



# Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

*The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*

## Holistic Mission

### Occasional Paper No. 33

Produced by the Issue Group on this topic at the  
2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

In Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004

### **“A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call”**

In encouraging the publication and study of the Occasional Papers, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization does not necessarily endorse every viewpoint expressed in these papers.

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The list of the Participants in this Issue Group appear at the end of the LOP.

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## The context for the production of the Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising  
“the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.”

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the **Lausanne Covenant** supported by the 2,430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant proclaims the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages), and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne, may be examined online at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

The Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum**. As a Forum its structure would allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues (around which were formed Issue Groups). These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report that has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information on these and other publications may be obtained online at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was “**A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call.**” This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1,530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:

“There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God’s direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6,000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non-believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole Body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11," the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peacemakers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations to open

doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively.”

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilise the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly gratefully to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Not withstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God’s gift of salvation through Christ.”

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God’s calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

*David Claydon*

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## Introduction

*By Dewi Hughes*

This Lausanne Occasional Paper begins with a general introduction to holistic mission by René Padilla, which was written as a common foundation for the work of the Holistic Mission Issue Group at the Lausanne Forum held at Pattaya, Thailand in the autumn of 2004. Dr. Padilla has had a long history of commitment to holistic mission and involvement in the Lausanne Movement. He was one of the key figures at the Lausanne Congress in 1974 in persuading the congress to recognize social action as a crucial element in the mission of the church. Since then through books, articles, preaching and lecturing he has been a stalwart advocate of holistic mission. This paper represents his mature thinking on the subject. The Holistic Mission Issue Group endorsed his paper not only as the biblical foundation for our group but for Christian mission as a whole.

The work of the Holistic Mission Issue Group was divided into four sectors:

1. Economic
2. Health
3. Hunger/Agriculture and Water
4. Relief

A specialist in each sector was commissioned to prepare a paper that was circulated to members of that sector group for comments. Further work was done on each paper at the Forum and that work was subsequently incorporated into the final papers that appear here. There are a number of points that need to be made about these sector papers:

1. These papers do not represent what the Holistic Mission Issue Group understands by holistic mission as a whole. Holistic mission is the task of bringing the whole of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ. It begins with the confession that Jesus is Lord of all and attempts to live out that lordship in the whole of life. The mission of the church is, therefore, comprehensive in its means and in its impact. In this broad sense every Issue Group at the Forum should have been concerned with holistic mission.

2. It is an unquestionable biblical truth that God has made an unbreakable link between faith in Himself and the outworking of that faith in seeing that justice is done to the poor and oppressed. Not surprisingly, therefore, the poor figure prominently in any discussion of holistic mission. The pursuit of justice for the poor is not the whole of holistic mission but it is a key component. For example, there are many aspects of the discussion about how wealth is produced and distributed in economics, but from the biblical perspective, the bottom line is how any economic system impacts the life of the poor. Biblically justice is defined by the inclusivity of the God who defends the cause of the orphan, widow and immigrant.

3. The four topics focused on in the sector papers are considered because they are seen as particularly important for the evangelical world at the present time. With the Doha round of the World Trade Organisation continuing and the Millennium Development Goals accepted by almost every nation-state it is an opportune time for us as Christians to campaign for economic justice. With the dominance of the Western scientific/technological model of medicine and health being challenged in many ways it is incumbent upon us to look again at what the Bible means by health and how it fits in with the care of the needy.

4. None of the sector papers are presented as a comprehensive treatment of the topic. For example, the Hunger/Agriculture and Water sector decided to focus almost exclusively on agriculture, seeing hunger as a wider, more generic right. It was felt that the relationship between agriculture and the care of creation is a matter needing urgent attention by evangelicals at present. The Relief sector also decided that looking at the whole issue of relief was too big a task and chose to focus on the growing problem of displaced people.

5. The first three sector papers are followed by action plans for the churches, NGOs and the evangelical community as a whole. The Relief sector does not follow this pattern because the actions demanded by the current situation with regard to displaced people have been woven into the paper.

6. During our discussions as an Issue Group it became clear to us that HIV/AIDS should have been included as a sector. A group led by Bryant Myers of World Vision focused on this topic and produced a declaration and call to the churches to urgently rise to the challenge of this terrible pandemic. This declaration and call is included as the final section.

These papers are now offered to the evangelical world in the hope that churches and individuals will take their truths to heart and put them into practice so that the world may know that Jesus is indeed Lord and turn to him in repentance and faith.

# Holistic Mission

By C. René Padilla

There is general consensus among evangelical Christians all over the world that the church is by nature missionary. But what does that mean? How is the mission of the church defined? What is included in mission? Can mission be circumscribed to transcultural missionary efforts for the sake of the planting of churches in “the regions beyond?” Should mission be identified with evangelism being understood as “the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God?”<sup>1</sup> Or should mission be equated with social transformation resulting from God’s action in history through human agency, which may or may not include the church, as has often been advocated in ecumenical circles?

No attempt can be made to answer these questions adequately within the confines of this paper. Enough can be said, however, to account for the description of mission as *holistic* and to illustrate in practical ways this important concept: a concept that has become increasingly accepted among evangelicals, especially in the Two-thirds World, since the International Congress on World Evangelization, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974.

## **What Is Holistic Mission?**

In a way, the adjective *holistic* only intends to correct a one-sided understanding of mission that majors on either the vertical or the horizontal dimension of mission. The desire to bring both dimensions together in a biblical synthesis was expressed by the late W. A. Visser t’Hooft in an opening speech at the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1968) in the following words:

I believe that, with regard to the great tensions between the vertical interpretation of the gospel as essentially concerned with God’s saving action in the life of individuals, and the horizontal interpretation of it as mainly concerned with human relationships in the world, we must get out of that rather primitive oscillating movement of going from one extreme to the other, which is not worthy of a movement which by its nature seeks to embrace the truth of the gospel in its fullness. A Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt and is not only insipid in itself, but useless for the world. But a Christianity which would use the vertical preoccupation as a means to escape from its responsibility for and in the common life of man is a denial of the incarnation, of God’s love for the world manifested in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The same aspiration for a more comprehensive view of mission became evident in evangelical circles as early as 1966, at the Wheaton Congress on the Church’s Worldwide Mission co-sponsored by the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) and the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA). Since then it grew consistently throughout the years to such an extent that by the time of the Lausanne Congress, the statement could be made in paragraph 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant* that

Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of

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<sup>1</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Norman Goodall, ed., *The Uppsala 68 Report* (Geneva: WCC, 1968), 317-318.

our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread his righteousness in the midst of the unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.<sup>3</sup>

Such a statement makes clear that, as Rodger C. Bassham has pointed out, the Lausanne Congress “produced some marked changes in evangelical mission theology....through broadening the focus of the Congress from evangelism to mission.”<sup>4</sup> These “marked changes in evangelical mission theology” are well illustrated by the “change of mind” that the well-known British writer and speaker John Stott experienced between the Berlin Congress (1966) and the Lausanne Congress. In his opening address on “The Biblical Basis of Evangelism”<sup>5</sup> at the memorable 1974 Congress, the well-known British author claimed that “the mission of the church arises from the mission of God” and should, therefore, follow the incarnational model of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> On that basis he argued that “mission...describes everything the church is sent into the world to do,” as those who are sent by Jesus Christ even as the Son was sent by the Father, that is, “to identify with others as he identified with us” and to serve as “He gave himself in selfless service for others.”<sup>7</sup> In his expanded version of the Lausanne address published in 1975 under the title *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, Stott candidly confessed that at the 1966 Congress he had sided with the many who, from the emphasis that most versions of the Great Commission give to evangelism, deduce that “the mission of the church...is exclusively a preaching, converting and teaching mission.” Then he added:

Today, however, I would express myself differently. It is not just that the commission includes the duty to teach converts everything Jesus had previously commanded (Matthew 28.20), and that social responsibility is among the things which Jesus commanded. I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Roger C. Bassham, Mission Theology: 1948-1975 Years of Worldwide Creative Tension: Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library), 231.

<sup>5</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed., Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications), 65-78.

<sup>6</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed., Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications), 66-67.

<sup>7</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed., Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications).

<sup>8</sup> John Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 23.

The affirmation that “the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility” seems to suggest a real integration of the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of mission, which is at the very heart of *holistic* mission. This approach, however, did not become part and parcel of the *Lausanne Covenant*, which in paragraph 6 qualified paragraph 5 by stating that “In the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary,”<sup>9</sup> thus supporting the two-mandate approach to mission-evangelism *and* social action. In contrast, the holistic approach was forcefully expressed by the so-called Radical Discipleship group, an *ad hoc* group of about four hundred participants who met spontaneously during the Congress. Their document on “Theological Implications of Radical Discipleship,”<sup>10</sup> which may be regarded as the first world-wide evangelical statement on holistic mission, affirms, among other things, that

There is no biblical dichotomy between the Word spoken and the Word made flesh in the lives of God’s people. Men will look as they listen and what they see must be at one with what they hear. The Christian community must chatter, discuss and proclaim the gospel; it must express the gospel in its life as the new society, in its sacrificial service of others as a genuine expression of God’s love, in its prophetic exposing and opposing of all demonic forces that deny the Lordship of Christ and keep men less than human; in its pursuit of real justice for all men; in its responsible and caring trusteeship of God’s creation and its resources.<sup>11</sup>

This definition of holistic mission as including what the church is, what the church does, and what the church says can hardly be improved. The atmosphere generated by the Lausanne Congress has been described as “euphoric,” particularly for relief and development workers who “could now appeal to the evangelical constituency as family, without the fear of either being rebuked for preaching the ‘social gospel’ or being charged of compromising on evangelism.”<sup>12</sup> It must be said, however, that after the Lausanne Congress the holistic approach to mission was very much under pressure in conservative evangelical circles. Thus, for instance, the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE), held in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980, under the sponsorship of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization (LCWE), led many observers to ask how seriously the organizers had taken the statement made in the *Lausanne Covenant* on the importance of both evangelism and social responsibility. Their concern was voiced by Waldron Scott in the following terms:

It seems unlikely... that the Lausanne Committee will be a major force in the 1980s for promoting a style of evangelism based on a holistic theology and a clear-sighted vision of the definitive contextual realities of

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<sup>9</sup> John Stott, ed., *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>10</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed., *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications), 1294-1296.

<sup>11</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed., *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications), 1294.

<sup>12</sup> Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, eds., *The Church in Response to Human Need* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans), ix.

the decade. Within evangelical circles we will have to look to groups other than LCWE for leadership along these lines.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of all the resistance to a holistic approach to mission, the position expressed by the Radical Discipleship group in 1974 was echoed in various important documents drafted in the eighties, including the following three:

1. The "Statement on Simple Lifestyle," which came out of the Consultation on this topic, held in Hoddesdon, England, in March 1980, convened by the LCWE Theology and Education Group and the Ethics and Society Unit of the World Evangelical Fellowship.
2. The "Statement of Concern for the Future of the LCWE," signed by approximately two hundred participants at the Pattaya Consultation of LCWE, in June 1980.
3. The Statement on "Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need," which summarized the conclusions of the Consultation on this topic, held in Wheaton, Illinois, in June 1983, under the sponsorship of the World Evangelical Fellowship. One may disagree with David Bosch's view regarding this document, that "for the first time in an official statement emanating from an international evangelical conference the perennial dichotomy (between evangelism and social responsibility) was overcome,"<sup>14</sup> but there is no exaggeration in saying that this Statement is a historical milestone in the understanding of holistic mission from an evangelical perspective.

After the Wheaton '83 Statement, no significant advance was made in evangelical circles with regard to the definition of holistic mission. This must not be interpreted, however, as a lack of interest in the subject. Rather, as a result of the amazing paradigmatic shift in the concept of mission which had taken place during the previous decade, the moment for the *practice* of holistic mission had arrived. Observers of this phenomenon could speak of a "rise in Christian conscience" leading to "the emergence of a dramatic renewal movement in today's church" (Jim Wallis). Hundreds of Christian faith-based organizations were now engaged in God's work everywhere, to such an extent that in 1983 it could be stated that "The proliferation of para-local church movements and organizations will be one of the distinguishing hallmarks of the last half of the twentieth century."<sup>15</sup>

An outstanding illustration of the process of change in perspective which took place especially after the Lausanne Congress is the formation of the Micah Network, whose First International Conference was held in Oxford, England, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Micah Network has grown into a world-wide group of more than 250 evangelical Christian relief, development, and justice agencies. At the Oxford meeting Micah adopted, as a matter of practicality in network communication, a distinctive term to refer to the Biblical model of mission that it advocates, namely, "integral mission," which was understood as pointing to "the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel." It went on to explain that it

is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Orlando E. Costas, Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 154.

<sup>14</sup> John Stott, ed., Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989 (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1996), 407.

<sup>15</sup> Jerry White quoted in Wesley K. Willmer, J. David Schmidt and Martyn Smith, The Prospering Parachurch: Enlarging the Boundaries of God's Kingdom (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), xii.

social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.<sup>16</sup>

### ***The Biblical Basis for Holistic Mission***

For a proper integration of the various constituent elements of the mission of the church at least three approaches are possible. These three approaches differ only in their focus and are really different parts of one picture.

The first approach takes as its starting point the purpose of God, which embraces the whole of creation. The biblical message of salvation points towards “new heavens and a new earth” and that means that we cannot view salvation as separated from creation. The purpose of salvation is not merely endless life of individual souls in heaven but the transformation of the totality of creation, including humankind, to the glory of God. A person’s conversion to Christ is the eruption of the new creation into this world: it transforms the person, in anticipation of the end time, in a wonderful display of God’s eschatological purpose to make all things new.

This way of looking at conversion has important consequences for evangelism. The purpose of the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ is not to change people into religious individuals who cut themselves off from the world in order to enjoy the benefits of their salvation. Rather, the purpose of evangelism is to constitute communities that confess Jesus Christ as the Lord of the totality of life and live in the light of that confession; communities that do not only talk about God’s love but also demonstrate it in concrete terms, through good works which God prepared in advance for them to do (Ephesians 2:10).

The reduction of the Christian mission to the oral communication of a message of otherworldly salvation grows out of a misunderstanding of God’s purpose and of the nature of human beings. It is assumed that God wants to “save souls” rather than “to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20) and that the human being only needs to be reconciled to God rather than to experience fullness of life. In the final analysis, this is a reduction related to ideas taken from Greek philosophy, not from scripture.

Mission is faithful to scripture only to the extent to which it is holistic. In other words, it is faithful when it crosses frontiers (not just geographic but also cultural, racial, economic, social, political, etc.) with the intention of transforming human life in all its dimensions, according to God’s purpose and of enabling human beings to enjoy the abundant life that God wants to give to them and that Jesus Christ came to share with them. The mission of the church is multifaceted because it depends on the mission of God, which includes the whole of creation and the totality of human life.

