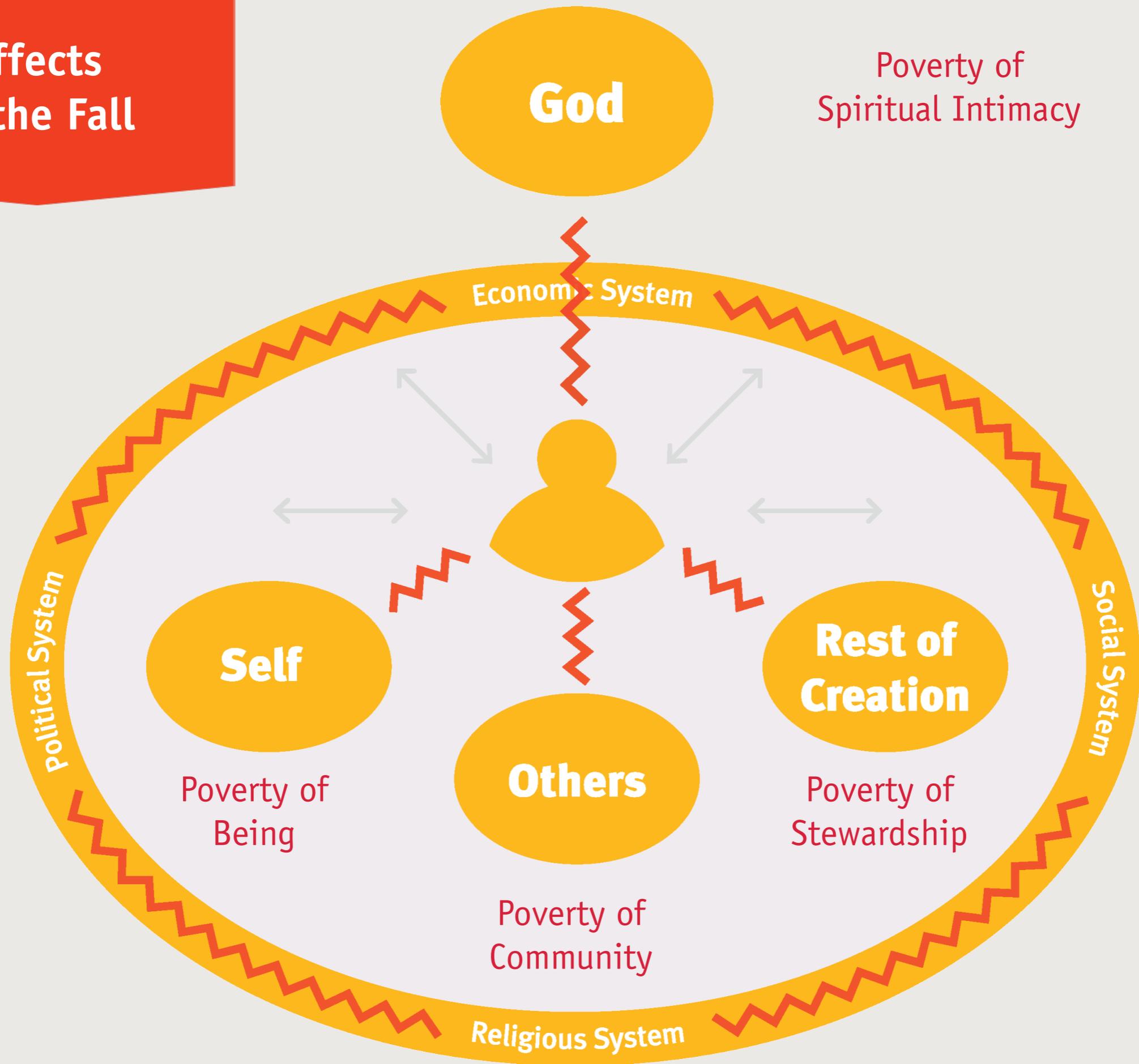
The most basic issue now facing black America [is]: *the nihilistic threat to its very existence*. This threat is not simply a matter of relative economic deprivation and political powerlessness...It is primarily a question of speaking to the profound sense of psychological depression, personal worthlessness, and social despair so widespread in black America

