

FULL GOSPEL MINISTRY AS WORD AND DEED

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*“For I will not presume to speak of anything,
except what Christ has accomplished through me,
resulting in obedience of the Gentiles
by word and deed.” Romans 15:18, NAS*

When Jesus came to begin His ministry, He clearly articulated the scope of God’s anointing on His life:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18-19, NIV)

With this clear announcement of the Lord’s ministry which involved the soul, spirit and body of man, it would seem that the division that is faced today between “word and deed” is somewhat superficial. Yet over the last 100 years in missions circles, there has been an ongoing disagreement about the relationship of evangelism and social action. Most Christian missions and Christian development agencies have struggled to define this relationship. Often the problem is discerning whether compassionate ministries have or even should have an evangelistic impact.

From a western worldview, many see holistic ministries and evangelism as completely separate enterprises. Obviously, compassionate ministry may not be overtly evangelistic. Yet thinking that evangelism addresses spiritual needs while holistic ministry addresses physical needs is a false dichotomy. This separation of evangelism and social ministries creates a gap in Christian missions that has caused friction and disagreement among missions leaders, missionaries and national churches.

Today, however, missions leaders are endeavoring to bridge the gap that exists between social compassion ministries and evangelism. How can this gap be bridged and what should be an evangelical-pentecostal view of evangelism and compassionate ministries?

Bruce Bradshaw has suggested that the central problem in this chasm has to do with the understanding of the relationship between religious truth, religious power and science. Major religions such as Christianity and Islam focus on truth and raise questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life. Animistic and folk religions focus more on power. They deal with health, well-being, guidance,

success and failure.

From a modern, Western perspective, science and the orthodox expressions of Christianity have had a somewhat compatible existence. Religion serves as a basis for mortality, purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals and society, while science attempts to solve the physical problems of life.

The problem we face in modern, Western society is religion's inability to maintain its role of giving meaning to life in the face of science and technology. We are developing an "unqualified reliance on technology." . . .

For Christians with a non-Western world view, where technology has not been so invasive, God's power is esteemed to deliver them from the spiritual and physical threats to their well-being. This esteem for God's power is the pulse of people who embrace non-Western, or primal, world views. They esteem God not only for providing people with an ultimate purpose and meaning in life, but also because he provides for their every need.¹

In this world with a great difference between a Western and non-Western worldview, Walter Rauschenbusch delivered his famous lectures called, "A Theology for Social Gospel." This series of lectures on the impact of a social gospel articulated one side of the great social gospel–fundamentalism debate that has divided the Church for much of the twentieth century. Rauschenbusch correctly understood that the Church has often placed sin and salvation in a one-sided individualistic way, neglecting social justice and ignoring Jesus' ethical teachings. But the failure of his theology was an emphasis on one area to the complete exclusion of the other.

Rauschenbusch bluntly insists that the social gospel "plainly concentrates religious interest on the great ethical problems of social life." He belittles "trust in the vicarious atonement of Christ" as rigid dogma and insists that the social gospel has little interest in metaphysical questions about the Trinity or deity of Christ, not to mention Satan. For the social gospel, "its chief interest is concentrated on those manifestations of sin and redemption which lie beyond the individual soul." Whereas "the non-ethical practices and beliefs in historical Christianity nearly all center on the winning of heaven and immortality," Rauschenbusch gladly predicts that "the more Social Gospel engages and inspires theological thought, the more will religion be concentrated on ethical righteousness."²

This blatant one-sided emphasis of the gospel caused the great division within the Christian faith in the twentieth century. In order to overcome this division, "we need a full-blown biblical theology that affirms both personal and social sin, both personal conversion and structural change, both evangelism and social action, both personal and social salvation, both Jesus as moral example and Jesus as vicarious substitute, both orthodox theology and ethical obedience."³

Not only was this emphasis upon the social gospel in the first six decades of the last century out of focus, it was also identified with theological liberalism. Since the social gospel emphasized a Christian's obligation to respond to physical need and oppression, the priorities of social action and the task of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth through human efforts were emphasized. Evangelical circles rejected this emphasis and focused on the future aspects of the Kingdom of God. As a result of this dichotomy, theological conservatives began rigidly dichotomizing evangelism and social action which brought a division between "word and deed."

The effects of the Great Reversal spilled over into missions structures and

organizations. Divisions occurred within the evangelical family which led in the second half of the twentieth century to the creation of many new and separate agencies. Some emphasized evangelism and others focused on social needs. Separate missiologies developed, with books and articles promoting each of them. Overlapping overseas programs appeared with their own administrations, goals and methods. Consequently, competition for funds developed, as each program and agency developed its own supporting constituency. Overseas, each agency developed its own set of partners. The result was that a confusing image of the whole missions enterprise emerged.⁴

Even though we have entered the third millennium, this division between social action and evangelism has not tended to subside. As recently as the first month of the new millennium, David Hesselgrave articulated some of his concerns about the Church being skewed by its humanitarian efforts.

Ahead may be a temptation to broaden, and thus weaken, the missionary mandate. . . . Noting that mission has become increasingly understood as holistic—“inclusive of a wide variety of ameliorative humanitarian, social, and even political efforts”—since the Lausanne conference in 1974, he [Hesselgrave] says the priority task of proclamation risks being marginalized.

“The importance of this broad understanding for the year 2000 and beyond can hardly be overstated,” Hesselgrave said. “Why? Because there are strong indications that the 21st century will be marked by major sociopolitical upheavals and a succession of natural disasters. Unless this new—among evangelicals—understanding of missions is successfully challenged, the likelihood of retaining the biblical priority of world evangelization in the face of unprecedented needs of every kind will become increasingly difficult.”⁵ This backlash against liberalism impacted the evangelical tradition and its humanitarian emphasis. So much so, that in the first part of the twentieth century, evangelicals went through a period of retreat and separatism which had a major impact on its humanitarian outreaches. This resulted in what Linda Smith called the “Great Reversal.”⁶ All progressive social outreach programs, private as well as political, were nearly eliminated by evangelicals. George Marsden, one of the foremost historians of evangelicalism attributes the decline to the stigma caused by the social gospel of the liberals which was at its zenith of the first part of the twentieth century. Since the evangelicals and fundamentalists rejected the emphasis of the liberals, they tended to emphasize more of the spiritual needs of man, evangelism and the future aspects of the Kingdom of God rather than the present. As a result, evangelicals began to dichotomize evangelism and social concern. Before the onslaught of the liberal view of the social gospel, holistic ministries were identified with evangelicalism. Now the strong negative reactive against liberalism had a great impact upon the evangelicals’ view of social action.

According to Linda Smith, it is hard to evaluate the impact the “Great Reversal” had on international programs.

Shifts were made in the types of missions programs planned from the home offices. In the field, however, the division between evangelism and social action was never as clear-cut. Missionaries, ostensibly abroad to meet spiritual needs, found themselves responding to other physical and material needs, but not necessarily according to any planned program. Schools and hospitals were maintained, though many of the social or economic programs were discontinued. However, some of the reduction may also have been due to decreased funding as a result of the depression. Short-tem,

spontaneous “Good Samaritan” actions were never eliminated. They were legitimized by the prominence of mercy as a theological tenet. Programs of social reform and planned, intentional aid toward human physical need, however, were no longer seen as appropriate areas of involvement.⁷

In reaction to the social gospel of the liberals, evangelicals during most of the twentieth century centered on individual response to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the focus being on converting people and placing them in churches.