The second approach takes into account that the human being is a unity of body, soul and spirit, which are inseparable. This view, which is taken for granted in both the Old and the New Testament, has been confirmed by modern science. Because the human being is a unity, one cannot properly help a person by taking care of his or her needs of one type (for instance, the need of God’s forgiveness, a spiritual need) while disregarding his or her needs of another type (for instance, the material or bodily needs). James acknowledges this when he writes: “Suppose your brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, Go, I

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted from the Micah Declaration on Integral Mission, [www.micahnetwork.org](http://www.micahnetwork.org)

wish you well; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:15-17).

From this perspective, holistic mission is mission oriented towards the satisfaction of basic human needs, including the need of God, but also the need of food, love, housing, clothes, physical and mental health and a sense of human dignity. Furthermore, this approach takes into account that people are spiritual, social and bodily beings, made to live in relationship with God, with their neighbours and with God’s creation. Consequently, it presupposes that it is not enough to take care of the spiritual wellbeing of an individual without any regard for his or her personal relationships and position in society and in the world. As Jesus saw it, love for God is inseparable from love for neighbour (Matthew 22:40). To talk about “holistic mission,” therefore, is to talk about mission oriented towards the formation of God-fearing persons who see themselves as stewards of creation and do not live for themselves but for others; persons who are willing to fulfil their God-given vocation in the world and to receive and to give love; persons who “hunger and thirst for justice” and who are “peacemakers” (Matthew 5:6, 9).

The third approach to show the integration of the various elements involved in the mission of the church is the one that takes as its starting point the “Christ-Event,” including Christ’s life and ministry, his death on the cross, his resurrection and his exaltation. Each of these events points towards integral mission as the means whereby the church continues Jesus’ mission throughout history and whereby the redemptive work of Jesus takes effect under present circumstances. Since the Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of God’s ultimate purpose for all creation including human beings, focusing on his significance in its fullness will inevitably include the first two approaches, and any other approach, to holistic mission.

**1. The Life and Ministry of Jesus and Holistic Mission.** The traditional tendency to separate the death of Jesus from his earthly life in order to give prominence to the cross has resulted in a sad lack of attention to the significance of his life and ministry for the mission of the church. Although it is true that the four Gospels emphasize the passion and death of Jesus, it is also true that what gives validity to the death of Jesus Christ as “the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10) is that it was the sacrifice of the perfect man, whose way of life established the foundations for the definition of what it means to love God above all things and to love one’s neighbour as oneself. His earthly life and ministry in this way came to be the model for the life and mission of the church. If that is the case, the proclamation of good news to the poor, the preaching of freedom for captives, of the recovery of sight for the blind and the liberation of the oppressed is a basic criterion by which to assess how far the mission of today’s church was really the continuation of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth. As John Perkins says, the church is called to be “the replacement of Jesus in a given community, doing what he would do, going where he would go and teaching what he would teach.”

**2. Jesus’ Cross and Holistic Mission.** The cross represents the culmination of Jesus’ surrender in submission to the will of God for the redemption of humankind. “He made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is at the very heart of the gospel. However, the cross also represents the cost of discipleship and of faithfulness to God’s call to take part in bringing to fruition his redemptive purpose. The mission of the church provides the link between the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, on one hand, and the appropriation of the justice of God by faith — justification — on the other. As Paul states, the work of reconciliation contains two closely related aspects: God “*reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us*” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). The practice of the “ministry of reconciliation” has its cost, however, both in terms of sacrificial surrender for the

sake of others — a self-giving which reproduces that of Jesus Christ — and also in terms of suffering for the sake of the gospel. The church is not truly the church unless it is, according to Bonhoeffer's description, "the church for others," in which the image of "the man for others"—the man who "came not to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45) — is reproduced. Then too, when Jesus sent his disciples out on their mission during his earthly ministry, he warned them that suffering would be a constituent part of their mission even as it was for his (see Matthew 10:22, 24-25). It would not be fortuitous or accidental, but the logical consequence of membership in the community of followers of the way of the Suffering Servant.

The cross was also the means whereby, according to Paul, Christ broke down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, thus producing a new humanity, one body (Ephesians 2:14-16). The church therefore is called to demonstrate, both in its life and in its message, this reconciliation with God and between individuals and groups. Among those who gather beneath the shadow of the cross of Christ, oppression that has come to be associated with ethnic, social and gender divisions disappear so that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female," but "all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) The church provides a glimpse of a new humanity that in anticipation incarnates God's plan, that plan which will be brought to fruition in "the fullness of time," "to gather up all things, things in heaven and things on earth" in Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

**3. The Resurrection of Jesus and Holistic Mission.** The fulfilment of God's plan for the life and mission of the church relies on one incomparable resource, the power with which God raised Jesus from the dead, the power of the resurrection. No wonder, then, that Paul in his prayer for the faithful asks God that they might experience the "immeasurable greatness" of that power (Ephesians 1:19-20). The resurrection of Christ is the dawn of a new day in the history of salvation. It was the confirmation that his sacrifice had succeeded in overcoming the fatal consequence of sin, which is death. For those who put their trust in him, therefore, death does not have the last word. Because death has been vanquished, Christian hope in the final victory of God's plan is based on a solid foundation. The risen Christ is the first fruits of the great harvest, a new humanity. By His resurrection he has introduced into history a principle of life which guarantees not only the survival of the soul for all eternity, but also the permanent validation of all that the church does through the power of the Spirit for the cause of Jesus Christ, that is, the cause of love and justice. The cause of Jesus Christ is the only cause that has a future. So it makes sense to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" and to strive that the power of the resurrection may become manifest in the here and now and in every sphere of human life, and in the whole of creation.

**4. The Exaltation of Jesus and Holistic Mission.** The close relationship that exists between the present dimension of the Kingdom of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit who works in history to make the mission of the church possible is clearly seen in Jesus' reply to a question posed by his close followers just before his ascension: "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Even after the crucifixion and the resurrection, two events which should have completely transformed the apostles' idea about the real nature of Jesus' mission, they are still clinging to those Jewish nationalist aspirations which had prompted them to follow Jesus from their first encounter and right up to the crucifixion of their Master. Jesus' reply does not seem to have much to do with the question. Rather, it sets in relief the combination of factors which are going to come into play in salvation history after the ascension of Jesus Christ. "*It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*" (vv. 7-8). The following comments are relevant.

First, according to Luke these are Jesus' final words before his ascension. They include the fifth account of the "Great Commission," in which the missiology of the whole book of Acts is summarized in narrative form. Beginning in Jerusalem, the gospel spreads first to the adjacent areas, Judea and Samaria and then progresses until it arrives in Rome. In the whole process, the church occupies a vital place, but not the church alone: it is the church in the power of the Spirit. The mission is no mere human project. It is the result of Jesus' mission being extended in history, an extension made possible by the action of the Holy Spirit. As such it is brought to fruition, not only by what the witnesses to Jesus say, but also by what they *are* and *do*.

Second, Pentecost follows immediately upon the ascension and is inseparable from it. Jesus Christ is enthroned as "Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:36), King of the universe and from this position sends his Holy Spirit to equip the church for the purpose of making disciples of all nations. The universal horizons of the mission are foreshadowed by the presence in Jerusalem of "devout Jews from every nation under heaven" (v. 5) on the day of Pentecost. The risen Christ, to whom the Spirit bears witness, has been anointed to reign and put his enemies under his feet. Peter explained it to the believers in his Pentecost sermon: "*Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool'*" (vv. 33-35). Years later, in agreement with Peter, the apostle Paul will affirm that "*he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet*" (1 Corinthians 15:25). With the exaltation of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, a new era has been inaugurated in salvation history: the era of the Spirit, which is at the same time the era of Jesus Christ exalted as Lord and Messiah, and the era of the church and her mission to make disciples in the power of the Spirit.

Third, Jesus' promise to his apostles that he would be with them always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20), a promise which accompanied his commission to make disciples of all nations, is fulfilled through the presence of the Spirit and the Word, the combination that made possible the existence of the church and the success of her mission.

Finally, Acts 2:41-47 clearly shows that the result of the Pentecost experience is no ghetto-church, devoted to cultivating individualistic religion and an exclusive, separatist church. On the contrary, it is a community of the Spirit, a community that becomes a centre of attraction, "*having the good will of all the people*" (v. 47), because it incarnates the values of the Kingdom of God and affirms, by what it is, by what it does and by what it says, that Jesus Christ has been exalted as Lord over every aspect of life. It is a missionary community that preaches reconciliation with God and the restoration of all creation by the power of the Spirit. It is a community which provides a glimpse of the birth of a new humanity, and in which can be seen, albeit "in a mirror, dimly" (1 Corinthians 13:12), the fulfilment of God's plan for all humankind.

### ***Historical Perspective on Holistic Mission***

Holistic mission does not lack historical antecedents. Some of the terms that are used today to describe it may be new, but throughout the history of the church there have always been groups of Christians who, by the way they have participated in the extension of the gospel, have demonstrated a deep solidarity with human suffering and needs.

An outstanding historical example of what we now call holistic mission is the missionary work that the Moravians carried out in the eighteenth century. For Nicolaus Zinzendorf (1700-1760), the founder of this movement that gave new life to Pietism, the agent of mission was not the institutional church, which was marked by dead orthodoxy, but small communities of committed believers, the *ecclesiola in ecclesiae*. In line with this line of thinking, small teams of Moravian missionaries were sent with the aim of forming "pilgrim houses" or "emergency residences" instead of churches like the ones in Europe. This holistic approach to mission was articulated by B.

Ziegenbalg, one of the very first missionaries sent from Halle, according to whom the *Dienst der Seele* ("service of the soul") was inseparable from the *Dienst des Leibes* ("service of the body"). This was no mere theory. Rather, it led Francke and other pietists to become involved in "home missions" in Halle and the surrounding area, serving the destitute and founding a school for poor children, a home for widows, an orphanage, a hospital and other institutions. Under this kind of influence, Germany became a leading missionary country sending ordinary men and women to go to the ends of the earth to share the gospel with the poor by living among them, oftentimes in degrading circumstances.

The social commitment of the pietists to serve the deprived sectors of society was admirable but not unique. Space here does not allow a full survey of the valuable contribution that other evangelical Christians made to the social, cultural, and political life of their nations. That was the case, for instance, in England. Several historians claim that the great revivals under Wesley and Whitefield in the eighteenth century were the main transforming factor that made it unnecessary for that country to go through a bloody revolution like the one that took place in France.

The socioeconomic and political impact of these spiritual revivals crossed the borders of Britain. As a result, many of those who were touched by them were moved to compassion toward the disenfranchised living in slums, in prisons, in mining districts, in the "American frontier," in plantations of the British colonies, in the Caribbean (in the British Indies) and in other places. The great influence that evangelical Christianity exercised on the social life in the United States during the eighteenth and the nineteenth century has been carefully studied. Many of the social benefits that people enjoy in many countries today, oftentimes without even knowing about their origin, such as the abolition of slavery, labour reforms and all kinds of philanthropic work are part of the legacy of these revivals.

### ***The Role of the Local Church***

An important deficiency in evangelical theology has been in the area of ecclesiology. For Roman Catholics the church constitutes one of the fundamental theological issues, whereas for evangelicals it tends to be a secondary question. It is hard to calculate the consequences of this lamentable deficiency. The least one can say is that, when the church lacks an ecclesiology rooted in biblical revelation, what takes priority is the institutional church, regulated by human traditions and preoccupied with the achievement of secondary objectives such as its *quantitative* growth, to the detriment of its *qualitative* growth.

Quite definitely, the lack of an adequate ecclesiology has practical consequences related to the way the local church perceives its mission. If mission is not holistic or if mission is seen as a peripheral matter, the minimal condition for the church to fulfil its purpose is missing and the church becomes a religious club with no positive impact on its neighbourhood. As the *Micah Declaration on Integral Mission* puts it,

God by his grace has given local churches the task of integral mission [proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel]. The future of integral mission is in planting and enabling local churches to transform the communities of which they are part. Churches as caring and inclusive communities are at the heart of what it means to do integral mission.

The meaning of "caring and inclusive communities" needs to be spelled out in practical terms if the church is going to be recognized in its own neighbourhood as more than a religious institution concerned above all for its own self-preservation. All too often, the stumbling block and the foolishness that prevent non-Christians from turning to Christ is not really the stumbling block and the foolishness of the gospel centred in "Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23), but the self-righteous attitude and the indifference to basic human needs on the part of Christians. The

first condition for the church to break down the barriers with its neighbourhood is to engage with it, without ulterior motives, in the search for solutions to felt needs. Such an engagement requires a humble recognition that the reality that counts for the large majority of people is not the reality of the Kingdom of God but the reality of daily-life problems that make them feel powerless, helpless, and terribly vulnerable.

If that is the case, a top priority for the church that cares is to enable people to articulate their needs, to analyze them, and to reflect on them. Inquiring about what people would like to see changed, what major needs they see in their area, what services they use and what services they lack, and so on, can prevent the church from jumping in with its own agenda. It can also help the church to begin developing meaningful links with the community.

The knowledge of the community based on serious conversation with the people who participate in it is the starting point for the kind of action that is needed — the action that goes beyond paternalistic poverty-relief and helps people to help themselves. Without this kind of empowerment, there is no solution to the problem that underlies many of the problems that affect people, especially the poor, namely, the lack of sense of human dignity oftentimes expressed in terms of marred identities and distorted vocations. Each church is called to be a transformation centre that enables people to change their self-perception by seeing themselves as human beings created in the image of God and called to participate in the accomplishment of God's purpose.

Not every church, however, is fit to become involved in holistic mission. According to the Apostles' Creed, the church is "one, holy and catholic." Traditionally, these are the essential marks, *signa* (signs) or *notae* (characteristics) of the church. Experience makes evident that these characteristics have to be supplemented by others if the church is to be a true agent of transformation in its own context. We suggest the following:

**1. Commitment to Jesus Christ as the Lord of all humankind and the whole creation.** There are many secular service agencies that do very good work among the poor. As a matter of fact, sometimes we Christians are challenged and even put to shame by people who do not know God but whose dedication to the cause of justice and peace, whatever their motivation may be, is far greater than ours. There is, however, one thing that we as followers of Jesus Christ can give the poor that no one else can give them and that is the witness to Jesus Christ as the Lord of all humankind and the whole creation — the witness that gives meaning to our own struggle for justice and peace.

The mission of the church is Kingdom mission and as such it points, beyond the community of faith, to the crucified King who has been exalted and reigns "until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15:25). The Kingdom of God that has come in Jesus Christ and is yet to come in its fullness provides the framework within which faith acts in love — a love that is translated into action on behalf of the needy. Holistic mission is the means through which the glory of the Kingdom of God is announced and concretely manifested in history in anticipation of the end by the power of the Spirit. Consequently, the first condition for the church to become an agent of transformation in its own community is to see herself as nothing more (and nothing less!) than a witness to the Kingdom that has come and is yet to come. Faithfulness to the King of kings and Lord of lords is not to be measured in terms of big church buildings full of people, but in terms of faith communities that are making disciples who are learning to obey all that Jesus Christ taught.