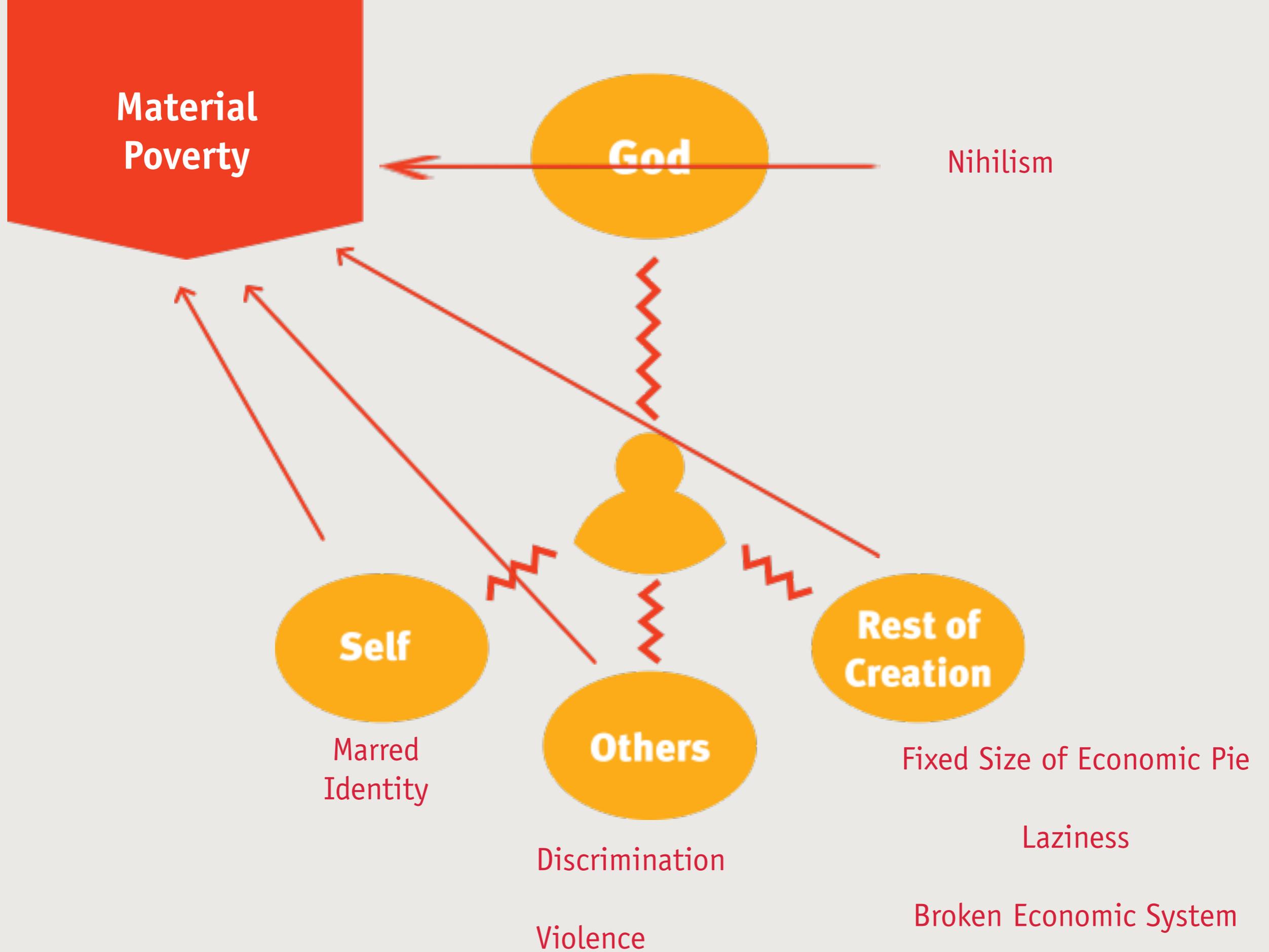
Cornel West in Race Matters

Creation



Effects of the Fall





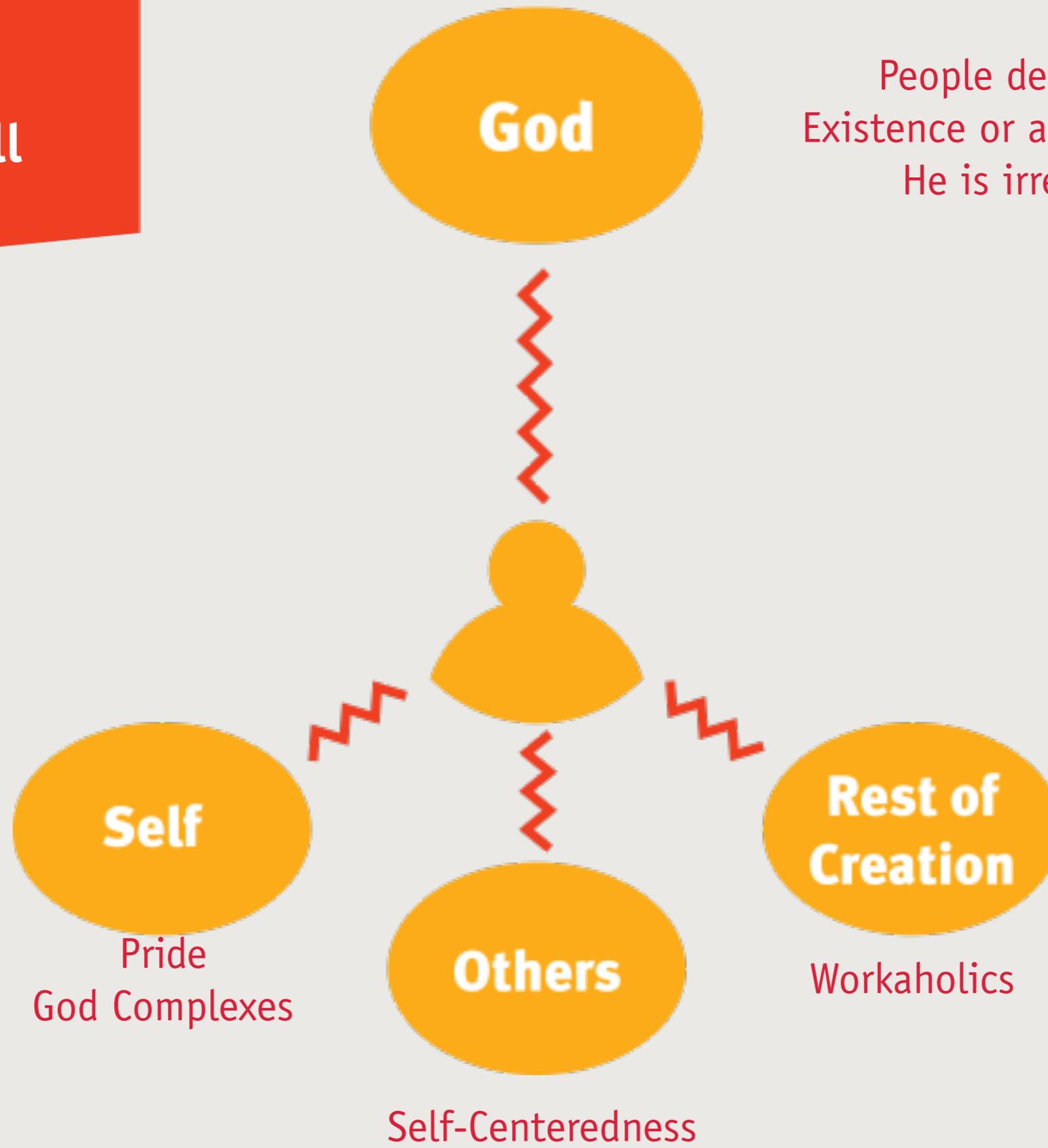


What is Poverty?

“Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable.”

Bryant Myers in *Walking With the Poor*, page 86.