By contrast, liberals who focused on the social gospel tried to see the Church through a theological emphasis of the Kingdom of God. Then because of the emphasis of the liberals on the Kingdom of God, evangelicals tended to de-emphasize a theological understanding of the Kingdom of God until the works of men like Elton Ladd. This opposition to the broader aspects of the Kingdom of God became so strong within the evangelical community that some even went to the extent of opposing any sort of humanitarian ministries designed to heal the pains of society.

In 1947 Carl F. H. Henry published *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* which was the start of a neo-evangelical movement which had greater concerns for justice, peace, oppression, social equality and other major social issues. With the publication of this book and the issues it raised, humanitarian and social action began to be restored to the evangelical agenda. “. . . The young evangelicals joined the movement and energetically proclaimed, with considerable success, the need to restore evangelical social concern. They may have swung the pendulum back a little too far, but that could be expected. . . . David Moberg could observe that, overall, evangelicals were ‘awakening to their inconsistencies’ and ‘returning to the totality of the Christian Gospel.’”⁸

Ron Sider in his book, *Good News and Good Works*, highlights four models that have come out of this debate. These models are the Christian’s way of understanding the underlying issues in the “word and deed” arena. The following is a short synopsis of these four models:

1. **The Individualistic-Evangelical Model**

In this model, evangelism is the primary mission of the Church endeavoring to bring people into relationship with God. The basic concern is the salvation of individual souls. Dr. Billy Graham would be the leading proponent of this model in which he defines evangelism and the announcement of the good news as “Jesus Christ, very God and very Man, died for my sins on the cross, was buried, and rose the third day.” In this model, evangelism is primary and other issues of the gospel are secondary, including social justice and social action.

For people who hold this view, the gospel is about justification and regeneration of individuals rather than the dawning of the Kingdom of God where all areas of life are being redeemed into a new community of believers called the Kingdom. Jesus came to offer deliverance to man from the power of sin and death rather than from the political structures of mankind. It seems that in this model there is no continuity between social justice now and the coming Kingdom. Obviously, dispensationalism which has shaped so much of evangelicalism of the twentieth

century is a significant force within this model.

2. **The Radical Anabaptist Model**

This second model is much like the first one with the exception that individuals are not viewed separately but more as the corporate body of believers. The emphasis is more on persons-in-community rather than as individuals. As a result of this, there is a much greater emphasis in this model on the Church. The gospel is the good news of the Kingdom. Forgiveness and regeneration are central to the gospel but there is more. The Church as a redeemed community is also part of the gospel. Unlike the first model, sin is viewed more corporately than as an individual phenomenon. The Church has relevance for social justice in the surrounding society, especially as it provides a model for what can come. The very existence of the Church is as a primary social structure through which the gospel works and through which the Christian community can have influence on society.

3. **The Dominant Ecumenical Model**

The heart of this third model is the claim that the conversion of individuals and the political redemption of society are both the central parts of the gospel. A person and social structures can both be evangelized. Salvation is both what happens to an individual person and also happens in a society to bring about wholeness. Salvation therefore is interpreted as personal and social. This model is concerned not only with what happens within the individual or the Church, but also what happens within the secular and non-Christian society.

Missions and Evangelism published by the World Council of Churches 1982 gives an interesting insight to this model. “The proclamation of the Gospel includes an invitation to recognize and accept in a personal decision the saving Lordship of Christ. It is the announcement of a personal encounter, mediated by the Holy Spirit, with the living Christ, receiving his forgiveness and making a personal acceptance of the call of discipleship.” It further states, “the call to conversion, as a call to repentance and obedience, should also be addressed to nations, groups and families. The Evangelistic Witness will also speak to the structures of this world; its economic, political and societal institutions.”⁹

4. **The Secular Christian Model**

This model emphasizes more of the political and societal structures rather than the individual. Emphasis is placed more on social justice than the response of a person or community to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The uniqueness of Christ and a belief in a Christian God is abandoned for a broader openness to the truths that may be found other world faiths. The 1968 World Council of Churches documents at Uppsala clearly articulated the difference of the former and then its present approach to the gospel of Christ. “‘The purpose of mission was Christianization, bringing man to God through Christ and his Church.’ Today the goal of mission is the humanization of society: ‘What else can the churches do than recognize and proclaim what God is doing in the world?’”¹⁰

People who accept this model seek to honestly listen to the people of other faiths. They are confronted squarely with the problems and implications of modern sciences to understand it. They have abandoned the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the emphasis on conversion, yet their desire is to help bring a Christian “influence” in the world because of the pain and the despair that is present.¹¹

The separation between “word and deed” is not only a theological debate but is also influenced by an individual’s worldview. The incredible impact of the Enlightenment and the paradigm shifts that it

brought to Western culture have had the enduring feature that there is a separation between the physical and the spiritual realms as distinct from each other. Individuals are taught to view the world as two separate unrelated items. On the one hand, there is a spiritual or supernatural world where God lives and works. Then on the other, there is the real or material world where man hears, sees, touches and feels. This realm is explained by the world of science.

This dichotomy has been impacted not only by the Enlightenment but also by modernity. Since modernity is deeply imbedded in all areas of man's life, there are acceptable divisions in every area. This division is revealed in a person's private and social life. What a person does on Sunday morning or in his spiritual realm may be completely separate from the rest of the week and what is done in his professional life. A Christian may be perceived to be a Christian in certain areas of his life but not in every aspect. In a culture where the gospel has been reduced to propositional truths or even a set of spiritual laws, evangelism becomes "word and speaking" and the actions of the gospel are of little effect. Conversely, in the physical world, the important question is, "What works?" The best answer then is the right method and best technology. Deeds are the real things, so the gospel is reduced to working for justice, alleviating human suffering and saving people from the streets of society.

In cultures in which words have lost their meaning, as in the case in the West, deeds are necessary to verify what words mean. Saying we are Christian is ambiguous since almost everyone claims to be a Christian. If we want to know what someone means when they say they are Christian, we look at their lives. The way we live and act declares to others what we mean when we say we are Christians.

In other cultures, deeds can be ambiguous. Whether we speak or not, people receive a message. Discovering water in the desert is a miracle and the technology that brings it is often interpreted by animist cultures as magic and witchcraft. Research done by MARC has discovered this repeatedly in World Vision's development work. In the view of some local villagers, World Vision has outstanding witch doctors and powerful shamans on its staff. Development technology, without accompanying words that interprets its good deeds, can result in glory being given to clever or "magical" soil scientists and hydrologists, rather than to God.¹²

Depending upon a person's worldview, the problem may be viewed in many different ways. Even with the difficulty of coming to a biblical response to this issue of holistic evangelism, there are many current young theologians who are endeavoring to articulate the shift that they believe is happening within the Church regarding this issue. Jay Gary is one who argues for a broader "Ecumenical Mission Paradigm." He states:

The divide between evangelism and social action among evangelicals has been healed by a growing emphasis on community and national transformation. This model of ministry, or paradigm of how the kingdom comes, will likely supersede the Industrial Era models of "evangelism" or "discipleship." Within five years we will see efforts by evangelicals to quantify the concept of "transformation" with quality life indicators.¹³

Furthermore, Jay Gary predicts “a revolution in our understanding of the Great Commission . . . from a closed view of history to an open view of history . . . Within 20 years, the ‘already, not yet’ consensus could shift to an ‘already, much more’ theology.” He adds, “So instead of asking, ‘What is the key to completing the Great Commission in our lifetimes, we will likely ask . . . , ‘What is the key to global transformation?’”¹⁴

This view may seem to be a little bit radical but it does indicate that within modern missiologists and theologians there is a desire to bring a healing of the chasm between evangelism and humanitarian ministries. As we look at the conditions of our world we can easily see that now is the time that we must come to this conclusion.

CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD

The realities of the globe at the beginning of the twenty-first century is rapidity of change. Even though the world is going through a time of unprecedented expansion, capital and the increase of the funds of the “have” nations, there are still many parts of our world where poverty, disease, violence and war are taking their impact on society.

Futurists refer to three waves that have touched mankind. The first is that which is often called the Agricultural Age. This was a time when better crops were produced and there was means to transport food over long distances. The Agricultural Age changed the nature of life in general.

The second wave that superseded the Agricultural Age is often called the Industrial Revolution. It didn’t supplant the first wave but rather it started an increase of certain aspects of life. This wave co-existed with the Agricultural Age. The power of the second wave became much stronger than that of the first wave. New types of warfare were developed among the second wave nations so that they were able to control more of the earth than ever before. It was the second wave that brought mass production, mass distribution, mass consumption, mass media and mass education.

In recent history, the second wave has now been superseded by the third wave which is called the Information or Knowledge Age. This fast-paced wave which is breaking across societies touches narrow segments of society rather than being broadcast to all peoples. For example, today’s niche marketing seeks out certain kinds of buyers but not everyone. In the same way, many people who have great needs and who are the poor of the world have no opportunity to become part of this great Information Age.

This third wave has brought several trends that are impacting the world of the third millennium. A trend is a direction of movement, the flow of a tendency which hints at where society is going. Trends are like rivers that run where there is little resistance and after time, begin to shape the landscape. They run a course in a direction that is not a straight line. They are more than opinions. They are based on an

analysis of what is actually happening, not something we only think about or anticipate. However, a trend is not a prediction, it is not a prophecy. It's a possibility of what is going to take place now or in the near future.

Some of the trends that have greatly impacted the third wave are things such as the telecommunications revolution. Nothing has shaped the future in the secular world as much as the revolution of technology. The growth of telecommunications which is the child of the Technological Revolution is growing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep ahead of all that is being developed. To purchase something is to realize that it will be obsolete in a matter of three to six months.

Another trend is the "global village" effect which has spawned a lifestyle that is impacting young people of the world. There are some reactions to this which are bringing about cultural nationalism. However, the impact of technology and the ease of travel have made young people aware of a global lifestyle which is changing the face of the future.

Another trend which is impacting the third wave is the unprecedented growth of capitalism in certain parts of the world. This is emerging as a force in many countries. Since so many societies have the right of free association, unrestricted travel and a belief in a nation's economy, this system has successfully reorganized a social structure for the purpose of manufacturing, production and consumption. The effect is that consumerism has become the religion of the capital society. The growth of urbanization, which has now spread to the whole world, is also impacting this modern society. For example, in Western countries, 94 percent of the population live in cities of 50,000 or more. Cities have their own ethnic identities, cultural habits, languages and religions which are the new modern cultural environment which produce secular religions and teach tolerance.

Another trend that has greatly impacted the third wave is the television revolution. This has made it possible for people of all cultures to be citizens of a "global culture." Television is perhaps less a window on the world than a vision of preselected images of that world that exposes certain people to it. Still, the world has become witnesses to an extraordinary range of events that daily shape and shake the world. Nothing happens in secret. What takes place in one part of the world can be known to other parts of the world in a matter of a few moments.

In addition to the trends listed, some other trends that have greatly impacting the context of the world would be the failure of Communism, the importance of the Pacific Rim and China, future events of the world and the rise of global chaos. In 1981, Richard Maybury began writing about "The Thousand Year War" which is the conflict between the Islamic world and the Christian west. Terrorism is just a latest chapter in this war. Mr. Maybury coined a term, *chaostan*, in 1992, predicting that the area from the Arctic Ocean to the Indian Ocean, plus North Africa would erupt into a huge economic crisis and a war which will eventually be known as the next World War.¹⁵

The sad reality is that this unprecedented economic growth in the developed world has left the developing world far in the past to the extent that the gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” has increase significantly in the last several decades. The *Harvard International Review* recently published an article that articulated this significant problem.

A torrent of international capital, unprecedented in world history, has been unleashed in the past decade. Yet this capital has had little impact on the day-to-day lives of most of the world’s population. In the past ten years, US stock market capitalization has grown by over US\$10 trillion, while 20 percent of the world’s households survive on less than one dollar per day. Between 50 to 70 percent of these impoverished families are self-employed, scraping out a living selling goods on the street, running cottage industries or small-scale agricultural operations with the simplest of tools. When the recent, rapid flow of capital out of Indonesia led to massive bankruptcies throughout the country, Indonesian banks and development organizations that lend to these poor farmers and market traders saw their arrears rates increase by only a few percentage points. . . .

The majority of the world’s poor live in the 48 least developed countries. Although these countries constitute 30 percent of the world’s population, they earn only 0.1 percent of the world’s income.¹⁶

The reality of the problems of the world cannot be overlooked by the Church. Jesus Christ came to not only redeem people but also to place people in a redemptive society where they could have hope.

Here are just a few of the facts that confront a worker of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- Ø Half of the world’s six billion people are mired in poverty, trying to eke out a living on \$3 a day or less.
- Ø Over 1.5 billion people live on less than the equivalent of \$1 a day. The fortune of the world’s three richest people exceeds the gross national product of the poorest countries and their 600 million inhabitants. The three have total assets of \$156 billion. The assets of the world’s richest 200 people exceed the combined income of 41 percent of the world’s population. A Bangladeshi would have to save all of his wages for eight years to buy a computer; an American would need to save just one month’s salary. Organized crime is estimated to make 1,500 billion dollars a year and sexual exploitation of women and girls makes seven billion. Tanzania spends nine times its health budget and four times its education budget on repaying its debts.¹⁷
- Ø Six young people are infected with the AIDS virus every minute.
- Ø Nearly 600,000 children under 15 and 2.5 million people age 15-24 got the Human Immunodeficiency Virus last year.
- Ø During 1998 more than 8,500 children and young people were infected with the AIDS virus each day.
- Ø Nearly eight million African children have been orphaned by the immune-stripping disease, and at least one million are infected.
- Ø Nearly 1,000 AIDS orphans are living or dying miserably on Nairobi’s filthy streets.¹⁸
- Ø By the year 2000, half of the global population will be children. Two billion of them will live in extreme poverty or be at risk.
- Ø There are 100 million street children in the world and by the year 2020, the number will have reached 800 million.
- Ø The United Nations estimates that one million children enter the trade of child prostitution every year.
- Ø World-wide, 10 million children will become orphans as a result of AIDS in the next five years.¹⁹
- Ø 200 million children who are under the age of five suffer from chronic hunger. Every day 35,000

- of them died because they do not have enough to eat.
- Ø More than 25 million children don't have even a hovel to call home.
- Ø Millions of children are working up to 16 hours every day of the week in deplorable conditions and paid almost nothing.
- Ø In the United States alone, more than three children die each day as a result of child abuse.²⁰

War still takes its toll on humanity, especially on those who are the weakest—children and older people.