**2. Commitment to one another.** Individualism is inimical to holistic mission because holistic mission requires that the members of the church experience integral growth in Christ, from whom "the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16). The witness to the Gospel is witness to God who in his love gave his Son to enable humankind, by the power of the Spirit, to

live according to the law of life: to love God above all things and to love one's neighbour as oneself. The church is a faithful witness to the extent to which she becomes a community of love in which people accept one another just as Christ accepted them. When love becomes visible in the church community, outsiders are given ears to hear about the love of God and eyes to see its reality. The likely result may well be the same as the one that occurred in the aftermath of Pentecost: "the favour of all the people" combined with the Lord's action in adding to the church those that are being saved (Acts 2:47).

**3. Commitment to the world as the object of God's love.** Already in the first century, the apostle Paul regarded it as necessary to exhort Christians not to even imagine that he could suggest that they do not associate with "the people of this world who are immoral." "In this case," he told them, "you would have to leave this world" (1 Corinthians 5:10). In full agreement with Jesus, he took it for granted that Christians are "not of this world," but are sent "into the world" (John 17:14-18) to witness to God's transforming truth and love. Such an attitude of openness to "people of this world" prevents the church from becoming a religious sect or club. It impels the church to look for ways to work in partnership with her neighbourhood in improving the quality of life on both a personal and a community level. The church fulfils her vocation as "light of the world" not merely by preaching the gospel, but by letting her light shine through "good deeds"—works that point towards *shalom* (the well-being for all and by all) and at the same time show the reality of God's love for his world and move people to praise the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

**4. Commitment to the priesthood of all believers.** The priesthood of all believers has been recognized as one of the main pillars of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. One can hardly exaggerate the sense of freedom before God that this New Testament doctrine brought to people who before its rediscovery had felt unable to "approach the throne of grace with confidence" (Hebrews 4:16). It was now clear that, by virtue of his once-for-all sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ had become the mediator of a new covenant and ordinary men and women could "draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22).

The classical Reformation, however, failed to live out the implications that the priesthood of all believers has for the understanding of the church as "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9) — a community of priests called to exercise their priesthood in the following terms:

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased (Hebrews 13:15-16).

The church is faithful to its priestly call to the extent to which she combines the sacrifice of praise with the sacrifice of good deeds that alleviate human suffering. Holistic mission thus becomes a priestly service in which the whole church, not just a sector of it, is involved. Hence the exhortation: "*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds*" (Hebrews 10:24).

**5. Commitment to leadership defined in terms of service.** From the perspective of a hierarchical concept of leadership, to speak of servant-leaders is to speak of living contradictions. Not so from the New Testament perspective, for which at the centre of Christian discipleship is the Son of Man who "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Holistic mission cannot become a reality unless the church leaders heed Peter's exhortation to his fellow elders:

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not

greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1Peter 5:2-3).

Holistic mission is not possible whenever the church is dominated by single-handed leaders who fail to see the importance of decentralizing power for the sake of the participation of the largest possible number of members. It is only possible whenever it is fully recognized that the church as a whole is called to witness to the crucified Messiah through humble service that seeks no other reward than that of pleasing the Giver of every good gift. The role of the leaders in this context is to serve by enabling others to develop and to use their own gifts — “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12). They are faithful to their vocation to the extent to which they are able to release others for service.

**6. Commitment to flexible church structures.** Effective holistic mission is not dependent on good structures and organization, but on the Spirit of God. That is true, but if it is true that good structures and organization do not guarantee success in mission, it is also true that bad structures and organization lead to failure. Holistic mission, therefore, requires a careful assessment of the ways in which such matters as the planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating of the service projects, whether in word or in deed, are functioning in reality.

### ***The Role of Christian NGOs and Service Agencies***

The outburst of the so-called parachurch organizations, special-purpose groups or voluntary societies especially after World War II, has been such that the claim has been made that they grew more than a hundredfold in the twentieth century. It has been estimated that today there are approximately 100,000 of these organizations. Heavily dependent on volunteer help, they have become a very important faith-based means through which the people of God, regardless of race, social class, or gender, participate in Kingdom work all over the world. That being the case, the question of the role of Christian NGOs and service agencies is quite relevant to the subject of this paper.

A whole paragraph of the 1983 Statement on “Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need,” mentioned above, was dedicated to “Christian Aid Agencies and Transformation.” Several warnings that are raised there are worth recalling, such as the following:

1. The need for integrity in the efforts to raise funds, lest the plight of the poor is exploited “in order to meet donor needs and expectations.” “Fund-raising activities,” it is said, “must be in accordance with the gospel. A stewardship responsibility of agencies is to reduce significantly their overhead in order to maximize the resources for the ministry.”

2. The need to demonstrate the values of Christ and His Kingdom and to “avoid competition with others involved in the same ministry and a success mentality that forgets God’s special concern for the weak.

3. The need to ensure that promotional efforts reflect what is in fact being done and that the responsibility to educate the donors in the way Christian transformation is experienced in the field is fully accepted.

4. The need to give adequate attention to listening sensitively to the communities that are being served, “facilitating a two-way process in communication and local ownership of the programs,” thus developing a true partnership between the service agency and the local people.

5. The need to ensure that the agency’s legitimate accountability to donors does not result in the “imposition of Western management systems on local communities,” based on the assumption that “Western planning and control systems are the only ones which ensure accountability.” Accordingly, the document calls on development agencies “to establish a

dialogue with those they serve in order to permit the creation of systems of accountability with respect to both cultures.”

The paragraph concludes with a call to repentance which includes “a renunciation of inconsistency and extravagance in our personal and institutional lifestyle.” Such a call is quite consistent with the fact that integral mission is not carried out only by what we say or what we do, but also by what we are. The conflicts that oftentimes affect the relationship between local churches and service agencies should be honestly faced and resolved. To this end Dr. Tetsunao Yamamori, former President of Food for the Hungry, has suggested the following principles:

1. The role of the service agency is that of an *apprentice*. As a part of the body of Christ the members of the service agency must work from within the church so as to learn and to face the local issues of holistic mission.

2. The role of the service agency is that of a *facilitator*. The service agency should place itself beside the church in order to enable the church to carry on its holistic mission.

3. The role of the service agencies is that of a *catalyst*. Despite the increasing number of churches with a vision for holistic mission, there are still many in need of help to get a wider vision of their task. The service agency exists to encourage these churches to become involved with their respective communities.

4. The role of the church is that of a *pioneer*. The role of the service agency as an apprentice, a facilitator, and a catalyst can only be fulfilled when there is a local church in the community. If no church exists, the service agency will have to choose between not working in that community and making strategic plans to plant a church either alone or in cooperation with a church from another community.

## Sector Papers

### Economic Justice for the Poor

David Befus and Stephen Bauman

*And what does the LORD require of you? To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).*

A theologian was preaching on the nature of injustice when a group of Latin American women called out, “We know what justice is—it is bread for our children.”<sup>17</sup> In a world where more than a billion people live on less than one dollar a day, business moguls earn more than the economic output of entire nations and malnourished countries export their grain to the highest bidder, the notion of *economic justice* has never been more relevant. Living as Christians today, surely we must ask, “What does the Lord require of us?”

#### **The Biblical Foundation of Economic Justice**

We serve a God who loves justice (Isaiah 61:8; Psalm 11:7; 33:5; 37:28; 99:4), delights in it (Jeremiah 9:23), demands it (Deuteronomy 16:20) and executes it for the needy (Psalm 140:13). He leads with it (Isaiah 9:7), promises it (Isaiah 42:3) and ultimately judges us with it (Isaiah 58:6). He is the “God of justice” (Isaiah 30:18) and requires us to “do justice” (Micah 6:8) as a community of faith. While the Bible does not present a systematic treatise on economic justice, it offers a profound paradigm on economic justice through the hundreds of texts scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments. While not comprehensive, the following statements attempt to summarize the biblical vision of economic justice:

**(a) Economic justice originates in God’s nature and character.** Justice is a moral attribute of God and is indispensable to his nature and moral character (Is 30:18). Because economic justice is one dimension of justice it is, therefore, rooted in God’s nature and character. Given the fact that God’s Trinitarian nature is relational, justice (economic and otherwise) is not an abstract, but relational concept.

**(b) The biblical vision for justice is founded in God’s creative act in history.** Every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1) and endowed with great creative potential (value, conscience, gifts, talents, and creativity). God’s creation is a gift to all, not to be appropriated for the benefit of only a few and to deny dignity or opportunity to any one person desecrates the image of God.

**(c) God worked for six days in designing the world, and He created man in His image to work productively.** The Christian notion of work implies *calling*, as expressed by the German reformation word *beruf*, meaning “a task set by God.” The encouragement to work is founded (Genesis 2:15) and presented throughout the Scriptures and the expectation that those who follow God’s path for their lives will “*work with your hands... so that your life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody*” (1 Thessalonians 4:11). Jesus teaches us to pray “*give us this day our daily bread,*” (Matthew 6) and work, not alms, is the foundation for the realization of that prayer.

**(d) Sin has corrupted God’s plan for economic justice.** The idea that economic activity “benefits consumers and maximizes efficient utilization of the earth’s scarce resources”<sup>18</sup> has proven false due to man’s sinful nature evident in greed, corruption and the concentration of resources in the hands of a few. Evil is manifested not only in the behaviour of individuals, but also in structural evils that preserve the wealth of upper classes. However, the *love* of money,

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<sup>17</sup> Duncan Forrester, Christian Justice and Public Policy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 55.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Gilpin, Global Political Economy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 23.

not money in and of itself, is evil. In spite of the fall, the field of economics is legitimate and, in fact, based in God's cultural mandate (Genesis 1:26-28). Put simply, wealth is a resource, and economics a tool.

**(e) Economic justice demands righteous relationships.** Economic justice is not only concerned with a sense of what is right, or what *should* happen, but with a righteous heart in relationship to God (vertical) and within society (horizontal). The relationship of the members of the divine Trinity provides the theological paradigm for our social mandate to serve in and through community.

**(f) The biblical vision of economic justice is redemptive.** The reconciliation of "all things" in Christ (Colossians 1:20) includes the economic realm. The scriptures link justice with deliverance from oppression (Judges 5:11), freedom from captivity (Isaiah 41:1-11) and salvation (Psalm 79:6; Isaiah 63:1). The biblical foundation of human dignity, coupled with the emphasis on love for our neighbour (Genesis 4:9, Luke 10:33), implies that we must seek reconciliation in *all* areas of life, including the economic sphere.

**(g) We are called to steward wealth in a manner that extends the Kingdom of God.** "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (Psalm 24:1). He is the only absolute owner (Leviticus 25:23); we are merely commissioned as stewards (Genesis 1:29-30). When God blesses and gives wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), it is for the purpose of making his ways known on the earth and his salvation among all nations (Psalm 67:2). While God can and does, allow the accumulation of wealth through unjust means he does not condone it. God takes into account how and on what basis, wealth has been accumulated and stewarded (Isaiah 58). As Christians, we enjoy the profound privilege of participating with God in the administration of His kingdom, which includes the creation of economies that respect and nurture the dignity and worth of every human being. Finally, while the biblical vision of justice allows for economic differences, it condemns significant disparity in society as unjust and holds us accountable for economic injustice (Isaiah 58). While *equality of income* is not necessarily the biblical norm for equity, *equality of opportunity* is perfectly in line with biblical principles. In short, economic differences are "morally acceptable, even, in fact, morally necessary,"<sup>19</sup> but only to a certain extent.

**(h) The biblical vision of economic justice is restorative.** The scriptures present a restored, just economy that contains a "dynamic, community-building character" (Isaiah 63:1). We recognize that restoration, *shalom*, is not possible without justice. Human life unfolds between the first and second creations (Romans 8:18-25) and it is here where God requires us to demonstrate justice measured by our treatment of the powerless in society (Isaiah 58:6). We also recognize the biblical mandate calls us to care for the environment (Genesis 2:15). Finally, this vision of restored creation (Isaiah 11:4-6; 25:1-8), where love and justice govern (Psalm 9:7-8), begins here and now. However, in keeping with the already/not yet view of the Kingdom of God, we must seek to effect change in this life while recognizing that perfect economic justice will only be achieved with the final coming of the Kingdom.

### ***The Church's Mandate***

The church has a biblical mandate to embrace, pursue, and model economic justice. Indeed, economic justice is integral to holistic mission and it is incumbent upon the church to take a leading role in addressing issues of economics and injustice, both at the macro and micro levels. It should be mentioned, however, that confronting this problem is complex, and, thus, we should not expect clear-cut solutions for the world economy. Often, instead, in evaluating economic issues, we encounter trade-offs. Moreover, while "economic analysis allows us to measure reasonably well who the winners and losers from trade will be, and what they will win

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<sup>19</sup> Ron Sider, *Just Generosity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 67.

or lose...[it] gives us no insights to judge which trade-offs are indeed most 'fair.'<sup>20</sup> It is the church that must provide a clarion voice to the issues of economic justice.

A summary of the church's mandate is as follows:

**(a) The church must pursue a holistic theology where economic justice is integral to its mission.** It is morally incumbent upon the church to *embrace, model and teach* economic justice as an expression of the Kingdom of God.

**(b) The church must embrace and teach a biblical understanding of the poor and poverty.** It is essential to distinguish between various expressions of poverty, such as *poverty as oppression*, where compounding factors, often systemic and structural, leave the poor in a state of utter powerlessness;<sup>21</sup> *poverty of being*<sup>22</sup> where a "lifetime of suffering, deception, and exclusion is internalized by the poor in a way that results in the poor no longer knowing who they truly are or why they were created,"<sup>23</sup> and; *poverty of spirit* (Matthew 5:3), which is, in essence, humility, or brokenness of heart — clearly a kingdom value sought and celebrated by Christians worldwide. How we understand poverty influences how we relate to the poor. Most importantly, we must be careful in labelling any person in view of the creative potential<sup>24</sup> with which God has endowed all of us, both individually (for example, value, innovation, conscience, talents, and gifts) and as a community (for example, the unique gifts of hospitality or perseverance in certain cultures).

**(c) The church must demonstrate economic justice through word, deed and sign incarnationally, among the poor, involving the presence of the poor in the process of transformation.** For economic justice to authentically occur, the poor must be actors in their own transformation, not merely receptors.

**(d) The church has an indisputable mandate to care for the poor.** There are more poor people today than ever before in history and in many cases they are getting poorer.<sup>25</sup> Jesus came to "lift up the humble, and to fill the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:53). As we follow this example, we must give special consideration to the impact of globalization on the poor. The ability of the poor to access capital, markets, and work are three critical factors that must be weighed in considering the effects of globalization.<sup>26</sup>

**(f) The church has a prophetic mandate to denounce systemic and structural sins of injustice** in business, government and culture, both at the national and international levels. Specifically, the church should be at the forefront of confronting the problem of an economic segment described by secular experts as "the bottom of the pyramid, where four billion people reside whose per capita income is less than \$1,500 per year."<sup>27</sup> As the church, we must take an

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<sup>20</sup> Diane Whitmore, "Faithfulness and the Dismal Science," *Faith and International Affairs* (2003), 54.

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Heuertz, *The Cry* 8:3 (2002), 5.

<sup>22</sup> We must promote awareness, understanding, and engagement in the *local church*, on issues of economic justice, business as mission, and wealth and innovation. Specifically, we must encourage grassroots discussion and action groups at the local church level to deal with issues of economic injustice.