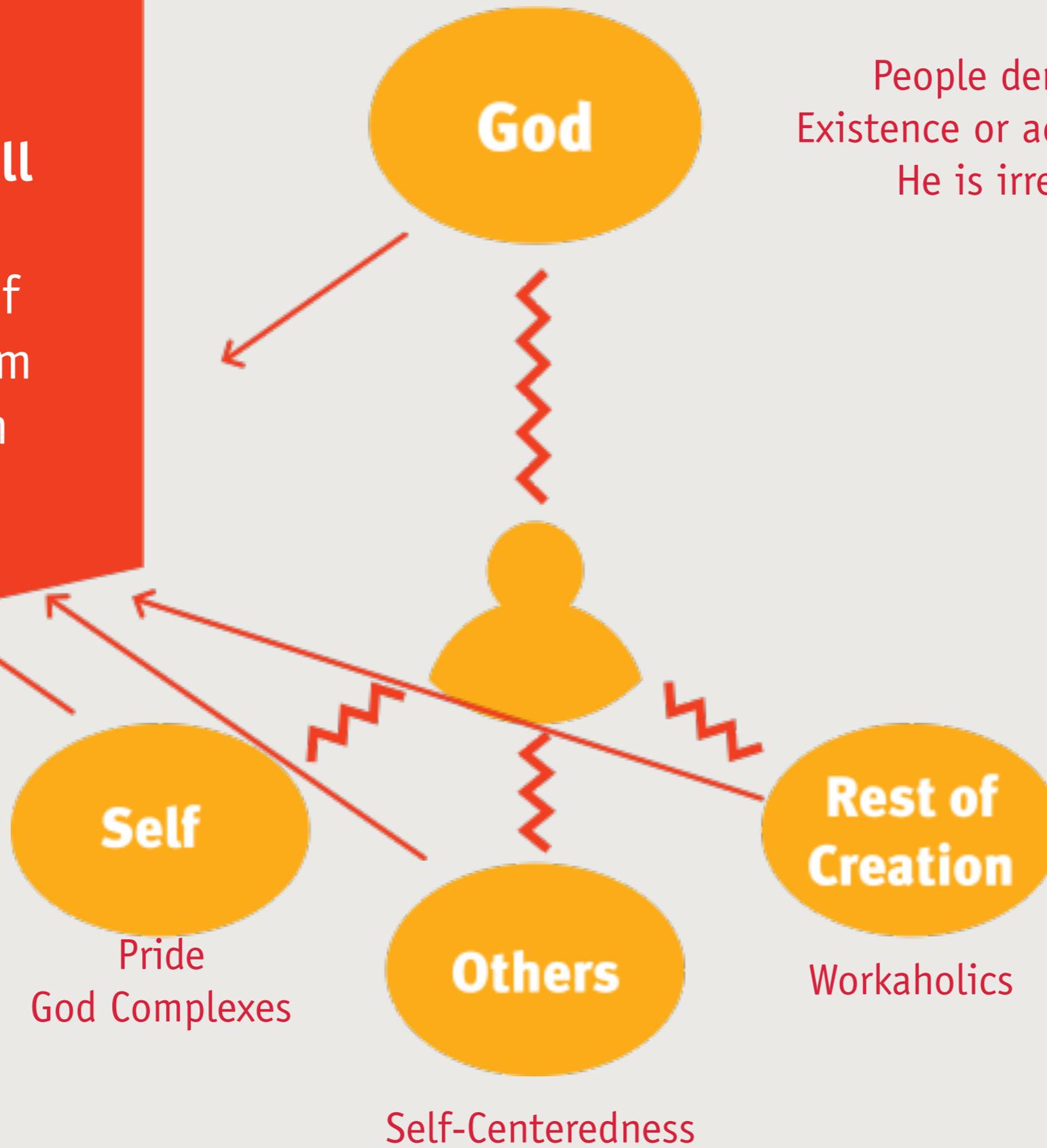
Effects of the Fall



Effects of the Fall

The Ills of Mainstream American Society

People deny God's Existence or act as though He is irrelevant





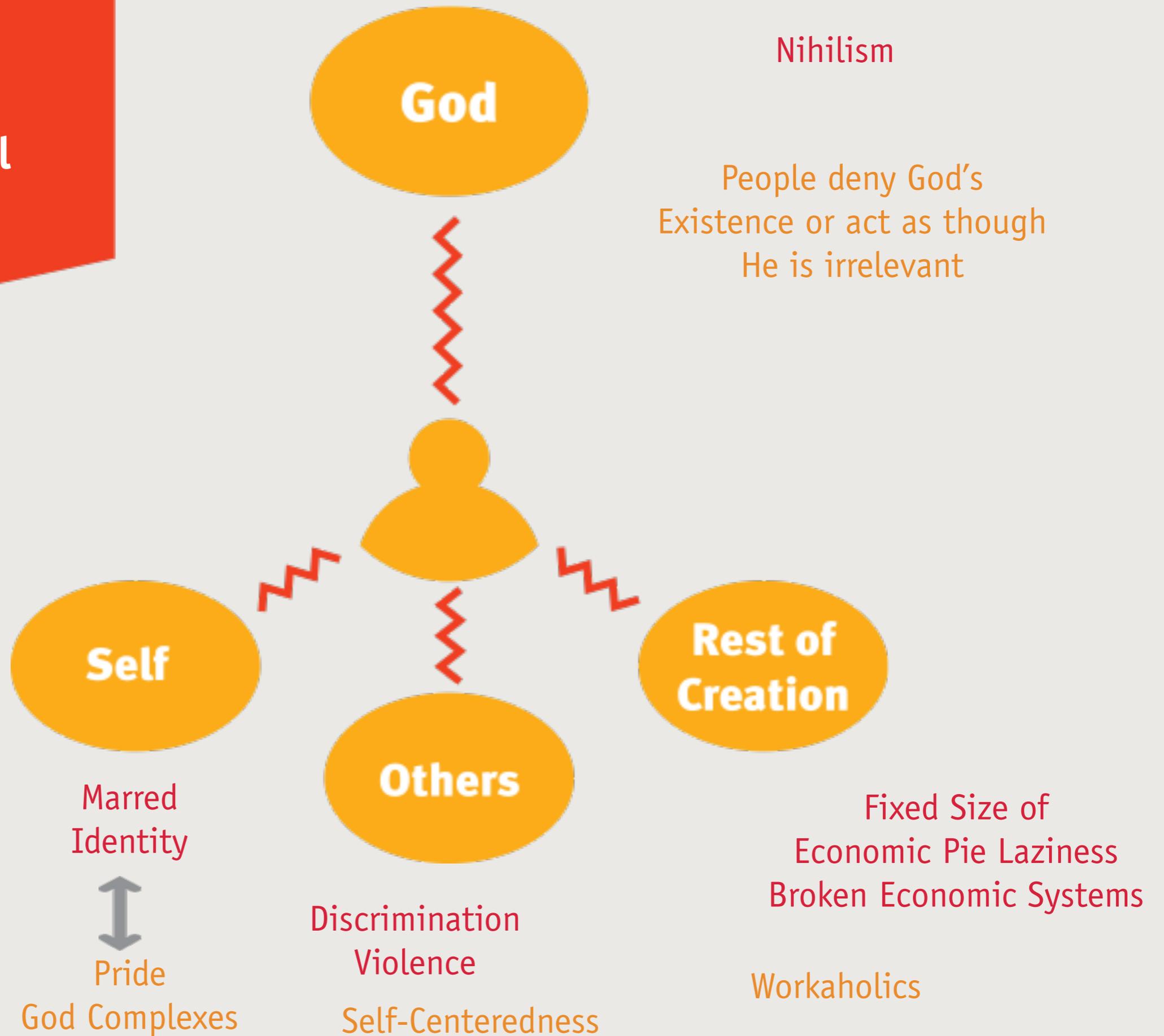
Who are the Poor?

WE ARE!

Until we embrace this, our attempts to help the “materially poor” are likely to hurt them and ourselves.

Let me explain...

Effects of the Fall





Fundamental Equation for Hurting when Helping:

Material Definition of Poverty

+

God-Complexes of Materially Non-Poor

+

Feelings of Inferiority of the Materially Poor

= Harm to both Materially Poor and Non-Poor



What's the first step in poverty alleviation?

Consider repentance as a good candidate:

1. Repentance of a material understanding of the world that is rooted in modern/enlightenment worldview
2. Repentance of our pride/god-complexes: "health and wealth" or "prosperity" gospel.



If you are sleeping...

The most important thing
is just ahead

It will definitely be on
final exam!



Colossians 1:19-20

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Jesus), and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.



Poverty Alleviation

Poverty Alleviation is about reconciling relationships: a process in which people – both the materially poor and ourselves – move closer to living in right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation.



Some immediate implications for how we work with the “materially poor”

1. We must walk humbly with materially poor people as Christ transforms both of us.
2. The verbal proclamation of the gospel of the *Kingdom of God* is central to poverty alleviation.
3. The local church has a vital role to play in poverty alleviation, because it is the “body,” “bride,” and “fullness” of Jesus Christ.



Some immediate implications for how we work with the “materially poor”

4. We must address both broken systems and broken individuals.
5. When working at the individual level, it's about people and relational processes not projects and products.
6. Distinguish amongst relief, rehabilitation, and development.