Take as an example of the last four centuries, in the microcosm of Europe alone. In the 17th century, 3.3 million people died in warfare. In the 18th century, 5.2 million. In the 19th century, 5.5 million. In the 20th century, over 28 million people have been killed in Europe alone. The 20th century has clearly become the bloodiest century in history. In fact, according to some estimates, we have possibly killed more people in this century than in the previous 19 centuries put together. These numbers do not even include the millions who have died in Russia, or the more than 60 million in China, or the 2 million in Cambodia.²¹

As I travel in many countries of the world, especially the developing world, I am overwhelmed by the poverty which is impacting almost all of these societies. It is hard to explain the affluence that is taking place in certain pockets of the world and yet to see the incredible problems of nations like Cambodia, Romania, India and Ethiopia in a time of “plenty” is overwhelming. Not only are disease, war and famine destructive forces in the world which cause concern to world Christians but also the growth of poverty which is increasing at a rate similar to the economic growth in the developing world. José Míguez Bonino reflects on the impact of poverty on a society and what it does to dehumanize people.

He [Gustavo Gutierrez] said (in summary) I discovered three things. I discovered that *poverty was a destructive thing*, something to be fought against and destroyed, not merely something which was the object of charity. Secondly, I discovered that *poverty was not accidental*. The fact that these people are poor and not rich is not just a matter of chance, but the result of a structure. Thirdly, I discovered that *poor people were a social class*. When I discovered that poverty was something to be fought against, that poverty was structural, that poor people

were a class [and could organize], it became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action.²²

When one is faced with such overwhelming problems, it should not lead to political action but rather to spiritual activity. The Church can no longer neglect its place in the world and the power of the Kingdom to overthrow poverty, disease, war, violence, for those who are the marginalized people of society. It is God's will that these people have an opportunity to enjoy His blessings. Without a doubt there are sufficient finances within the Church to feed all the people of the world. If we understand anything about the Kingdom of God and its power in the world, we would understand that God will supply through the Church that which is needed in the world to overcome poverty, disease and the effects

of war.

One morning I had breakfast with two wealthy businessmen. It was interesting to note the importance they placed on businessmen bringing God's Kingdom to the developing world. According to their view, it's not pastors, church men or theologians, but rather businessmen that God has raised up with their resources, through the Church and missions, to help people in the developing world. It is God's will and the responsibility of the Church to move people from the margins into the center of the Kingdom so that they can enjoy the blessings of God.

At the beginning of the third millennium, World Vision with all of its resources, began to speak about the needs of the millennium generation. It's interesting to note that this is the first generation of children born that could inherit a world free of poverty and full of promise. The means are in the Church yet this is not taking place. The truth of the matter is that for about a third of what the world now spends on war, man could meet basic human needs and ensure fundamental human rights for all people. The bottom line is not a question of money. It's all a question of our willingness to follow the Lord and the Kingdom principles.

The writers of World Vision's document, "What are the Ten Urgent Issues?" began to articulate their thinking in the following manner:

At the beginning of the First Millennium, Jesus Christ spoke of a world of justice, harmony and peace. Yet at the dawn of the Third Millennium, many of the world's children live in poor, hostile and unjust conditions as bad or worse than those of the first century Palestine.

After 2,000 years, we can do better. Much better. Many of the developed countries have promised to eradicate world poverty through international co-operation. The rich nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have pledged to commit .7 percent of their Gross National Products to help poor nations. But they have not delivered. Official assistance to the world's poor is less than one-quarter of one percent of the rich world's wealth.

By seriously addressing these 10 urgent issues, the developed world could end needless poverty and suffering. It could effect the structural changes that would free children from misery and despair. The children of the next millennium could enjoy safe, healthy and sustainable life.²³

The ten things World Vision said the world can do to eradicate poverty, marginalization, disease and violence are:

1. A liveable income.
More than half of the world's 6 billion people live on less than \$2 a day. Poverty heightens infant mortality, disease, illiteracy, and unemployment and shortens life itself.

Poverty can be reduced by policies that promote good governance, micro-enterprise, small-scale agriculture, income equity and access to credit, education, and training.

2. Food for everyone.
In developing countries, malnutrition leaves four of every 10 children stunted. The diet of the a third of the world's population is either insufficient or lacks the essential vitamins and minerals necessary for good health.
3. Primary education for all children.
More than 130 million children are growing up without schooling; 150 million children drop out of school before grade four. . . . Education of children is essential to their well being and the future of their nations.
4. Clean water.
About 1.7 billion people do not have clean water. One billion lack the 25 liters per day for a survival level of drinking water, sanitation and food preparation.
5. Debt relief.
Onerous debt service deprives poor nations of revenue for education, health care, and economic development. Children pay the biggest price, forgoing immunizations, schooling and proper nutrition.
6. Peace building.
During this decade, four million people have been killed in more than 100 wars and conflicts. Eighty percent of those victims were women and children.
7. Girls growing as equals.
In many countries, girls are more likely to be aborted, abandoned and neglected. They are fed less than boys and are less likely to attend or stay in school.
8. A sustainable future.
Air and water pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, desertification, global warming and depletion of natural resources imperil the future of the Earth.
9. An end to child exploitation.
More than 250 million children now work so their families can eat. Many are forced into prostitution, drug trafficking and debilitating jobs that adults refuse to do.
10. Freedom to believe.
Intolerance has fueled many of the world's conflicts and prevented the mutual understanding that brings peace.

The right of all people to believe and to act on their beliefs through full participation in society is fundamental to human well being.²⁴

In view of such incredible lists of problems in our world, what should be our response? What should Christians do in a world that seems to be moving toward chaos? Without a doubt we should do what Jesus did. Obviously, we should not do less. Jesus preached and healed, He taught and He acted. He modeled what He taught. He not only announced the arrival of the Messianic time of justice and help for the poor and oppressed, He also fed the hungry and welcomed those who are ostracized by society into His fellowship. His diverse circle of men and women, rich and poor, crippled and well, was a visible

demonstration of the Kingdom that He announced.

The core of Jesus' ethical thrust, however, is precisely his summons to begin living now in this fallen world according to the values and demands of the dawning kingdom. In the power of the Holy Spirit who works signs and wonders, it is now possible to live out Jesus' new challenge to the status quo. Jesus' gospel of the kingdom does indeed produce a disturbing community. But it is a community that lovingly challenges the evils of the status quo precisely because it shares the Creator's love for the good creation and dares to strive now toward that wholesomeness in personal, socio-economic and political life that Christ will bring in its fullness at his return.²⁵

There is an extreme within the Pentecostal-Charismatic community which tends to place all demonic powers in the heavenlies and to spiritualize the evil that is upon the earth. Without a doubt, we fight not against flesh and blood but the Church must be redemptive in the world today and not be "other worldly" only. Jesus ministered to whole persons. He healed sick bodies. He touched the broken spirits. He restored those who were out of relationship with God. All peoples, regardless of their place in society, received His healing touch. He forgave the sins of those who were outcast. He touched lepers and to the amazement of the religious community, He talked with women. In fact, in Luke's Gospel, it is recorded that He spoke with women 63 times. The miraculous healings of the blind and the lame were not overshadowed by His confrontation with the powerful economic and religious leaders. He demanded that all, whether rich or poor, powerful or not powerful, to repent and change. He brought a comprehensive healing to the body and the soul, both of the individuals of society as well as communities. He even began a new community in a covenant relationship which we call the Church.