<sup>23</sup> Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 76.

<sup>24</sup> Realized or unrealized creative potential, that is.

<sup>25</sup> Special consideration must be given to Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for only 1% of total world trade, is left out of the world economy, and continues to fall further behind.

<sup>26</sup> Capital tends to concentrate in the pockets of the upper classes, as does critical information about technology, prices, and transport requirements for imports or exports.

<sup>27</sup> C. K. Prahalad, *The Future of Competition: Co-Creating Unique Value With Customers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), 3.

active role in the public sphere where, for example, corruption is often present, but we must avoid the promotion of specific economic frameworks, whether capitalism, socialism, or other as it can result in the misuse of the Christian faith to legitimize practices that may not be compatible with the Christian worldview. Likewise, scrutiny and open-minded debate is required of macro economic policy.<sup>28</sup> Christians are often not aware of the economic impact of their country policy on the poor and needy populations of the world.

**(g) At the same time, the church must prophetically announce economic justice within and without the church locally and globally through word, deed and sign.** It is morally incumbent upon the church to grapple with, and seek to understand, the complex issues of economic justice. Out of this understanding, the church must teach and model economic justice as an expression of the Kingdom of God. As we seek to address issues of economic injustice, we must give consideration to the issues of freedom and equality. The promotion of *freedom* highlights individual rights and the free market for maximizing economic production. The promotion of *equality* focuses on how wealth is shared, and how profits are distributed. There is a difference between poverty and inequality; these are two separate issues. There are real-world cases where inequality is high, but poverty is low and vice versa. There are also trade-offs between poverty and inequality currently evident in globalization. God is concerned about both. Furthermore, as economic policy is considered, we need to differentiate the concept of absolute and relative comparisons of income and poverty.

**(h) The church must prioritize its efforts in understanding and addressing economic injustice as both a cause and symptom of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.** In 2004, 8,000 people died each day from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the number continues to escalate. The church must respond holistically, recognizing that poverty is central to the HIV/AIDS issue.

**(i) The church has a prophetic mandate to address lifestyle issues related to consumerism.** Unfortunately, self-indulgent economic activity and materialism is promoted in some Christian communities as having intrinsic value, with no regard to Christian witness, responsibility to the poor, or any other objective except the affluent lifestyle of the “successful Christian.” The market place is a context for ministry, but ministry only takes place if the people of God proclaim His word, show love and compassion, exercise stewardship of creation, and engage in spiritual warfare. Accumulating wealth for one’s own material status is not inherently Christian, and is criticized by Jesus.

**(j) The church must give a high priority towards searching out the causes of economic injustice as it relates to terrorism.** September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and events thereafter, underscore the importance of addressing the causes of terrorism, especially in understanding its relationship to economic injustice.

### **Action Steps**

On Karl Marx’s tomb in Highgate cemetery are inscribed the words “Philosophers have only interpreted the world. The point is, however, to change it.” If we consider all that is written on the topic of economic justice, the same statement can be made. As we look to the future, we need more practical and constructive steps to promote change. However, we must remember the issues are complex. We need to avoid simplistic conclusions, and instead provide practical solutions rooted in biblical theology.

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<sup>28</sup> For example, U.S. representatives at the Doha round of GATT/WTO trade negotiations rightly criticized the European Union Common Agricultural Policy that provides huge export subsidies and impossible restrictions on agricultural imports, but then did not acknowledge the injustice of the steel tariffs, U.S. farm bill, and blockage of a deal that would have given poor countries access to cheap essential medicines (*Fortune*, 9/1/2003), 35.

**First and foremost, it is essential we engage the poor in the process of seeking economic transformation.** As the non-poor, we must not merely integrate the poor into the discussion but, rather, through authentic relationship, recognize and embrace their voice *alongside and among* our own. This process must begin at the grassroots level, in churches, community groups and networks and trickle up to local, national, and international dialogue. We must begin by learning from the poor, in particular, their enormous capacity to daily survive economic injustice within their communities. Together, the non-poor and resource poor, *as one church*, must address issues of economic justice.

***We, the Church of Jesus Christ, must speak and act prophetically on issues of economic injustice in the following ways:***

1. We must promote awareness, understanding and engagement in the *local church*, on issues of economic justice, business as mission, wealth and innovation. Specifically, we must encourage grassroots discussion and action groups at the local church level to deal with issues of economic injustice.
2. We must urgently respond holistically to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, recognizing that poverty and economic injustice is central to the pandemic.
3. We must evaluate and change our patterns of consumption and promote a simple lifestyle to avoid contributing to global economic injustice.
4. We need to invest in women and children with the message of economic justice as a means of transforming the next generation.
5. We must promote biblical holistic worldview education in the church.
6. We must endorse, promote and implement holistic models of microfinance<sup>29</sup> and enterprise as solutions to economic injustice, and consider the worldwide Christian business community as a resource to generate employment and increase incomes.
7. We must endorse and encourage involvement in established networks and global forums addressing economic injustice, such as the Micah Network, Micah Challenge, and the Christian Community Development Association, as well as encourage the formation of new networks around this issue.
8. We must seek to incorporate issues related to economic justice into pastoral training, seminary curriculums, weekly preaching and Sunday schools.<sup>30</sup>
9. We must encourage and seek various means of carefully<sup>31</sup> planned exposure of leaders, business people, and influencers to situations of economic injustice.

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<sup>29</sup> The microfinance movement has been a significant means towards creating economic justice for the poor. Today thousands of microfinance institutions, including many Christian organizations, are serving some 67 million clients worldwide with credit, savings, and other products (S. Daley-Harris, [State of the Microcredit Summit Report 2003](#), Microcredit Summit, New York). Innovations continue to be developed with the hope of serving more clients as well as existing ones better. It must be mentioned, however, that the microfinance movement is not without its criticisms. Many institutions do not serve the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable. Many clients are only moderately poor, while still vulnerable, actually *non-poor* (J. Sebstad and M. Cohen, [Synthesis Report on Microfinance, Risk Management and Poverty](#), Assessing the Impact of Microfinance Services [AIMS], Washington, D.C., 2000). Also, the vast majority of clients served are less risky urban traders, merchants, and artisans, rather than farmers in rural areas where three-fourths of the poor live.

<sup>30</sup> In particular, we need the promulgation of economic training and tools for the Kingdom to help the church to view business as a blessing, recognizing the positive role of production, jobs, even taxes, and other enterprise creation programs for the Kingdom.

<sup>31</sup> In a way that avoids dehumanizing the poor through exposure trips that further entrench the “us” versus “them” mentality.

10. We must document and publish examples, case studies, and projects of Christians addressing economic justice at local and national levels.
11. We encourage the Lausanne movement to use its influence to promote mainstream media exposure (e.g., Christianity Today) to issues of economic justice.
12. We need to resource pastors with sermon outlines, narratives, tapes, discipleship guides on issues related to economic justice and emphasize theological training that addresses issues related to materialism and the prosperity gospel.
13. We must develop, list<sup>32</sup> and distribute information, resources, tools, conference opportunities, books and periodicals related to implementing productive economic activity as a tool for Christian ministry.
14. We need to promote understanding of the negative *ecological* impact of economic injustice.
15. We need to become actors<sup>33</sup> in the public realm to reshape the global economy so that benefits of globalization, for example access to markets, are available to the marginalized and the vulnerable.
16. We need to encourage debt relief, fair trade and the transparency and accountability of governments, transnational corporations, and the international banking sector.
17. We need to challenge and hold NGO's, mission agencies, and Christian businesses accountable for their actions in the realm of economic justice.
18. We need to encourage the church and individual Christians to engage in alternative economics, such as the fair trade movement.
19. The church must encourage discussion on the relationship of economic injustice to terrorism.
20. We must promote awareness, understanding, and engagement at the macro and micro levels of *secular society*, emphasizing a biblical vision as the solution to economic injustice.
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## **The Church and Health**

Evy Hay Campbell

Dry skin forms a puckered tent on the abdomen of an emaciated and dehydrated child carried into a clinic. She will survive, unlike the more than ten million other children who die from preventable causes each year. Our planet is full of people who will die before their time because of diseases related to either poverty (for example, infectious diseases) or self-indulgent affluence (for example, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes). What can we do about these needs?

More people pass through the healthcare systems of the world than through its churches.<sup>34</sup> They are suffering, together with the many others who have no ready access to health or healthcare systems. All of them are struggling with questions about God, suffering, life and death. Millions of these people come into contact with local churches and Christian healthcare workers. How can local churches, healthcare workers and faith-based organizations demonstrate the love of Christ as they respond to these needs?

The sad reality is that fragmented concepts of health and of human beings have seriously hindered Christians from promoting and practicing holistic health. E. Anthony Allen, psychiatrist and theologian, states how frequently "the body is left to the doctor; the mind to the

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<sup>32</sup> For example, a bibliography of training resources.

<sup>33</sup> For example, through political engagement, advocacy, speaking, and writing.

<sup>34</sup> Life slogan of Francis Grim, pioneer evangelist among healthcare staff in more than 100 countries.

psychologist; the soul to the church; and the socioeconomic to the social scientists and politicians.”<sup>35</sup>

Holistic health breaks with such unbiblical concepts and is part of holistic mission (the whole Church bringing the whole gospel to the whole world.)

### ***Biblical Foundations Regarding Health***

Health is rarely described in the scriptures as an abstract concept. On the contrary, God’s word usually speaks about healthy and sick persons and defines health primarily in relational terms. In numerous ways God’s laws promoted the health of the Israelites.<sup>36</sup> Sabbath rest and holy days provided recuperation (restoration) and guarded against disease. Circumcision promoted physical hygiene. Sexuality was promoted within the protective shelter of marriage. Other laws regarding sexual relationships, such as the prohibition of adultery, homosexuality, lust and bestiality had character development, biological and social benefits. Dietary and sanitary restrictions, as well as other instructions on personal hygiene, prevented a variety of maladies: tapeworm, cholera, plague, and many others transmitted through biting insects and polluted water.<sup>37</sup> Stable societies were to be built on the basis of covenant relationships between individuals, families, tribes and nations.

Using today’s terminology: God’s word gives solid guidelines for local church and faith-based organization’s ministry to the sick and dying as well as for good community care, preventive healthcare, primary healthcare, and the rest of healthcare.

### ***Key Biblical Terms Related to Health***

Health and salvation have the same root in the Old Testament word *yeshuwah*, meaning “something saved, deliverance, aid, victory, health, help, salvation, saving (health), welfare.”<sup>38</sup> The New Testament words *soteria* and *sozo*, which mean salvation, are also used to describe healing.<sup>39</sup> The implication of this is that the Bible teaches a holistic approach to health; the effects of sin and disease are inextricably combined and need to be dealt with holistically.

In addition to *yeshuwah*, another Old Testament word that references physical health is *shalom*. It is commonly translated into English as “peace,” but it has a much richer meaning than that. The various meanings of *shalom* include:

- right relationships with God, each other and with the rest of creation
- right relationships with angels and demons, the past, the present and the future
- the strength to cope with and adapt to the challenges of life
- the fulfilment of one’s God-given potential and calling
- God’s provision for whatever resources are really needed
- God’s accompanying presence in the valley of death
- the sense of wellbeing / wholeness that results from all the above<sup>40</sup>

*Shalom* is a glorious treasure. Even a dying person can experience God’s *shalom*. Secular authors have discovered some of the elements of *shalom* and have based their definitions of

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<sup>35</sup> E. Anthony Allen, “Wholeness, Salvation and the Christian Health Professional” in Eric Ram, ed., *Transforming Health: Christian Approaches to Healing and Wholeness* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1995), 19.

<sup>36</sup> The Old Testament books Leviticus and Deuteronomy are especially relevant in this regard.

<sup>37</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromily, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 2 M-J (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 640.

<sup>38</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984) in Daniel E. Fountain, *Health, the Bible and the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Billy Graham Center, 1980), 48.

<sup>39</sup> Bruce Bradshaw, *Bridging the Gap: Evangelism, Development and Shalom* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1993), 17.

<sup>40</sup> For more information one could use any of the excellent Old Testament Dictionaries available.

health on it, but the Bible gives us a comprehensive understanding of health. *Shalom* connects evangelism to development and health ministries and provides the key to understanding holistic health.<sup>41</sup> Tony Atkins states that the pursuit of health without Christ, the Prince of *Shalom*, is futile.<sup>42</sup> To be in Christ is to be in *shalom*. Holistic mission is the outworking of what we are individually and corporately in Christ.

### ***What Is Health?***

Healthy persons are those who have the strength to relate rightly to God, angels and demons, others, themselves, the rest of creation, their past, their present and their future. Thus a person can be described as healthy with minor pathological conditions or with a disability or when experiencing the degenerative processes of normal aging. At the same time, a person who is in a good physical condition can be diagnosed as being ill when such a person is under the harmful influences of evil spirits.<sup>43</sup> In holistic health, there is an additional concern for the community, policy, justice and political aspects of health.

There are two pitfalls to avoid when discussing health. The first is the belief that Western scientific medicine has the only truth with regard to health and illness. One example of this is the doubts some have about claims of authentic cures outside of the Western scientific framework.<sup>44</sup> The second pitfall is unreflectively adopting non-Christian values and concepts in health ministries. For example, Christians should make discerning use of the guidelines of the WHO and deal wisely with authoritarian instructions never to be a witness of Christ.

Holistic health needs to be grounded in a biblical world view. This includes biblical views of:

God: Trinity = community/unity in diversity; Personal = Relationship Being

Man: Imager of God; created for community and relationship<sup>45</sup>

Finances: not capitalistic, not socialistic, but biblical.<sup>46</sup>

Politics: not blinded by discrimination or by ideology; justice includes making sure that each one gets what is due to them.

Structures in society: pro-family; pro-community; pro-culture. Seeing cities, organizations, institutions as relational networks.

Principles that form the foundation for holistic health and medical practice and which have been widely accepted in Christian circles, include:

1. All healing is of God and is the expression of the Creator's redemptive energy.
2. Faith is at the centre of health and health involves the whole person in purposeful living.
3. Health can only be experienced in fullness through community, the corporate fellowship of Christians and in relationship with God through Christ.
4. A commitment to promoting health globally is mandatory for Christians and this includes a

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<sup>41</sup> Bruce Bradshaw, *Bridging the Gap: Evangelism, Development and Shalom* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1993), 17.

<sup>42</sup> Tony Atkins, What Is Health? in D. Merrill Ewert, ed., *A New Agenda for Medical Missions* (Brunswick, GA: MAP International, 1990).

<sup>43</sup> Think of the many persons who were delivered from evil spirits by Jesus Christ himself.

<sup>44</sup> John Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 91.

<sup>45</sup> Worked out in more detail in the publication of the Lausanne Issue Group on Medical Ethics.