Relief

Rehabilitation

Development

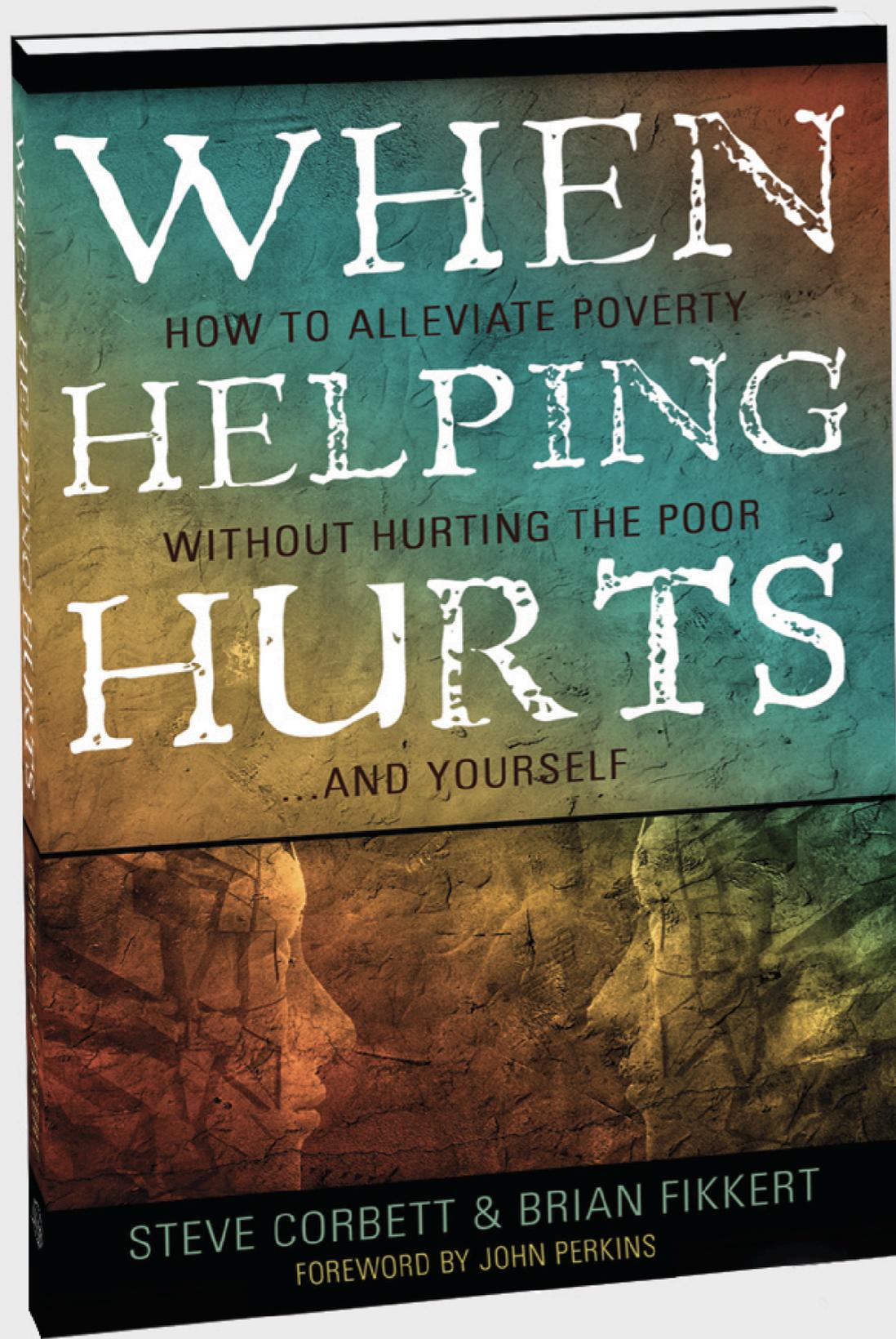




Some immediate implications for how we work with the “materially poor”

7. Use “asset-based” rather than “needs-based” approaches.
8. Donors need to adjust, well,

EVERYTHING!!!



Want
to learn
more?

An aerial, grayscale photograph of a city serves as the background. In the lower foreground, a large stadium is visible, filled with spectators. The city's skyline is composed of various buildings of different heights and styles. The overall tone is dark and professional.

CITY S ERVE

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