Many rejected His message. They did not accept Him as the Jewish Messiah because they did not understand His ministry in the world and what the Kingdom was all about. But even though He was not received by the Jewish nation, He invited all people to enter into His Kingdom and experience its power to raise people up and to give them dignity in this world. It is because of Jesus' ministry that the Church must endeavor to overthrow the power of darkness and to establish communities of hope, or as the Old Testament called them "cities of refuge" for people who are the marginalized, the poor, widows and children.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The central truth of Christianity to which all Christians must be committed is that the God of history, out of sheer love for mankind, intervened into man's fallen state. He came into this violent, diseased and fractured world through His Son, Jesus Christ, and is now redeeming sinners unto Himself that they may be reconciled into the household of faith. It is by His Holy Spirit that He is establishing a new community or a new order of these redeemed ones in the world. Jesus, from the very beginning of His ministry, called this new order "the Kingdom of God." In this Kingdom, Jesus Christ is king and the

Kingdom workers are His disciples who go about the work of the Kingdom. The work of the Kingdom has to do with several things:

- Ø First, it is the proclamation of the Word of God calling people unto repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
- Ø It is a call for these redeemed ones to be part of the community of the King and live out their new lives in relationship with other Christians in acts of mercy.
- Ø It is also a demonstration of God's love with compassion to the poor and righteousness and justice to be given to society.
- Ø It is this responsible work of stewardship and care of God's creation and His precious resources.
- Ø It is also spiritual warfare against the kingdom of darkness and its leader Satan which has a plan to destroy people everywhere and establish a power structure that is controlled from Satan's world.

All these dimensions and aspects of the Kingdom of God are closely interwoven and will come in fullness at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and establishment of a millennial age. The day is coming when Jesus will make all things new (Rev. 21:1-4). Even though the Church as a whole would ascribe to the statements listed above, how this is implemented has brought great division in the body of Christ. Some would proclaim only by word and not by deed. Others proclaim by deed or just presence and somehow the unity of the Kingdom of God would be weakened.

The dichotomy between "word and deed" also has a similar component in the different ideas of the Kingdom of God. To some who would emphasize the deeds of the Kingdom, any fight against poverty or social injustice is an integral part of the coming of God's Kingdom to the earth. According to this view, anything that is done to help the injustices of the world is something that helps build up the Kingdom. It is seen as a breakthrough of God's Kingdom into worldly activities. Accordingly these people would believe that God's Kingdom does not begin just with individuals responding to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, but really occurs when God's values are established in a particular context. Then, since God's values are for the protection and the help of the poor and those who are vulnerable, development work is done in the Kingdom where no one may accept Jesus as king. An extreme position of this view, the word "redemption" which normally means the people have been reconciled from the dominion of Satan into the light of God's beloved Son, can also be appropriated to describe God's activity outside the Church and speak of it in more of a figurative way as a regeneration of society.

On the other hand, those Christians who would emphasize the word of the Kingdom are very concerned about inappropriate amount of time being spent on the physical rather than the spiritual aspects of Kingdom work. These advocates maintain God is very much at work among poor people and those who do not confess Him as king. However, they would describe this activity in terms of His role as Creator, Sustainer and Judge of all humanity, not as in His position as the Redeemer of mankind. They would reserve Kingdom and redemptive language just for God's rule over the Church or those who have

been redeemed from their sins.

Those who would confine Kingdom language to the personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord fear that the emphasis on deeds will encourage a movement away from people making a conscious decision to follow Jesus Christ. In other words, it would be enlisting “rice Christians,” people who only come for the bread and not for a personal relationship with God.²⁶

Sider notes that the New Testament uses two interesting words to express the early Christian beliefs that the Messianic Age has truly began even though it was not fully present.

They are the words *aparche* (firstfruits) and *arrabon* (pledge or down payment). In 1 Corinthians 15:20 and 23, Paul says that Jesus’ resurrection is the firstfruits of the general resurrection that Jewish messianic hope expected at the coming of the Messiah. In 2 Corinthians 1: 22 and 5:5, Paul describes the Holy Spirit as a down payment or guarantee . . .

The word *firstfruits* is used in the Old Testament to talk about the early harvest festival that celebrated the first arrival of the new crops. . . .

Arrabon (down payment or guarantee) is a loan word from the Semitic. It comes from the arena of commerce and means a deposit that pays part of a total debt and gives a legal claim for the full repayment. . . These words were particularly suited to express the early Christian belief that the resurrection and Pentecost were visible, tangible evidence that the messianic kingdom had begun. Like the firstfruits of the harvest, the messianic age had truly dawned. The early Christians had already tasted the powers of the age to come (Heb. 6:5). Therefore, in spite of the powerful evidence that the Old Age was still very active, the early Christians were certain that the fullness of the messianic kingdom would surely arrive in God’s good time.²⁷

Then, the truth of “already, but not yet,” the Kingdom has started but not come in fullness has a correct interpretation for holistic ministries. God started His work in the world as the planting of a mustard seed that will grow. It was to grow by the Kingdom community overcoming the power of sin, evil, pain, poverty and anything that would destroy man created in the image of God.

Therefore, the ministry of the Kingdom of the Church must be to all people because all have been created in the image of God. Because God bestows human dignity on all people, no matter what culture, what people group, what ethnic identity they may have, they deserve the Kingdom of God’s full attention. To follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, the community of faith must therefore address all the needs that Jesus addressed—spiritual, personal, social, economic and physical (Matt. 25:35-40). In this way, the Kingdom of God and specifically the Church offers a visible representation of God’s force in the world. Life in the Kingdom should look like what the Kingdom people do. If the world wants to see what the future Kingdom is like, then the Church should be a true representation of that, serving God in the same way Jesus did, touching people in the various areas of their needs.²⁸

It is important how we define the gospel of redemption, the good news that God is redeeming the world unto Himself through the work of His Son on the cross. To define the gospel as the good news only of forgiveness or just personal salvation de-emphasizes many of the other aspects of the gospel. A more

biblical position would be to define the gospel as the good news of the Kingdom understanding that it is comprehensive and holistic in its framework, not one sided and appealing to an individual emphasis.

Further, Sider goes on to say that “Jesus’ kingdom is clearly wholistic. Thank God that it *does* bring forgiveness with God and personal, inner sanctification in the power of the Spirit. But it also challenges and changes the social order. The Kingdom impacts soul and body, individual and society. The church properly communicates the Good News of Jesus’ kingdom by word and deed: by proclamation, miracles, acts of mercy and justice, and living out the gospel as a winsome example to others.”²⁹

However, Howard Snyder goes one step further when he points out “Church people think about how to get people into the church; kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world. Church people worry that the world might change the church; kingdom people work to see the church change the world.”³⁰

If one takes the position that the Kingdom of God involves both spiritual and physical dimensions, then it helps us to understand the Church’s role in society. And to hold this position, there are several outcomes that will come as we focus on Jesus’ ministry in society that helps us understand the Kingdom and enhance the role of the Church today.

1. If the gospel is not just the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of individuals, we then cannot separate a reconciled relationship with God and a reconciled relationship with brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.
2. If the gospel is just not forgiveness of sins, we better understand that reconciled social and economic relationships in the body of Christ are one part of salvation, obviously not the whole but they do tell a part.
3. If the gospel is not just forgiveness of sins, we understand more clearly that ministering to both physical and spiritual needs of people is not an option but rather essential parts of the gospel.
4. If the gospel is not just forgiveness of sins, we see clearly that Jesus’ community will always challenge the wrong in the status quo. The Church then is to be a countercultural community.
5. If the gospel is not just forgiveness of sins, then any sharing of the gospel that does not include a significant concern for the poor is outside biblical truth. It does not mean that God cares for the poor or those in poverty more than He does the rich but still, to emphasize one to the exclusion of the other is unbiblical.
6. If the gospel is not just forgiveness of sins, then we perceive more clearly that there must be a sharp distinction between the Church and the world, the culture of the redeemed and the culture of the secular realm. One of the problems of the modern church is that it has become more identified with its environment than to become a society of the redeemed.
7. If the gospel is more than just the forgiveness of sins, we cannot share all the gospel just by preaching. The gospel must be lived out by acts of mercy. Words and deeds do go together.³¹

The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization captured an evangelical, holistic meaning of

the coming of the Kingdom of God:

The evangel is God's Good News in Jesus Christ; it is Good News of the reign he proclaimed and embodies; of God's mission of love to restore the world to wholeness through the Cross of Christ and him alone; of his victory over the demonic powers of destruction and death: of his Lordship over the entire universe; it is Good News of a new creation of a new humanity, a new birth through him by his life-giving Spirit; of the gifts of the messianic reign contained in Jesus and mediated through him by his Spirit; of the charismatic community empowered to embody his reign of shalom here and now before the whole creation and make his Good News seen and known. It is Good News of liberation, of restoration, of wholeness, and of salvation that is personal, social, global and cosmic. Jesus is Lord! Alleluia!³²

Possibly some of the confusion over "word and deed" and the meaning of the Kingdom of God can be placed at the different definitions of conversion and its meaning within the body of Christ. It is interesting to note the divergence of opinions in something that is basic to Christian experience.