<sup>46</sup> Worked out in more detail in the publication of the Lausanne Issue Group on Economic Justice. See also the book by Michael Schluter, *The R-Factor* (UK: The Relationship Foundation).

just distribution of resources.<sup>47</sup>

5. Holistic health should be implemented at three levels (the local church should operate at all levels too):
  - a. Micro-level: interpersonal
  - b. Meso-level: institution, community
  - c. Macro-level: mega-city, country, region, global

### **Root Causes of Health Problems**

The causes of ill health are complex. One could consider the physical and sociological roots as was done by Professor Dr. N. R. E. Fendall at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. He spoke about the septic fringes resulting from urban migration and misguided efforts to *improve* slums rather than *prevent* them. He grieved over inadequate understandings of environmental biology and vector- and arthropod-borne diseases that are commonly exacerbated by indiscriminate clearing of land, dam construction and land use affected by human resettlement. He emphasized the interrelationship of epidemics, illiteracy, paucity of financial resources and scarcity of trained personnel.<sup>48</sup> With regard to the root causes of health problems he would forcefully emphasize, "It is poverty, prejudice, ignorance, fecundity, and disease."<sup>49</sup> Some Christians would agree with all these root causes, but many would want to remove 'fecundity' from the list because the bible invariably sees children as a blessing from the Lord.

E. Anthony Allen cautioned that an individual's sins should not be overlooked as causes of health problems. Examples are: the sins of lust, envy, avarice, hatred, deceit, materialism, unforgiveness and lack of self-discipline. Neither should one overlook the evils in the socio-political systems of the world. Racism, unbridled capitalism, passivity-inducing socialism and rightist fascism impact health, as well. Contrasting the impact on health of the fruit of the Spirit versus the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-23) is one of many scriptural eye-openers on the root causes of ill health, both personal and societal.

In scripture, frequent mention is made of God's involvement in health and disease. For example, when God sends a plague it is not a matter of cold and hard judgment, but it is motivated by the Father-heart of God. He is calling people to come back to Him. Christians need to be motivated by this deep desire for restoration – healthcare is a holistic ministry of reconciliation.

All aspects of reality need to be considered when talking about holistic health and one should not consider the physical factors only. The evil spiritual forces that influence political, economic, healthcare and ethical decisions should not be forgotten, either. This underlines the need for intercessory prayer in holistic health.

### **The Biblical Mandate for Health Ministries**

Holistic health ministries have a broad biblical basis: the dominion mandate given in Genesis 1: 26, 28;<sup>50</sup> love God and love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39); the

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<sup>47</sup> T. F. Davey, Introduction, in Stanley G. Browne, Heralds of Health: The Saga of Christian Medical Initiatives (London: Christian Medical Fellowship, 1985), 12-14.

<sup>48</sup> N. R. E. Fendall, Auxiliaries in Health Care: Programs in Developing Countries, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), 2.

<sup>49</sup> Evvy Hay Campbell, Poverty and Creation: Implications for Christian Service, in Compassion and the Care of Creation (Canton, OH: National Association of Evangelicals Conference on Poverty and Environmental Stewardship, March 1999), 19.

<sup>50</sup> "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea....' And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the

Commission of Jesus in Luke 9:1-2 to integrate proclamation and healing;<sup>51</sup> and the imitation of Christ's example (1Corinthians 11:1 and I Thessalonians 1:6), the ongoing challenge for genuine Christian ministry.

It was, as well, the weak and socially marginal that Jesus commonly healed: the blind beggar, the slave of a Roman soldier and an older bent-over woman. Lepers were healed and the lame walked. Because Jesus saw death not as the end of life but rather "a door into a different dimension of existence with God" his followers have "a particular ministry of comfort and hope to the dying."<sup>52</sup>

### **Historic Ministry Models**

It is instructive to look back in time prior to considering the future. Throughout history Christians were involved in what we today call holistic mission. There are lessons to be learned from the early church, through the Reformation and into the more recent centuries of medical missions.

### **The Early Church**

In his multi-volume set *History of the Expansion of Christianity* Kenneth Latourette described the many-faceted impact the early Christians had on society. Eager to share the gospel and expecting the imminent return of Christ, they were nevertheless fully engaged in serving those around them. The church in Rome and in Antioch supported widows, prisoners, and the poor.<sup>53</sup> Christians improved the status of women and children, ended prostitution in pagan temples, halted gladiatorial contests, and protested against both infanticide and abortion which were commonly practiced then. They also improved the "lot of slaves."<sup>54</sup> This was particularly remarkable because the Christians were a minority population and experienced ten major persecutions in their first three hundred years.<sup>55</sup>

The third through eleventh centuries saw Christians seize countless additional opportunities to care for the sick and dying in sacrificial ways. Various religious orders were later established specifically to care for the ill: the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (1113), the Hospitaller of St. John of God (Do Good Brothers, 1540) and the Bethlehemites in Mexico (1667).<sup>56</sup> During those centuries there were at least 326 homes for those with leprosy in Britain and 2,000 in France. Nearly all were supported by the church.<sup>57</sup>

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earth, and subdue it, and rule over..." Literal Version. Note: humankind is to have dominion over the rest of creation, utilizing it as wise stewards for the blessing of others to the glory of God.

<sup>51</sup> E. Anthony Allen, "Wholeness, Salvation and the Christian Health Professional" (7-38), in Eric Ram, ed., Transforming Health: Christian Approaches to Healing and Wholeness (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1995) 30, 27.

<sup>52</sup> T. F. Davey, Introduction (1-16), in Stanley G. Browne, Heralds of Health: The Saga of Christian Medical Initiatives (London: Christian Medical Fellowship, 1985), 7.

<sup>53</sup> Eusebius, *Eccles. History*, Book VI, p. 43; Chrysostom, "Homily on Matthew" No. 66, sect. 3, in Kenneth Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity (7 Vol.) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), 266.

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity (7 Vol.) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), 259-261, 265.

<sup>55</sup> Bong Rin Ro, "The Perspectives of Church History From New Testament Times to 1960" (1.1-1.29), in Holistic Witness in Church History: A Harvest Reader (Phoenix: AZ, 1996). From B. J. Nicholl, ed., In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility (11-40). (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 1.3.

<sup>56</sup> Christoffer Grundmann, "Proclaiming the Gospel by Healing the Sick? Historical and Theological Annotations on Medical Mission" (120-126), International Bulletin of Missionary Research 14:3 (1990), 120.

<sup>57</sup> T. F. Davey, Introduction, in Stanley G. Browne, Heralds of Health: The Saga of Christian Medical Initiatives (London: Christian Medical Fellowship, 1985), 10.

## ***The Protestant Era***

Martin Luther felt that life should not be separated into the sacred and secular but that Christians, as both children of God and citizens of this world, should live “life in this world in order to show forth the love of the kingdom of God.”<sup>58</sup> As recorded by Latourette, European Christian leaders in the Reformation had a holistic view of the mission of the Church. Partnership of word and deed was modelled by the Puritans and Pietists of the seventeenth century. The eighteenth century Methodist evangelical revival brought about increased care for the poor.

While living in India, missionary pioneer William Carey campaigned 25 years against the practice of *sati* (widow burning) until its abolition, advocated humane treatment for people with leprosy, initiated savings banks to combat usury, established the Agri-Horticultural Society and began the first college in Asia at Serampore.<sup>59</sup> Between 1867 and 1893 China Inland Mission (CIM) was involved in church planting, social services, education and healthcare.<sup>60</sup>

## ***Some Examples from the Centuries of Medical Missions***

The Danish-Halle or Tranquebar Mission commissioned the first physician to work overseas in 1730. Dr. John Thomas, who served with William Carey in 1773, was one of the earliest missionary physicians in India, followed by Dr. John Scudder, minister and physician. His daughter was Dr. Ida Scudder, who founded Vellore Medical College which has subsequently become a modern 1,700-bed medical complex.<sup>61</sup> In that same era Dr. Edith Brown from England laid the foundations for the Ludhiana Medical College, also in India.

Between 1850 and 1950 Britain alone sent more than 1,500 medical missionaries to the majority world. Nineteenth century missionary societies formed in Europe and the United Kingdom held evangelism and indigenous education as their highest priorities and advocated that medical missionaries were “to be first preachers, then medical men, if time remained for that.”<sup>62</sup>

Gradually the emphasis in medical missions shifted from proclamation to demonstration. At the World Missionary Conference at Jerusalem in 1928, a statement of “The Place of Medical Missions in the Work of the Church” was adopted, stating that “in the missionary enterprise the medical work should be regarded as, in itself, an expression of the spirit of the Master and should not be thought of as only a pioneer of evangelism or as merely a philanthropic agency.”<sup>63</sup>

The shift from proclamation to demonstration also was seen in the area of social

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<sup>58</sup> Bong Rin Ro, “The Perspectives of Church History From New Testament Times to 1960” (1.1-1.29), in Holistic Witness in Church History: A Harvest Reader (Phoenix: AZ, 1996). From B. J. Nicholl, ed., In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility (11-40) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 1.

<sup>59</sup> Ruth Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwai, Carey, Christ and Cultural Transformation: The Life and Influence of William Carey (Carlisle, Cumbria: OM Publishing, 1993).

<sup>60</sup> Bong Rin Ro, “The Perspectives of Church History From New Testament Times to 1960” (1.1-1.29), in Holistic Witness in Church History: A Harvest Reader (Phoenix: AZ, 1996). From B. J. Nicholl, ed., In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility (11-40) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 1.25.

<sup>61</sup> Ruth Tucker, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: Biographical History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 337.

<sup>62</sup> J. B. McCord with J. S. Douglas, My Patients Were Zulus (New York: Rinehart, 1951), 26 in Michael Gelfand, Christian Doctor and Nurse: The History of Medical Missions in South Africa from 1799-1976. (Sandton, Republic of South Africa: Mariannhill Mission Press, 1984).

<sup>63</sup> Report of the International Missionary Council, Jerusalem, March 24 – April 8, 1928, Vol. 8, Addresses and Other Records, London 1928, 197 in Christoffer Grundmann (1990), Proclaiming the Gospel by Healing the Sick? Historical and Theological Annotations on Medical Mission (120-126), International Bulletin of Missionary Research 14:3. 124.

ministries. In the nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries were commonly evangelists or church planters who secondarily engaged in social ministries. In the twentieth century, however, technological and scientific advances increasingly resulted in specialization in missions, including linguistics and translations, education, aviation, and radio broadcasting.<sup>64</sup>

In the last decades of the twentieth century, maintenance of institutions constructed in the pioneering phase of medical missions has been complex. National churches which became responsible for mission hospitals have struggled financially. Frequently restrictions have been placed on spiritual ministry when government subsidies were accepted. Staff members have recognized they are repeatedly dealing with problems that could more appropriately be dealt with through health promotion, community health and primary health.

The 1978 International Conference on Primary Health Care, held in Alma-Ata (now Almaty, Kazakhstan), turned the attention of the global health community to healthcare at the community level and primary health care was defined.

Key holistic health publications from the 1990's emphasized: a focus on community-based health that empowers people to address their own problems; partnering with the church; sustainable transformation; facilitators who excel both in professional skills and Christian character; the necessity of practitioners living incarnationally and the imperative of a biblical worldview with regard to health and God's vision of the future.

### **Contemporary Health Ministries**

It is encouraging to note the way in which contemporary holistic health ministries have learnt from the past. At the *Health and Wholeness for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* conference in Thailand (Chiang Mai, 2003), members of Christian health ministries and mission agencies interacted on issues of contemporary best practice. The examples that follow include a number from that conference.

### **Local Church Involvement in Community Health**

In Africa, Asia and Latin America many local churches have responded to health needs in their communities in an exemplary way. Many examples can be found in networks involving the ministries of World Vision, MAP International, Food for the Hungry, Samaritan's Purse, Tearfund, Trans World Radio and others. They partner to develop inspiring indigenous local church based holistic health ministries with the following key elements:

1. Begin with where the community is. Look and listen – who are the poor in our vicinity and what are their health needs? What does God want us to do about it?
2. Begin with the assets already available in the community (social, political, economic, etc.).
3. Develop a multi-faceted ministry to meet the needs. For example, health plus agriculture plus literacy plus vocational training.
4. Consider all aspects of health including prevention, health promotion, care, and cure.
5. Build capacity.
6. Develop sustainability.

### **Self-supporting Initiatives**

Litein Hospital was started as a dispensary in 1924 by African Inland Mission. Managed and staffed by 262 Kenyans, in 2002 the hospital had a budget of US\$1.2 million and was 100% self-reliant for monthly operating expenses, with money coming primarily from patient fees and small income generating projects related to the work of the hospital. Profits have been used to

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<sup>64</sup> Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 325.

pay the costs of other programs.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Integrated Health and Development Programs***

The Health Environmental Learning Program (HELP) in Nepal is an example of a church-based program that has included — in addition to community health initiatives — literacy training, instruction in animal husbandry and the promotion of smokeless stoves.<sup>66</sup> Half a world away, Kenyan physician Florence Muindi learned while working in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that ministry can include a Vacation Bible School of 400 children, vocational training in carpentry and tailoring, a sports ministry, a church-based kindergarten, church-based library and tutorial services and an HIV/AIDS ministry in addition to health screening by the church. Other health promotion activities included cleaning public toilets, repairing the houses of those with leprosy, clearing drainage areas, and dealing with trash.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Church-based Health Care***

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Vanga Evangelical Hospital developed from a small rural hospital to a 400-bed referral hospital with 50 primary health care centres in partnership with the Baptist Church of Western Zaire and with other private and government health services.<sup>68</sup> In 2003 about two-thirds of the health zones in the Democratic Republic of Congo were co-managed by Catholic and Protestant partners (Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Mennonite, etc.). With government funding and faith-based management, healing, relief, and holistic health are being brought to thousands of communities affiliated with the Church of Congo and mission organizations during a time of difficulty and despair; a true “Joseph in Egypt” story.

### ***An Emphasis on Capacity Building***

The Ballia Rural Integrated Child Survival (BRICS) Project, a cooperative project between World Vision US and USAID, was implemented 1998-2002 in Uttar Pradesh, India to serve more than 150 thousand people. The core organizing principle was capacity building with partners that included both public and private health care providers, NGOs (non-government organizations) and local government. The project dealt with immunization coverage, maternal/child care, family planning, training of traditional birth attendants and prevention of malnutrition. Goals for each intervention were met or surpassed. Intentional Christian witness without proselytism was integrated in this 98% Hindu area.

### ***Training in Context***

Independence for Kyrgyzstan in 1991 resulted in an economic crisis that impacted the socialized health care system. In 1995 the Ministry of Health sought help in introducing Family Medicine and requested assistance in retraining physicians and nurses for that discipline. The

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<sup>65</sup> Lois J. Ooms, “AIC Litein Hospital/Community Health Program” in Health and Wholeness for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, (Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 17-22, 2003), 17-18.

<sup>66</sup> Devi Raman Badal, “Health Environmental Learning Program” in Health and Wholeness for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, (Chiang Mai, Thailand., October 17-22, 2003), 49-52.

<sup>67</sup> Florence Mundi, “Life in Abundance: Christian Missionary Fellowship” in Health and Wholeness for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, (Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 17-22, 2003), 53-56.

<sup>68</sup> William Clemmer, “SANRU III” in Health and Wholeness for the 21st Century (Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 17-22, 2003), 79-80.