Recently, I read the *Christianity Today*, February 7, 2000 issue and noted an article that gave the definition of nine evangelical leaders to the topic of the "Good News."

The purpose of this article was to give laymen a concise, biblical statement of what the Gospel is. Last year, *Christianity Today* published a detailed theological statement. Because that statement tended to be technical, the idea was to have nine leaders discuss this basic Christian concept in more "laymen's terms." I read the nine statements with a sense of curiosity, looking for a full revelation of the biblical meaning of conversion. What I found was very interesting. Even though all of these men and women are presidents of universities and seminaries, professors at theological schools, leaders in youth ministries, as well as pastors, not one gave a complete definition of conversion in the biblical sense.

The themes of these articles were:

- Ø Reconciling love
- Ø For us and creation
- Ø The gift
- Ø Wonderful news
- Ø A mystery revealed
- Ø The true story
- Ø Divine fellowship
- Ø Mighty to save
- Ø Good news of Jesus

Of these finely written statements, only two hint of the very aspects of the Kingdom that we are referring to. Professor Cheryl Bridges Johns made one statement that reveals a fuller understanding when she stated:

We are enabled to live lives characterized by religion that is pure and undefiled before God. The gospel calls us to care for the oppressed, to practice justice, and to fulfill our vocation as stewards over Creation.³³

The second statement, by Professor Robert Smith Jr., is that “the gospel is holistic, serving as a change agent for social justice and penetrating the realm of body, mind, and soul or spirit. It entails a marriage between evangelism and social ministry that exists to redeem the lost and wayward spirit of humanity and to rectify dehumanizing social conditions. The gospel is not parochial; its activity is not confined to the local church, as it takes on global dimensions. ‘And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together’ (Isa. 40:5, RSV).”³⁴

It is most interesting to note that of the 2,150 words that are written about the meaning of the Good News, only 125 have to do with the ethical implications of conversion. It is for this reason that the Church needs to revisit the meaning of conversion and reveal its impact upon societies.

In the Bible, salvation is known as the work of God. He is the Creator and the One who works in salvation experience to rescue His people and bring them back unto Himself. It is God’s work in history, in society redeeming communities unto Himself. For example, God’s intent was to save Israel from the hands of the Egyptians. Michael Green comments: “It is no exaggeration to say that this rescue from Egypt, the land of bitter bondage under the threat of imminent death at the hand of harsh taskmasters determined the whole future understanding of salvation by the people of Israel. For Israel, God’s single most important act of salvation was a concrete historical event that liberated the whole community.”³⁵

In the New Testament, salvation is linked inseparably to the Kingdom of God. Receiving salvation and entering the Kingdom were identical in Jesus’ own definition. Secondly, salvation is also communal. Jesus speaks of a new redeemed community which was central to God’s salvation in the Old Testament. For this reason, Jesus called a community of disciples that would begin living out the Kingdom values in society and be His examples of the fullness of the Kingdom to come. Since Jesus was countercultural, His announcement was a total transformation of the world’s ethical values, actions and relationships.

Also, salvation had to do with physical healing. This came from the Old Testament meanings of the word which has to do with wholeness or *shalom*, which impacted every part of life. Conversion meant the forgiveness of sins but also is to be applied to more than just to the individual. When Jesus came, He saved people not only from their sins but also from their physical sufferings. In the New Testament, the word “save” is used to describe the healing of a leper, of a blind man, the liberation of demon possessed persons as well as to describe physical rescues from the danger of death by drowning. Salvation includes more than just a spiritual act, it also includes transformation of broken physical bodies and the restoration of broken relationships.

Conversion is also precipitated by the repentance of an individual to his past sins. The Bible uses three words to describe this act of grace. First, it can mean to turn around, to go in the opposite direction. This has a more theological meaning, refers to turning from the ways of Satan to faith in Jesus

Christ. A second concept has the idea of changing one's mind. It is the unconditional turning of oneself to God. It also means to turn against everything that is against God and bringing oneself under the divine Lordship of Jesus Christ. A third term also means to change one's mind and to regret something. These three words carry slightly different meanings but all have the common thread of a transfer from one Kingdom to another by a changing of a person's direction. It refers to a radical transformation of thought and action by conversion when a person coming under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This regret for past sins but full involvement in a future Kingdom. Sider quotes René Padilla to explain this work of grace in the believer's life: "Repentance is much more than a private affair between the individual and God. It is the complete reorientation of life in the world . . . in response to the work of God in Jesus Christ."³⁶

If we truly understand the biblical meaning of conversion, then we understand there are important and inseparably links between repentance of sin and a Christian social responsibility. Christians repent of personal as well as social sins. A Christian, in order to become part of the Kingdom, must abandon some of the social sins of society that would have to do with neglect of the poor, racial attitudes and the dehumanizing effect of poverty so that he can become more like a Kingdom-thinker. The difficulty of much of modern evangelism is that it operates in the realm of simple "believism"—that is, just a personal attitude of turning from sin rather than realizing the whole scope of Kingdom orientation. When a person moves from the dominion of darkness into the light of God's beloved Son, he is literally changing worlds. And to operate with an inadequate biblical understanding of conversion is to do harm to the aspects of a Christian's responsibility in restoring Kingdom relationship to the hurting people in society.

Most of the Church world would agree on certain points of the idea of conversion. First, there is an essential, ethical element in the evangelistic invitation. It's more than just simple believism but rather it is a change of Lordship. Secondly, most of the Church would agree that conversion is not a one time experience but a lifelong process. Thirdly, the condition of the person the evangelist or missionary is speaking to is important. Their felt needs are important to God and the Kingdom of God. Fourthly, most of the Church is aware of the imminent dangers of Western culture being overlaid on a conversion invitation. The gospel needs to be contextualized in the sense that it is understandable to the people to whom it is spoken rather than taking on the trappings of a Western church.

Possibly, the difference of opinion in the meaning of conversion in the evangelical church has to do with the word "discipleship." Of course, all would agree that bringing persons to Jesus Christ is making disciples. But making disciples involves a life-long process which would include ethical growth as well as spiritual growth. Jesus taught His disciples by command in Matthew 28:19 to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." The imperative is to make disciples but the outcome is to teach them everything God taught the disciples. Then the discipling activity should include

conversion as well as the ethical growth in sanctification. The power of conversion is that it can transform people from Satan's control and placed them under Jesus' Lordship. Because of this, there are several crucial things that must be experienced as God's divine gift. First, it brings restored relationship with God so that the heart of the believer that was restless can now rest in Him. Secondly, it brings liberating freedom from the power of guilt and shame. Thirdly, it brings a supernatural power from beyond oneself which centered around destructive behavior and moves them into proper relationship with their Father. Fourthly, it brings a dynamic new sense of dignity and worth. In conversion, what was lost in Adam's sin has been redeemed in the dignity that God restores to those who are made in His image. And fifthly, this God who transforms people is also concerned about justice in His world. He abhors divorce, oppression, tyranny, racism, poverty. These are all the tools of the enemy. If this is the agenda of God, then it must also be the agenda of the Church.³⁷

To bring a more holistic approach to the gospel of Christ and to continue to emphasize the need for radical conversions, the Church needs to repent of some of its misuse of the word of God and its lack of living by a full understanding of God's meaning in conversion. Roger Greenway has suggested that this repentance needs to take the form of five important areas:

1. We need to repent of our dichotomizing between "word" and "deed" in evangelical missiology and return to the holism of the Kingdom that is plainly biblical.
2. We must repent of the truncated vision and the narrow goal-setting which many of our organizations have invested in during the past forty years, and come to an agreement on what the Lord has called us to do together.
3. We all need to take a closer look at ourselves and to admit to the middle-class "captivity" of evangelical thinking about ministry among the poor, and repent.
4. We must repent of a number of attitudinal evils that has driven a wedge between Kingdom workers and their ministries for several decades. The only cure for these evils begin with repentance and a profound change of attitude.
 - We must repent from the evil of our "priestly" tradition which is the tradition of a clergy class controlling the church and its ministries.
 - The evil of elitism is among missionaries that places one class of Kingdom workers on a pedestal above others.
 - The evil of avoiding or muting the verbal presentation of the gospel and sometimes even arguing that "deed" ministries are enough by themselves.
 - The evil of avoiding the organized church overseas, or merely using the church when it serves our purpose, but not really taking the church seriously or seeking its best interest.
 - The evil of private "empire building," which has been a driving force behind many of the separate agencies begun in the past four decades.
5. We need to repent from practices and procedures that treat people as "clients" and which replace honest and durable relationships with a string of numerical goals, glowing reports and short-term solutions.³⁸

MISSIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In chapters 24 and 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, four parables are given about an absent lord or

master. The first is in Matthew 24:42 and speaks of keeping watch because you do not know the day of the Lord's return.

The second parable has a similar emphasis when it speaks of the master who puts his servant in charge over his household and what will happen if the master returns and finds out that servant has been lazy. The Scriptures goes on to state that when the master stayed away a long time, the servant began to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. Of course, when the master returned unexpectedly, he began to punish that servant.

In chapter 25, the first parable is of the ten virgins. The bridegroom was gone a long time and they all began to be drowsy and fell asleep. But five were foolish in that they did not have enough oil because they did not know when the bridegroom was going to return. The emphasis is upon the last verse of the parable, "Therefore keep watch because you do not know the day or hour."

The fourth parable has to do with a man going on a journey and as he goes, he entrusts everything to his servants. After a long time, he returned to settle accounts and then he gave to some a double reward but to the one slothful servant, he took away his one talent and gave it to the one who had ten.

The emphasis of these four parables has to do with an absent master or lord of the house. In the conclusion of chapter 25, the Scripture states that there is going to be a judgement time when the Son of Man will separate the sheep and the goats. To some, He will give eternal reward, to the others eternal punishment. The amazing thing is that neither the good servants nor the slothful servants knew when they had really served God. In this context we have this Scripture:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:35-40, NIV)

The emphasis of these parables and this conclusion is that God has disguised Himself. To us, it seems like the Lord is not here, He is on a long journey and we do not know the day or the hour when He is returning. The truth of the matter is that God has disguised Himself as the poor, as the hungry, as the thirsty, as the stranger, as the sick and as prisoners. And when we minister unto these, we in effect, minister unto the Lord. The work of the Church is to minister as unto the Lord to the least of these until the King returns.

In a day when there is much tension in missions and missionary strategies are becoming more complex, God still calls us to simple acts of mercy.

Global appeals of cyberspace escapism, economic gluttony, violent outbursts, and unlimited indulgences mesmerize people deeply hungry for a sense of personal significance and particular value in today's world. Our missionary response to these peoples must emerge from three strong commitments. First, we must understand the significance of past and currently emerging societal and global trends as the contexts in which Christ's redemptive love is learned. Second, we must retire all paradigms, programs, and individuals whose insightful light and salty significance no longer relate to the world's changing life contexts. And, finally, we must return to the Lord in honest humility, prepared with knowledge of the signs of the times but peacefully awaiting the anointing of his Spirit for the adventures ahead. He calls us his friends. He yearns to take us into the best life of all, a walk of total integrity with Christ in a world hungry for such integrity.³⁹

For missions of the third millennium to be successful and to fulfill the will of God, it must keep both the Great Commission and the Cultural Mandate in view. Obviously, the Great Commission is that part which we are to take the "word" to all the world. The Cultural Mandate, found in Genesis 1:28 is that the Kingdom of God is given the responsibility of control or sovereignty over God's creation. The Church is to treat creation as God Himself would treat it.

The specific content of the Cultural Mandate is awesome. God expects a great deal of those to whom he has entrusted the earth and all of its goodness. Distribution of wealth, the balance of nature, marriage and the family, human government, keeping the peace, cultural integrity, liberation of the oppressed—these and other global responsibilities rightly fall within the Cultural Mandate. Since it is God's will that the human race live in shalom, those among them who have been born again into the kingdom and who purpose to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ are required to live lives that will promote shalom to the greatest extent possible. . . . The Cultural Mandate has never been rescinded. It was given at creation and will be in effect until Jesus returns. Christian people are God's chosen agents for doing what they can do to make it happen. Every Christian and every church should be contributing in some way to the effective fulfillment of the Cultural Mandate. It is not enough to think and theologize about it. It takes doing. It is not enough to even pray about it. It takes energy and involvement. Changed persons do not automatically move out to change society. They need to be taught, they need to be encouraged, they need to see exemplary models that they will desire to imitate."⁴⁰

A possible bridge to the dichotomy between word and deed could be a biblical understanding of the term *shalom*. Generally translated, *shalom* means peace, but it is much more than just the absence of war or a common idea of peace. It also communicates the idea of human welfare, health, well-being, both in a material as well as a spiritual sense. It embodies our covenant relationship with God.

Our evangelical tendency is to view the covenant relationship between God and His people as totally in the area of salvation. However, salvation is only one part of *shalom*. *Shalom* also identifies the state of wholeness and holiness possessed by individuals and communities as they are part of God's

family. It also describes the well-being resulting from sound relationships among people and between people with their God. It would include protection of the widows, orphans and society's dependent, struggling against the exploitation and the oppression. It is the protection of life and property.

Then, holistic Christian compassion ministries characterize by God's *shalom* would recognize that the gospel has both present and future tenses. As we look forward to the day when the Kingdom of God would come in fullness, we still realize that the present hope is that the Kingdom of God is with us today and is breaking forth into societies.

Because of the present and future hope of the gospel, holism affirms that poverty, oppression and injustice are not incidental to revealing the redemptive nature of the gospel. Rather, the Good News of Christ cannot be revealed without speaking to these issues. To use the famous concept of Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message. *Shalom*, as it addresses poverty, oppression and injustice, is the medium that comprises the liberating message of a development approach that is both Christian and holistic.