<sup>69</sup> Beulah Jayakumar, “Ballia Rural Integrated Child Survival (BRICS) Project” in Health and Wholeness for the 21st Century (Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 17-22, 2003), 19-23.

<sup>70</sup> Daniel E. Fountain, “Vanga: Health, the Church and the Government,” in D. Merrill Ewert, ed., A New Agenda for Medical Missions. (Brunswick, GA: MAP International, 1990), 53.

Scientific Technology and Language Institute (STLI), a newly formed Christian NGO, formed a partnership with USAID, the World Bank, the Kyrgyz State Institute for Continuing Medical Education, Abt Associates, and the Kyrgyz State Medical Academy and an eight-year project was started in 1997. In addition to occasional office hour discussions on ethical or spiritual issues and mentoring local colleagues, outside of office hours STLI staff members were free to talk openly of spiritual matters. STLI volunteers were also involved in local churches and helped to establish fellowship groups for indigenous medical workers who became believers.

### ***Recruiting Christian Healthcare Workers for Mission Work***

In nine states of North and Northeast India the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) and the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India (EMFI) partnered in a project to remedy the lack of Christian doctors in rural areas in India. Over thirty-five medical and dental graduates responded and by 2003 EHA had, for the first time in many years, the optimum number of junior physicians.<sup>72</sup>

There are many other projects involving Christian healthcare staff in other parts of the world. Japanese and Korean healthcare staff have done magnificent work in other parts of Asia; Singapore and Hong Kong. Doctors have ministered in China. U.S. healthcare workers have ministered in Latin America, Africa and Asia. European healthcare staff have served all over the world. African doctors and Asian nurses are working as tentmaker missionaries in Europe and the Middle East.

### ***Clinical Healthcare Equipping and Mobilizing***

Clinical healthcare represents a large and very strategic field for evangelical Christian ministry. The influence that healthcare workers hold in people's lives cannot be denied and must not be neglected as a viable ministry opportunity. Unfortunately, most Christians in the healthcare professions have heretofore been reticent to incorporate faith into practice, but, because of the substantial body of medical literature linking faith and health and the power of Christ to transform the whole person, this is a key area for ministry development. Organizations such as the Medical Strategic Network of Campus Crusade for Christ, the International Christian Medical and Dental Association, Nurses Christian Fellowship, Healthcare Christian Fellowship and The Kardia Foundation are devoted to equipping and mobilizing healthcare professionals and students for holistic ministry.<sup>73</sup> A significant issue regarding healthcare professionals is the way in which the West has drained healthcare workers from the majority world. It is a real challenge to healthcare workers from the majority world to stay in their homelands to serve.

### ***Action Plan for the Church***

Both recurrent and new challenges face the church with regard to global health. Injustice, armed conflict, recurrent and emerging health threats, and the enormous problem of HIV/AIDS all require responses that the evangelical church must implement. What could be done practically? Possibilities for prayerful consideration include the following.

### ***Personal Action by Lausanne Issue Group Participants***

1. Seek to promote holistic health throughout professional networks.
2. Develop up-to-date descriptions of best practice models and send them to the point persons of the Health Sector group for publication/distribution.<sup>74</sup>

### ***Promote a Comprehensive Biblical Understanding of Holistic Health***

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<sup>72</sup>David, Sam, "Multiplying Medical Mission," in *Health and Wholeness for the 21st Century* (Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 17-22, 2003), 63-64.

<sup>73</sup>[www.gomets.org](http://www.gomets.org); [www.icmda.net](http://www.icmda.net); [www.ncfi.org](http://www.ncfi.org); [www.hcf-international.com](http://www.hcf-international.com); [www.kardia.org](http://www.kardia.org).

<sup>74</sup>Evy Campbell ([evvy.campbell@wheaton.edu](mailto:evvy.campbell@wheaton.edu)), Jeff Russell ([jrussell@kardia.org](mailto:jrussell@kardia.org)), Ndunge Kiiti ([nkiiti@map.org](mailto:nkiiti@map.org)) and Chris Steyn ([chris.steyn@xs4all.nl](mailto:chris.steyn@xs4all.nl))

The Church needs language in common use that reflects a comprehensive biblical understanding of health and wholeness. It needs to be gripped by both the Isaiah 58 vision for health and an understanding of the Kingdom of God as both now and not yet. This must include a grasp both of the root causes of ill health, including sin, avarice, idolatry of materialism, and evils in socio-political systems as well as the redemptive work of Christ and the opportunity to share the good news of salvation. Finally, there needs to be an understanding of the mandate for reaching out in ministries of health and healing.

Strategic comments:

1. Our vision for holistic health fits into the overall vision of the holistic mission of the Church.
2. Models for attaining holistic health should aim for transformation in as many ways as possible:
  - a. Develop models both inside present healthcare systems and alongside them
  - b. Involve local churches
  - c. Involve Christians already involved in healthcare
  - d. Get going in all regions of the world.

How can we promote a biblical understanding of holistic health and the mandate for health ministries? Some suggestions for maximizing the impact of holistic mission on the body of Christ include:

1. Promote the development of modules on holistic mission in the various expressions of theological education. Make such modules available on paper and via a website.
2. Introduce an understanding of holistic mission into church-planting circles.
3. Promote synergy regarding holistic mission between local churches, Christian (mission) hospitals, other healthcare institutions and faith-based organizations.
4. Integrate holistic mission teaching in Christian medical, nursing, and other healthcare schools. Put such a curriculum on paper and on a website to make it accessible.
5. Utilize models of good practice to inspire those training next generation leaders in and for holistic mission. Put this on paper and on a website to make it easily accessible.

### **Mobilize Prayer for Holistic Health**

Healthcare Sunday is the Sunday closest to the 18<sup>th</sup> October (St. Luke's day) each year. Prayer and sermon materials for use are available from the Healthcare Sunday website in the UK where it has successfully been held for more than ten years in collaboration with the Evangelical Alliance.<sup>75</sup> Permission for translation, adaptation and use in other countries has been granted.

### **Get Local Churches Involved In Holistic Health Ministry**

1. Start small and grow the ministry gradually without overloading church members. Acts 1:8 tells us that local churches will be witnesses of Christ among four groups of people: their own culture nearby, another culture nearby, their own culture further away, other cultures far away.
2. In the same way, local churches can grow their holistic healthcare ministry among all four groups without neglecting any of them.
3. Remember to consider preventive health, health promotion, and community care
4. Begin by using the church members who: have a vision for holistic health, visit the sick and dying, and work in healthcare
5. Think of other church members who might become interested: church youth could visit other

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<sup>75</sup> Search at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) for [healthcaresunday](http://healthcaresunday) to find the most up to date website.

young people who are sick or who have AIDS; children could do health prevention and promotion programs for other children or could go to the hospital at Christmas time to give small gifts to the staff and thank them for what they are doing to help the sick.

6. It might be helpful to distribute copies of this document among healthcare professionals and potentially interested persons.

### ***Focus on Transformation***

Churches should seek the Kingdom of God and therefore envision the transformation of their communities in all aspects of life. Social action alone is not sufficient to effect justice; the guilt, power and consequences of sin also need to be dealt with through the holistic gospel of Christ.<sup>76</sup> Transformation cannot to be achieved by strategies and plans only (mere change on the outside), but it needs to be complemented by God's work in human hearts (change from the inside outwards). It is a vision that sees all people at the table of life with "enough to eat, decent work and wages, education for their children, adequate healthcare and housing, and most of all, hope for the future."<sup>77</sup>

### ***Emphasize Community Health and Primary Care Whilst Strengthening Health Systems***

As local and self-sustaining entities, with members or pastors that are ethical and commonly literate, churches are uniquely suited to both promote health and partner in strengthening health systems. The Vanga Evangelical Hospital provided an example of the church playing a major role in a public-private partnership while the Ballia Rural Integrated Church Child Survival Project demonstrated what a small Christian minority can accomplish working through a Christian NGO.

### ***Develop Practitioners Who Are Committed Disciples of Christ***

Local churches should teach members who are working in the health field that their workplace is their mission field and disciple them accordingly. They are encouraged to make use of the specialist services of the organizations mentioned under the heading Clinical Healthcare Equipping and Mobilizing.

Practitioners must be committed disciples of Christ who manifest the fruit of the Spirit, model professional excellence, have a clear grasp of the holistic theology in which their ministries are grounded, empower others, and serve with humility.

Practitioners need to become promoters of advocacy, justice, and structural/policy/global issues from a biblical perspective.

### ***Work Together as the Body of Christ***

"Partnership" is a common term in professional health and development circles but believers have a far more powerful and organically reality as the Body of Christ. We need to actively network with the National Evangelical Alliances and other potential partners, seeking synergy for the advance of the Kingdom of God. Partnerships must be at all levels: locally, nationally, regionally, and globally.

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<sup>76</sup> Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, Mission as Transformation. (Oxford: Regnum 1999), x.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Catholic Bishops, Called to Faithful Citizenship. United States Catholic Conference (January 1999) in Ron Sider, "Two Exciting New Resources," PRISM ePpistle, (April 21, 2004), 2.

## I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food

Ronald J. Vos

Approximately 40,000 people die each day from starvation or hunger-related causes.<sup>78</sup> Yet in developed countries there is a surplus of food in the form of cereal grains. In some regions even potable drinking water is often lacking. In this paper the group has decided to focus on agriculture. Water is intrinsically linked to sanitation and irrigation, and as an issue of global importance should be discussed in another paper.<sup>79</sup>

### **Worldview Issues**

How we regard creation, how we practice agriculture, all depends upon how we view the world. A worldview can be described as the basic assumptions that one holds either consciously or unconsciously about the make up of the world and how the world works. A worldview has been described as the pair of spectacles through which we view the world. If you believe that the earth is given to humans to be used for what humans ultimately deem is appropriate, then a logical conclusion is that you will use it for human profit and ignore consequences to the rest of creation. A biblical worldview is necessary to understand appropriate responses to agriculture.

People's view of the nonhuman creation will ultimately affect how agriculture is practiced. Depending on our worldview, either God (theocentric), the rest of creation (biocentric), or humans (anthropocentric) are exalted.<sup>80</sup> We are not passive observers of the ecosystem, but constantly have an impact on it and the impact we have is dependent on our worldview.

A biocentric worldview elevates the ecosystem over humans. Humans are subservient to the earth and are often seen as a pathogen that threatens the health of the planet.<sup>81</sup> While exalting the rest of the creation may appear unselfish, people who believe this either tend to worship creation or believe in the elimination of humans in order to conserve the ecosystem.<sup>82</sup> This view is typically held by New Age followers and some traditional religions.

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<sup>78</sup> Estimates range. *Justpeace News*, 2:1, January 2004 used the figure of 34,000 under the age of five. Others including FAO have used numbers as high as 54,000. Regardless of the estimate, it is unacceptably too large. This figure is much higher than the number that reportedly die each day from HIV/AIDS. There is a correlation between those dying of HIV/AIDS and hunger because many of the food providers are dying and this adds to the hunger problem.

<sup>79</sup> Fresh water is a very precious commodity. Approximately 97% of all the earth's water is saline. Most of the remainder of the 3% of fresh water is tied up in glaciers or ice caps of mountains, too deep in the earth to extract, or is tied up in soil. In fact, only 0.003% of all the earth's water is available for consumption and agricultural production. Annually renewable freshwater supplies on land account for only 0.000008% of all water on earth. While this may seem to be a small amount, estimates show that with proper care there is adequate water for all people and other creatures living on earth. The problems arise due to unequal distribution and frequency of rainfall, location of population centres that are demanding water that exceeds supply, and salination and siltation due to irrigation. For more information see "Water Conservation and the Politics of Irrigation" by Laura E. Powers and Robert McSorly in *Ecological Principles of Agriculture*, Delmar Thomson Learning, 2000, and *The Conquest of Land over Seven Thousand Years* by Lowdermilk (<http://www.soilandhealth.org/01aglibrary/010119lowdermilk.usda/cls.html>).

<sup>80</sup> Roger W. Elmore, "Our Relationship with the Ecosystem and Its Impact on Sustainable Agriculture," *Journal of Production Agriculture*, 9:1 (1996).

<sup>81</sup> Biologist E. O. Wilson stated back in 1945 "The human species is our own home-grown asteroid."

<sup>82</sup> James Lovelock, *The Gaia Hypothesis*, (1979).

Animism is the belief that ‘the physical world is animated by spirits or gods.’ Because certain natural objects are worshiped they cannot be used for food or fibre by humans. Animists will often starve while certain edible plants and animals surround them because appropriate use of these plants or animals would be considered sacrilegious. The Animist’s fear of offending the spirits keeps people in ignorance of the blessings of creation.

The danger for Christians in rejecting the biocentric view is to swing to the opposite extreme of over-valuing human power over the natural world and thus fall into the error of anthropocentrism. The anthropocentric worldview exalts humans over the rest of creation; humans are considered dominators of creation. Anthropocentrism assumes that people are accountable to no higher authority for their treatment of the rest of natural world. Everything is there for humans and nothing has intrinsic or God-given value. One direct result of this worldview is the tendency to view the natural world simply in terms of price. This results in a focus on short-term actions and often near-sighted approaches to land and natural resources. Land is worth only the amount of income it will produce for its owner. Therefore, the best use of land is what brings in the most income. If land can be sold for a purpose that brings more money than it would bring if it were being used for agricultural purposes, then it should be converted to the most profitable use. Urban sprawl is a simple example of ‘developers’ being able to pay more for land than people involved in agriculture. Other examples are factory farming and genetically-modified crops. Most of the present day use of land and agriculture in Western countries is a result of this anthropocentric view.

An anthropocentric worldview assumes that forests or prairies only have value when humans can utilize them. Thus forests or prairies should be preserved because they can provide us with a plentiful supply of oxygen or because there may be some plant species that could serve as future sources of medicine or food for humans. The anthropocentric view puts the forests’ and prairies’ economic value above any intrinsic or God-given value. A result of this philosophy is that all technology is initially embraced as good technology because it hastens the human exploitation of creation for human benefit. Only if there is overwhelming evidence that humans can be affected negatively is such technology called into question. There is little regard for non-human effects.

Sadly some Christians have interpreted God’s granting ‘rule’ (Genesis 1:28) over the natural world to humankind as the sort of ‘rule’ found in the anthropocentric view. Christians who recognize that humans are created in God’s image often misinterpret this passage and think this gives them the right to use their power to do as they please, rather than practicing the servant ruler model as exemplified in Jesus Christ.<sup>83</sup>

Because human beings are by nature selfish the anthropocentric view leads to some demanding so much of the natural world’s benefits that others are left with nothing. Some come to possess vast tracts of land while others are left landless (Isaiah 58). Here again land is viewed in terms of its price for the few without any regard for its value for the many. God condemns such exploitation in no uncertain terms and legislated against the inequality of land holding in the law of Jubilee (Leviticus 25).<sup>84</sup>

The anthropocentric view does not promote an agriculture that is sustainable for the long term. Under this view, some people, but not all, will have food; some people, but not all, will

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<sup>83</sup> Ronald J. Vos, “Social Principles for ‘Good’ Agriculture” in Biblical Holism and Agriculture: Cultivating our Roots, David J. Evans, Ronald J. Vos, and Keith P. Wright, eds., (William Carey Library, 2003).

<sup>84</sup> Some critics like Berkeley historian Lynn White Jr. often blame Christians for the environmental crisis and the exploitation of creation. See “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”, Science 155 (1967): 1203-1207. This accusation is the result of a misinterpretation of the biblical message. Severe environmental problems in the Former Soviet Union demonstrate that tremendous problems exist in non-Christian societies.

have a reasonable quality of life and some, but not all, agricultural producers will be economically viable. This is considered a normal economic process because there is a survival-of-the-fittest mentality driving this worldview. Standards of justice are the result of what a majority of humans decide is just. This is a worldview that if unchecked and carried to its logical end, breeds cutthroat competition as well as the destruction of creation because it is driven by human greed and selfishness.<sup>85</sup>

Christians who believe that salvation is only a matter of saving individual souls are in danger of adopting by default an anthropocentric view of the natural world.<sup>86</sup> This leads to an exclusive focus on personal morality and neglecting the teaching in God's word regarding creation. The world's way of practicing agriculture is accepted without question, resulting in adding to environmental degradation. Views of the end of the world that emphasize the destruction of the earth rather than its regeneration also leads to a neglect of environmental ethics and seeing no value in the natural world beyond exploiting it for human gain or using it to prove the existence of God. Failure to understand the delight that God takes in His creation (see Genesis 1 and Job 38-42 for example) and failure to realize that because He is sovereign, He upholds and provides for His creation, inevitably results in humankind misusing God's creation.

### ***Theocentrism: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation***

Human beings are directly involved in the ecosystem and like the rest of creation are created by God. We derive our food and the air we breathe from the ecosystem; we add wastes to it and ultimately our present bodies return as dust to it. Interaction with creation cannot be avoided; it is a holistic activity that must be brought with the rest of life under the Lordship of Christ.

The Bible teaches that the earth is God's creation, that He declares it good, and that the pinnacle of His creative activity is the Sabbath when He rested from His work and delighted in what He had made (Genesis 1-2:3). As a reflection of who He is, the creation declares God's glory to anyone who chooses to see it (Psalm 19; Romans 1:20). In contrast to the biocentric view, God is seen as separate from His creation. In contrast to the anthropocentric view, humankind is seen as the crown of God's creation, but in the context of the rest of creation which is given intrinsic value by God. God also upholds the creation over which he is sovereign (Job 38-42; Psalm 104, 148, 150; Isaiah 55; Luke 12; Matthew 6). As mentioned previously, God delights in the creation that He has made. To diminish a part of God's creation is to diminish what God delights in and prevents that part from praising God.

God is the first agriculturalist. This fact has great implications for how we practice agriculture. Since God is the first farmer all those who work in agriculture are engaged in a dignified and holy vocation. God upholds and delights in the great diversity that He has made (Genesis 2:8-9).

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<sup>85</sup> The selfishness of humans is illustrated by Garrett Hardin, professor of biology, in an animal-grazing example. Hardin's concept has become known as the Tragedy of the Commons. See "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162, (1968), 1243-1248. In a grazing area that is open to all herders, everyone will work together for their mutual benefit until the carrying capacity of the land is reached. At that point each herder may consider the cost and benefit of adding one more animal to his herd. One person may soon discover that his benefit is the addition of one more animal but that the cost of adding another animal is divided among all herders. As each individual herder seeks to add more animals, the commons becomes ruined and tragedy ultimately results. "Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all (Hardin, 1968), 1244.

<sup>86</sup> Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation" in *The Art of the Commonplace* (Shoemaker and Hoard, 2002).

Human beings, both female and male, were appointed as rulers of the rest of creation under the authority of God (Genesis 1:28). This concept is further explained in Genesis 2:15 where God puts Adam in the garden and commands him to realize the potential of (*abad*) and conserve (*shamar*) the creation. This servant kingship is fully revealed in Jesus Christ the servant king, who will usher in the new heaven and earth.

An old but rich concept that expresses the biblical concept of how humankind can use the earth and its fruits is that of 'usufruct.' Usufruct literally means 'to use the fruits of.' It is the right to utilize and enjoy the profits and advantages of something belonging to another so long as the property is not damaged.<sup>87</sup> This concept should be a guiding principle in how we should practice agriculture and how we approach issues related to hunger.<sup>88</sup>

Even though God created everything good, humankind rejected God's authority and destroyed the perfect relationship that existed between them. Yet the destruction of this relationship also involved destroying the relationship between themselves and the rest of creation. However, because He loved the world (*cosmos*) (John 3:16) that He had made, God in the person of Jesus Christ came into this world to pay the penalty for all sin. Through his suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, Christ has redeemed his people and all of creation (Colossians 1:15-20; Ephesians 1:9-10). In gratitude we are called to spread this good news and with the help of the Holy Spirit to reform human activities to be in accord with God's original mandate.<sup>89</sup>

God has not discarded His creation. As a result of the fall, every part of creation was subjected to frustration and bondage to decay (Romans 8:20-21). Yet God graciously established a covenant with humankind and the rest of creation that He would never destroy the world again with a flood (Genesis 9:8-11, 22). This covenant demonstrated God's continued delight and concern for all of his creation. This covenantal understanding is in stark contrast to the utilitarian economic view that the value of creation is determined solely by how humankind benefit. This places great responsibility on Christians in how we interact with creation.

While the natural world obeys God's laws without any choice in the matter, humankind was given the responsibility to rule over and care for this natural world. Because of sin, cultures and social institutions are often damaging to the natural world. It is not surprising that agriculture may be detrimental to God's creation.

The covenant which was fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection has cosmic consequences for creation as well as personal consequences for believing Christians. As Fred Van Dyke (et al.) states in the book *Redeeming Creation*: "God's saving grace through Christ not only pays the price for people, but redeems an oppressed cosmos. This does not demean the work of Christ, but rather amplifies it. Just as the sin of Adam affected all creation, so the

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<sup>87</sup> As author, professor, and farmer Wendell Berry, in a letter read by Wes Jackson at a Theology of the Land Conference, Collegeville, MN. in 1986 stated: "To receive the gift of Creation and then to hasten directly to practical ways of exploiting that gift for maximum production without regard to long term impacts is at best ingratitude and at worse blasphemy (the act of claiming for oneself the attributes and rights of God)."

<sup>88</sup> Richard Bauckham, "Human Authority in Creation" in God and the Crisis of Freedom: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives (WJK Press, 2002).

<sup>89</sup> Charles Colson and Nancy Percy, How Now Shall We Live, (Tyndale House, 1999), 296. "Salvation does not consist simply of freedom from sin; salvation also means being restored to the task that we were given in the beginning: the job of creating culture. . . . Christians are saved not only from something [sin] but to something [Christ's lordship over all life]."

sacrifice of Christ begins the redemption of it.”<sup>90</sup> That redemption is not just for humans, but all God’s creation as shown in Romans 8:19-21: “the creation itself will be liberated from the bondage of decay.” Colossians 1:15-20 describes Christ holding everything together in creation, everything was made for and by Christ; everything holds together in Christ and everything will be reconciled by Christ. Redemption at the end of time is not an end to the creation, but the beginning of a purified new heaven and a new earth. God will make all things new (Revelation 21:5).

In summary, theocentrism exalts God over creation, including human beings. But if we follow the example of Christ as servant leader, we have the ability to put others above self and to become caretakers of creation accountable to God. This view results in the blessing of sustainable agriculture and will promote good environmental stewardship and sufficient food production for a long period of time. It aims for a quality of life based on sufficiency rather than excess and leads to the long-term sustainability of creation.

### ***Implications Related to Agriculture***

From a biblical perspective, holistic mission — where agriculture is concerned — means focusing on stewardship under God and sustainability. The industrial model of agriculture is very prominent in Western culture and many Christians are involved in its practice. This model is being exported around the world. In some ways it can be considered a success because it relies on few people and large amounts of purchased inputs to produce a lot of food. However, the social and environmental costs that accompany this type of agriculture are often ignored. Some of the well known, but often ignored, negative results of this type of agriculture are: environmental degradation, depleted aquifers, polluted ground and surface water, diminished genetic diversity, and heavy reliance on limited fossil fuels.

Our view of plants and animals are also different from the world’s view if we accept a theocentric worldview. For example: weeds are not some evil plants that have been planted by the devil, but plants that are growing in places in which humans wish they were not growing. A weed is simply a plant that is out of place from a human viewpoint. This plant still functions as God intended. It prevents soil erosion by anchoring itself to the soil with its roots. It reduces the impact of raindrops on soil by intercepting the rain with its leaves. It produces carbohydrates as a result of photosynthesis, and can serve as a source of food and protection for non-human creatures. Domestic animals are not just objects that produce something to be utilized by humans. Animals are part of God’s creation and their diversity gives Him great pleasure. An animal gives praise to God when it is allowed to be the animal that God intended it to be. Humans must remember this fact as we raise our animals for food and fibre. Christians especially need to remember that they are dealing with something that is not theirs. Creation is a gift given them by the Creator Himself. This fact should instil a sense of awe and respect in Christians.

Sustainable agriculture is economically viable, resource efficient, environmentally sound, promotes justice to both the human and non human creation, and builds community while providing food and fibre for humans for long periods of time.<sup>91</sup> Sustainable agriculture may involve many different practices. There is no one method that can be applied as a panacea. Agricultural practice has to be tailored to the local soils, topography, growing season, livestock, rainfall, etc. Diversity and adaptation to local conditions are the keys for successful sustainable agriculture. Land and soil cannot be managed well by mass-produced mono-technologies but by wisdom and local insight.

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<sup>90</sup> Fred Van Dyke, David C. Mahan, Joseph K. Sheldon, Raymond H. Brand, *Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship* (InterVarsity Press, 1996), 86.

<sup>91</sup> Ron Vos and Del Vander Zee, “Trends in Agriculture: Sustainability” in *Pro Rege* (March, 1990).

A sustainable model of agriculture must mimic the creational model of the ecosystem it replaces because in reality agricultural systems are highly modified ecosystems.<sup>92</sup> Ecosystems are systems of 'communities' of living things (biotic communities) that have the following features:

- They use solar energy, which is like a stream of income, to produce local products which recycle raw materials locally and are not exported to a far away place as if they were mined. (For example, solar energy degrades animal waste so that it can be used as a fertilizer.)
- They depend on local plants that hold the soil and nutrients in place.
- Species diversity is encouraged rather than relying on one single species for income.
- Local resources are kept in place as much as possible instead of being mined for a distant country.
- If changes and displacements occur they occur at a rate and scale that is compatible with maintaining internal integrity. Social and ecological impact is minimized.

A sustainable agriculture will be characterized by the following. Agroecosystems:

- that are less dependent on fossil fuel and manufactured items (such as fertilizers) and more dependent on local renewable resources. Efficiency is measured in terms of energy not money because solar energy is like an income stream whereas fossil fuels are like a savings deposit that is gone forever once spent.
- that have little or no adverse environmental impact (for example, on ground water, downstream watersheds, and local wetlands).
- that depend on local wisdom instead of following a centralized command that does not know the local system as intimately as those who live and work in it.
- that values diversity in creation.
- that allows room for wild creatures in addition to domestic creatures.
- that encourages local and natural methods of pest control instead of purchased pesticides.
- that grows plants and animals in regions to which they are adapted. For example, rice should not be grown in a desert just because it is technologically possible to do so.
- that produces agricultural products primarily for sale in the region in which they are produced with only the surplus being used to earn income, rather than producing for a country a long distance away while neighbours may be starving because the product grown for sale is not used locally.

Sustainable agriculture is something to strive for. To implement the characteristics listed will require local knowledge, wisdom, and care by local people and will thus support community.<sup>93</sup> These characteristics outline a sustainable holistic approach to land, creatures, water and people. Implementation is not going to be possible without active support from church and mission leaders around the globe. Practical help is also available from sources such as *Footsteps*, a magazine produced by Tearfund (UK) dealing with various issues including agriculture and available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish from [footsteps@tearfund.org](mailto:footsteps@tearfund.org) or on the web at [www.tilz.info](http://www.tilz.info).

We cannot ignore the long-term implications of our actions while immersing ourselves in a personal piety that ignores the full impact of the gospel on how we live out our faith before the

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<sup>92</sup> An ecosystem is "a system of interacting organisms in a particular habitat." The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

<sup>93</sup> Ron Voss and Del Vander Zee, "Sustainable Agriculture" in Signposts of God's Liberating Kingdom (Potchefstroom University Press, 1998).

face of God. Such piety reinforces a non-biblical but often practiced dichotomy of the sacred and secular. Instead, Christians should heed the wisdom of theologian, educator, and diplomat Abraham Kuyper.

Wherever a person may stand, whatever anyone may do, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, or whatever one may do in one's mind, in the world of art, or in science, everyone is, in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before God. Each person should see him/herself employed in the service of God, responsible to obey God and above all, to aim to give glory to God.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Action Plan for the Church***

In a world in which many millions die annually because of inadequate nutrition, should be clearly a matter of vital interest to everyone, including Christians. As already discussed, God is interested in agriculture — in the way food is produced. What type of agriculture we practice and endorse as Christians is, therefore, an important element of our witness to the kingdom that has been ushered in by our Lord Jesus Christ. In a world where the majority of its peoples will soon be living in cities there is an urgent need for strong holistic biblical teaching on agriculture. We suggest the following actions:

#### ***Education***

1. Christian schools, colleges and universities should teach all students the fundamental principles of holistic agriculture and where possible provide courses either in agriculture or closely allied fields such as agricultural economics, horticulture and ecology, or environmental studies.
2. Seminaries and Bible colleges should teach the principles of holistic agriculture in courses focusing on both the theology of creation and ethics.
3. Many Christian educational establishments have land, which more often than not is kept as decoration. Some of this land could easily be used to practice the principles of holistic agriculture.

#### ***Church Leaders***

1. Church leaders should embrace and understand the principles of holistic agriculture and begin to preach and live them out in their churches and communities. This could range from encouraging farmers in the congregation to practice holistic agriculture to Bible exposition encouraging the purchase of locally grown food. Church leaders could even grow some of their own food holistically.
2. Church leaders should encourage church members that are knowledgeable in holistic agriculture to teach their congregations.

#### ***Churches and Individual Christians***

1. All Christians — rural, urban and suburban — should grow at least some of their own food so that they can better understand the connection between the land and the food they eat, and to give praise to God who is the First Farmer.
2. The church should come alongside and support farmers who desire to adopt more creation-friendly agricultural practices. Examples of this would be supporting farmers who decided to switch to organic farming or getting involved with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).<sup>95</sup>
3. The church should take advantage of planting and harvest festivals to celebrate God's gifts and to educate members about holistic agriculture.

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<sup>94</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 7.

<sup>95</sup> For a brief description of how CSA works see "Social Principles for 'Good' Agriculture by Ronald J. Vos in *Biblical Holism and Agriculture: Cultivating Our Roots* by David J. Evans, Ronald J. Vos, and Keith P. Wright, eds., (William Carey Library, 2003), 57.