Shalom bridges the gap between development and evangelism by its concern for truth, power and control. It does not see these things as contradictory or competitive, but sees their roles redemptively. God works to bring these aspects of high religion, folk religion and science together with *shalom*. It is a comprehensive term that defies the categories within which we want to place it.⁴¹

As was stated by Hesselgrave earlier, many evangelicals scholars tend to think that emphasis on compassion ministry automatically de-emphasizes conversion and personal experience in redemption. However, nothing could be further from the truth. When the gospel comes in fullness, it not only transforms the individual, it also transforms communities and societies. There is no doubt that many Christians are suffering and it seems like they are not in a position to have a great impact on society. However, if we view the Church over the period of time, we can see that God's work does bring redemption and lift. These two components go hand-in-hand. Wherever the gospel goes, it not only redeems individuals but it also lifts them out of the quagmire of worldly systems and gives them hope. The long term impact of the gospel is that it not only redeems souls but has an economic impact on society. This is certainly true in the work of the Pentecostal church in Central and Latin America. Many of them have turned to religion for help, given no other option, and have found it to be a source of economic mobility as they gave themselves in commitment to Christ. Their initial response was that the community of the King helped them and began to provide a means whereby they could come out of the destructive power of poverty and economic exploitation.⁴²

It is also interesting to note that Dr. Gary McGee, a Pentecostal church historian, stated that some of these issues facing the Church are critical. Two of the most important are the need to define the meaning of the Church and then a challenge to understand the concept of holistic mission to the world in addressing the dark side of spirituality: satanic activity. In Dr. McGee's reflection on the second item, he stated,

If Pentecostals prophetically challenged social and economic injustices, would this necessarily dilute the redemptive power of the gospel? Generally speaking, North American Pentecostals, while historically responding to charitable appeals, have been reluctant to emphasize social concerns too strongly, lest it diminish their goal of converting unbelievers before the imminent return of Christ. In contrast, Scandinavian Pentecostals have been less restrained about their involvement in such endeavors. For some charismatics, less influenced by dispensational premillennialism, evangelization should be followed by the Christianization of society. Given the staggering problems facing the larger part of the world's population today, many Pentecostals and charismatics will follow the lead of the Lausanne movement in emphasizing that the preaching of the Word (proclamation) should be complemented by deeds (social concern) announcing the good news of the kingdom of God.⁴³

When I entered my career as a church planter in Japan, there was one issue I wanted to communicate to the leadership that I had covenanted to work together with. These were great men, well trained and with a zeal for the Lord that exceeded pastors and leaders in many Western countries. However, it seemed that a weakness was in their definition of the Church. Because of Japanese society and the Western cultural baggage that had come with the early missionaries, they saw the Church as a small community, struggling to survive in the alien and resistant society of a culture that is 2500 years old. A proper understanding of the Church helps Christians realize their position in the Kingdom of God and that they are the very heart and hands of God in bringing Kingdom goodness to the world so that the lost can see what will come in fullness of the future. The Church must be a proclamation community. It must speak the word of truth. It must always communicate God's voice in the midst of a dark world. It must give hope to people who have no understanding of a covenant God. It is by word that His love can touch the hearts of those who have been marginalized by the systems of this world.

The Church must be a reconciling community. It is by this work that the world is reconciled unto God through Jesus Christ. Reconciliation can take the form of acts of mercy and kindness that help estranged people see that God lives within His community. There is hope because of the acts of kindness and mercy which issue from the heart of God and are expressed by His people in the times of difficulty in this world.

The Church must also be a unifying community. Its purpose is to not only bring people unto God but also to bring individuals into relationship with each other under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The New Testament church had a great impact on society because those outside of fellowship with God recognized that they lacked something from those who were inside. "Behold, how they love one another." God's Kingdom had come and had changed people's hearts and made them one. Nothing unifies the Church like a balance in word and deed, with acts of compassion which speak of God's Kingdom combined with the message of hope of redemption.

The Church must also be a proactive community. Because of the influence of westernism, there is a fear of imposing one's view on other people. Even acts of kindness given in honesty are judged by

others as trying to get something or as forcing one's opinions on someone else. The truth of the matter is that the Kingdom of God does acts of kindness because it's the nature of the Church. People help the despised, the depressed, those who are marginalized because it is the heart of God. Until the Church can begin to move more proactively, it will not be able to complete its mission in the century. God calls us to lively activity. We are living stones. We have a living hope because we have a living Lord.

¹Bruce Bradshaw, *Bridging the Gap* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1993), 13-14.

²Ronald J. Sider, *Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 9.

³*Ibid.*, 10.

⁴Roger S. Greenway, *Together Again Kinship of Word and Deed* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1998), 16.

⁵*World Pulse*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 6., Evangelism and Missions Information Service, 7 January, 2000.

⁶Linda Smith, "Recent Historical Perspective of the Evangelical Tradition," in *Christian Relief and Development*, Edgar J. Elliston, ed. (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 25.

⁷Smith, 25.

⁸C. Peter Wagner, "A Missiological View of Christian Relief and Development" in *Christian Relief and Development*, Edgar Elliston, ed. (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 118.

⁹Sider, 38-39,

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹¹Sider, 45.

¹²Bryant L. Myers, "Modernity and Holistic Ministry" in *Serving with the Poor in Asia*, Tetsunao Yamamori, Bryant L. Myers and David Connors, eds. (Monrovia: CA: MARC, 1995), 182.

¹³*World Pulse*, 7 January, 2000, 6.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Richard Maybury, *The Coming Great War* (U.S. and World Early Warning Report, 16 November, 1998) [database on-line].

¹⁶*Harvard International Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, Winter 1998/1999.

¹⁷United Nations quoted in *Hope for Children in Crisis*, 4th Quarter 1999, 15.

¹⁸U.N./UNAIDS quoted in *Hope for Children in Crisis*, Fall 1999, 15.

¹⁹*Children At Risk* (Oxford, England: Viva Network) [database on-line].

²⁰Jennie Woods and Sandra Levinson, "It's Time for Children Everywhere" in *Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*, Phyllis Kilbourn, ed. (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1996), 89-90.

²¹Ravi Zacharias, "God and the Problem of Violence" in *Children and Violence* (Federal Way, WA: World Vision, 1995), 8.

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- ²²Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might Nor by Power* (Irvine, CA: Regnum Books, 1996), 173-174.
- ²³*10 Urgent Issues for the Millennium Generation*, World Vision, 19 January 2000 [database on-line].
- ²⁴*10 Urgent Issues for the Millennium Generation*.
- ²⁵Sider, 71.
- ²⁶Dewi Hughes and Matthew Bennett, *God of the Poor* (UK: OM Publishing, 1998), 25-27.
- ²⁷Sider, 73-74.
- ²⁸*Brussels Statement on Evangelization and Social Concern*, n.d., 4.
- ²⁹Sider, 75.
- ³⁰Howard Snyder quoted by Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 75.
- ³¹Sider, 76-78.
- ³²J.D. Douglas, ed., *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publication, 1975), 1294.
- ³³“What’s the Good News?” in *Christianity Today*, February 7, 2000, 48.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, 50.
- ³⁵Michael Green quoted by Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 85-86.
- ³⁶René Padilla quoted by Sider, *Good Works and Good News*, 104.
- ³⁷Sider, 117.
- ³⁸Greenway, 22-28.
- ³⁹Lynn Joesting Day, “Considering the Contexts of Twenty-First Century Missions” in *With an Eye on the Future*, Duane Elmer and Lois McKinney, eds., (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1996), 119-120.
- ⁴⁰Wagner, 119-120.
- ⁴¹Brashaw, 18.
- ⁴²Petersen, 130.
- ⁴³Gary B. McGee, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions” in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, eds., (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 50.