4. Church members should be educated to understand that God cares for the earth and is actively involved in sustaining it and in providing for all its creatures including human beings. It is therefore appropriate to pray God's blessing on crops and animals.
5. The church should educate its members about purchasing and using fair trade agricultural goods.

### ***Campaigning and Advocacy***

1. The church should actively support the UN Millennium Development Goals that relate to and reinforce holistic agriculture. This can be done through supporting the Micah Challenge, a joint initiative of the Micah Network and the World Evangelical Alliance to campaign for the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>96</sup>
2. Access to land to produce food because most of the land is in the possession of a few very wealthy families is still a major problem for many rural people. There is still a need to advocate on behalf of the landless.
3. Lands that have been cared for in a sustainable way by indigenous people are being threatened by logging companies and *campesinos* in many countries. It is our Christian duty to work with and on behalf of these traditional farmers.

### ***Materials***

1. There is a growing body of theological and practical material on holistic agriculture. However, there is a need to produce more material and to disseminate such material to pastors, churches, and farmers.
2. Some of the Lausanne Holistic Mission issue group participants in the agriculture sector will:
  - a. network in this area to discover what is available for use by pastors, churches, and farmers.
  - b. develop up-to-date descriptions of best practice models for publication and dissemination to those working in the agricultural sector.

## **Humanitarian Response: Christians in Response to Uprooted People**

*Bryant L. Myers*

*At every stage in Christian history, even from the beginning, the refugee motif has been central.*<sup>97</sup>

In 2001, over 37 million people were displaced by conflict, persecution, poverty, economic collapse, natural disasters and famine.<sup>98</sup> Half of these people were children. Over 227 million people were affected by natural disasters or conflict in 2000.<sup>99</sup> In 2001, almost two thirds of the world refugees were Muslims.<sup>100</sup>

Over 150 million people live outside their country of birth, of which 13 million are refugees. The rest are economic migrants, fleeing poverty in hope of a better life. Most international migrants come from China and Mexico.<sup>101</sup>

The highest numbers of internally displaced people are in Sudan, Angola, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Myanmar. The largest sources of refugees are Afghanistan, Palestine, Myanmar, Angola, and Sudan.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> For information see [www.micahchallenge.org](http://www.micahchallenge.org).

<sup>97</sup> Frederick Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees* (Abingdon, 1969), 52.

<sup>98</sup> UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>99</sup> International Federation of the Red Cross, *World Disasters Report* (2001).

<sup>100</sup> Estimated from US Committee on Refugees, *World Refugee Survey* (2002).

<sup>101</sup> Rodger Doyle, *Scientific American* (February 2002).

The world has seen the largest numbers of uprooted peoples in human history in the last 10 years. The number of major conflicts has risen from 10 in 1960 to 38 in 2000, affecting almost 21 million people.<sup>103</sup> There are between 50 and 90 emergencies a year.<sup>104</sup> Sadly the Human Rights Watch reports “States have largely regressed in their commitment towards protecting refugees over the past 50 years,”<sup>105</sup> by which it means the right of asylum is eroding. At the same time, humanitarian assistance for OECD countries has been stable at US\$5.5 billion annually over the last three years.<sup>106</sup>

The world of humanitarian response has changed dramatically in the last decade. In an era of failed states, a new kind of emergency has emerged: complex humanitarian emergencies or CHEs. CHEs combine extensive food insecurity with widespread movements of displaced people or refugees, systemic economic collapse and civil war or political unrest.<sup>107</sup> Humanitarian workers are no longer neutral players and humanitarian aid is being exploited for power and profit making. It is not always clear anymore if humanitarian aid is only doing good. Therefore a new round of ethical issues now must be factored into humanitarian response.

The root causes of humanitarian need are found in racism, cultural conflict, poverty, competition for resources, ideology and religion, leaders who profit from creating refugees, and failures of the human heart. Increasingly, those involved in humanitarian response are wondering how humanitarian responses are addressing these root causes. Are we at risk of being the ladles in the world’s soup kitchen?<sup>108</sup>

### ***Biblical Reflections***

Christians should, and often do, have a special place in their hearts for refugees, displaced people and migrants to foreign lands. The Letter to Diognetus describes Christians as people “who live in their own lands, but only as aliens” for whom “every foreign land is their homeland and yet for them every homeland is a foreign land.”<sup>109</sup>

The story of Israel and the story of the church is also a story of refugees. Being exiles is part of the collective memory of Christian peoples. Born in a garden, we were made aliens in an unfriendly world by the wound of sin (Gen 1-3). Cain began the cycle of violence and, as a result, became a restless wanderer upon the earth (Gen 4:12), outside the presence of God. Yet, in the same moment, a gracious God marked Cain to save his life (Gen 4:16), the first instance of the right of protection.

### ***Leaving Haran***

Being forced to leave home and not returning is an ambiguous event in biblical terms. Consider Abraham and his pilgrimage to Canaan, then to Egypt and eventually to the Promised Land.

Abraham was asked by God to leave everything and travel to a land whose name he did not know (Genesis 12:1). A voluntary refugee, Abraham became a stranger in a strange land (Hebrews 11:9) and thereby contributed to Israel finding its true home in the Promised Land (Genesis 17:8). This kind of leaving home ultimately proved to be positive.

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<sup>102</sup> US Committee on Refugees, *World Refugee Survey* (2002).

<sup>103</sup> Project Plowshares, *Armed Conflicts Report 2001*, [www.plowshares.com](http://www.plowshares.com)

<sup>104</sup> International Federation of the Red Cross, *World Disasters Report* (2002).

<sup>105</sup> “50 Years On: What future for refugee protection?” [www.hrw.org/campaigns/refugees](http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/refugees)

<sup>106</sup> Ian Smillie (Development Initiatives) and Larry Minear (Humanitarianism and War Center, Tufts University), “Global Humanitarian Assistance Flows 2003: An Independent Assessment of Humanitarian Aid Flows,” [www.reliefweb.int/cap/hfs](http://www.reliefweb.int/cap/hfs)

<sup>107</sup> Andrew Natsios, “US Foreign Policy and Complex Humanitarian Emergencies,” *World Refugee Survey 1995*, (New York: US Committee on Refugees, 1995).

<sup>108</sup> Stephen Commins, “NGOs: Ladles in the Global Soup Kitchen,” *Development in Practice*, 9, Number 5 (1999).

<sup>109</sup> Cyril Richardson, ed., “Letter to Diognetus,” *Early Church Fathers* (MacMillan, 1970).

It was a famine that caused Abraham to become a refugee to Egypt (Genesis 11:10). Living as “strangers in a country not their own (Acts 7:7),” ended up meaning 400 years of slavery and oppression. This leaving home was not so positive. But it was also famine that drove Joseph’s brothers to Egypt (Genesis 42:1-2), resulting in Israel regaining his son and God reaffirming His promise to make Israel a great nation (Genesis 45:25 – 46:5).

As a result of being economically necessary and culturally threatening at the same time, these Hebrew migrant workers ultimately experienced attempted genocide in Egypt (Exodus 1:9), much like migrants today. This oppression led to cries to a God who is especially sensitive to the cries of the lost and dispossessed (Exodus 2:24, Genesis 16:7). Israel was driven out of Egypt by an oppressive Pharaoh to wander in the wilderness in formation until forty years later Israel was drawn to Canaan, a land free of slavery in which Israel discovered its true home. This leaving home had a positive outcome.

This ambiguity of the meaning of people leaving their homes is reflected in modern human history. Some migrations end up being permanent and positive such as the Jewish Diaspora and the Irish movement to the United States in the aftermath of oppression and the Potato Famine. Sometimes dislocation and separation to a foreign land result in rediscovery and recreation.

### ***Caring for the Alien***

God gave specific instructions to Israel on the care of aliens or foreigners, those without legal protection in their new country: “Do not mistreat the alien or oppress him [or her], for you were aliens in Egypt (Ex 22:21).” In establishing rules for social responsibility, Israel was reminded of who God is -- “the Lord of Lords, mighty and awesome, who shows not partiality” – and what God does – “defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing (Deuteronomy 10:17-18).” This is followed by God’s command to God’s people: “You are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. Fear the Lord your God and serve him (Deuteronomy 10:119-20).” A negative injunction – do not oppress them – becomes a positive one – love them. We should also note that the Deuteronomy verse suggests that fearing God and loving aliens are interrelated.

What God means when God asks us to love an alien is also provided. “When an alien lives among you in your land, do not mistreat him [or her]. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him [or her] as you love yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God (Leviticus. 19:33-34).” This command takes us is beyond simple charity. It is a call for radical inclusion. This foreshadows Christ’s command in the Gospels that we are both to love God and love our neighbour. This commandment stands in stark contrast to how refugees, displaced people and migrant workers are often received today.

### ***Refugees in Babylon***

The second major refugee movement in the Bible is the exile of Israel. Yet this refugee movement was also ambiguous.

Israel was devastated. Jerusalem was razed. The Temple was destroyed. All of Israel’s leading citizens were relocated forcibly to Babylon. Northern Israel never recovered. Jerusalem lay in ruins until the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, both returning refugees. Refugees in Babylon were scattered and assimilated. Israel ran the serious risk of losing its identity through social merger.<sup>110</sup> The depth of loss and suffering is echoed in Psalm 137:

By the waters of Babylon,  
there we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered Zion.  
On the willows there  
we hung up our lyres....

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<sup>110</sup> Norwood, 37.

How long shall we sing the Lord's song  
in a foreign land?

Ezekiel and Jeremiah also add something new to our reflection on uprooted peoples. Ezekiel echoed the Pentateuch and its admonitions on the care of aliens, but also made a considerable extension to what we've seen previously. "You are to allot it [the land] for yourselves and for the aliens who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the alien settles, then you are to give him his inheritance, says the Sovereign Lord (Ezekiel 47:22-23)." It would seem that if you need aliens to settle among you and work for you, then you have an obligation, and they have a right, to be made fully at home.

In a letter to the exiles, Jeremiah wrote, "This is what the Lord Almighty, God of Israel, says: `Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper (Jeremiah 29:4-7).'"

While receiving people have an obligation of caring, love and inclusion, uprooted people have obligations, as well. One cannot escape the irony of Jeremiah encouraging population growth when that was what triggered Pharaoh's oppression of Israel, just as it does today among those afraid of population growth among migrant and refugee populations.

### ***Refugees and the New Testament***

The refugee motif of Christian peoples is also a New Testament phenomenon. Jesus was a child refugee, taken by his father and mother to Egypt to escape the politically motivated slaughter of innocent children in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13-15). Being a scattered people is inescapably implied in Christ's command to be his witnesses in "Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)."

The scattering of the disciples in the persecution following Stephen's death was instrumental in the spread of the gospel to Samaria and North Africa (Acts 8). The first mission church in Antioch began as a refugee church. Peter's first epistle is addressed to the "strangers in the world scattered throughout Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1Peter 1:1)." In fact, this was the essential plight of the Christian community by the sixth decade of the first century and it extended thereafter in the face of Roman persecution.<sup>111</sup> Many early Christians were refugees.

### ***Theological Reflections***

There are a number of theological themes that must be kept in mind as we explore the Christian response to humanitarian crises.

### ***Hospitality***

While the Christian response to uprooted people is biblically demanded, the imperative rests on something deeper than Old Testament law. The demand to love God with all one's heart and mind and to love one's neighbour as oneself is made clearer and more specific in Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25. All the nations will be gathered and separated according to fairly simple criteria: provision to the "least of these" of food, water, clothes, medical care in the context of "inviting me in." This brings us to the important theological theme of hospitality.

One of Kosuke Koyama's endearing contributions to missiology is what he calls "neighbourology."<sup>112</sup> Koyama reminds us that people need good neighbours more than they need good

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<sup>111</sup> Norwood, 52.

<sup>112</sup> Kosuke Koyama, "Extending Hospitality to Strangers: A Missiology of Theologia Crucis," International Review of Mission, 82. No. 321 (October 1993).

theology or even emergency relief. He reminds us that the central part to being a neighbour is to invite people into the place where we live. Hospitality is a missiological response.

Pope Paul VI underscored the same idea in *Populorum Progressio*, an encyclical written two years after the Second Vatican Council: “We cannot insist too much on the duty of giving foreigners a hospitable reception. It is a duty imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity.”<sup>113</sup> The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees reminds us that progress in terms of living peacefully together within the human family is “closely linked to the growth in the mentality of hospitality.”<sup>114</sup>

Hospitality is more than caring for or reaching out. “I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:35).”

Welcoming is an invitation to get close and personal. It’s a little like Jesus sharing a meal with lepers and outcasts.

### ***Charity and Solidarity***

We must also acknowledge the theological theme of the responsibility of the rich. While no one is too poor to give, the Bible suggests that those who have are obligated to share. In Acts we are told that no one in the community of faith was in need (Acts 4:34) and this was made possible by sharing. Failure to welcome the refugee, displaced person or migrant worker constitutes a moral failure, not simply an economic choice. As we have seen, the expectations of such welcoming goes far beyond provision of material needs.

In *Populorum Progressio*, three moral duties of rich nations are named: 1) mutual solidarity in the form of the aid that rich nations should give developing nations, 2) social justice in the form of rectifying trade relations between strong and weak nations and 3) universal charity – the effort to build a more humane world community in which all can give and receive.<sup>115</sup> This echoes the Old Testament commandments. Sharing (loving the alien) must be accompanied by creating a fairer playing field (not oppressing the alien) and restoring just and peaceful relationships among peoples (giving the alien an inheritance), but where does the passion for charity and solidarity come from?

### ***Faith and Love***

This leads us in turn to consider the relationship between our faith and our capacity to love our uprooted neighbour. The test of our faith is our ability to love (James 1:16-17). If we cannot welcome the stranger, our faith is suspect. Either we don’t truly believe, or our gospel is too narrow, or there are too many idols distracting us from our gospel responsibilities.

More importantly, faith is the precursor to being able to love and love truly. Our faith in the Lord of grace and the sanctifying Holy Spirit is what holds out the promise that we might be able to love unselfishly, as opposed to gaining something for ourselves. David Bloesch says it nicely: “Faith alone justifies; love attests that faith is alive. Faith is personal; love is social. Faith is the foundation; love is the goal. Faith is the root; peace, joy and love are the fruits.”<sup>116</sup> This reminds us that our Christian faith and its vitality and sustenance are the foundation of our humanitarian response.

### ***True Humanitarianism***

Finally, we must clarify our theology of humanitarianism. There is a temptation to reduce a Christian understanding of humanitarianism to its modern secular form. Bloesch warns us “The object of humanitarianism [in its secular sense] is not to identify with the world in its shame and affliction (James 1:27), nor to permeate the world with the leaven of the gospel, but to remould the world in the

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<sup>113</sup> Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 67 (1967).

<sup>114</sup> Cardinal Roger Etchegaray and Archbishop Giovanni Chelli, “Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity,” a paper presented by the President of Cor Unum and the President of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Refugees at the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (1983), 4.

<sup>115</sup> Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, paragraph 44 (1967).

<sup>116</sup> Donald Bloesch, “Humanitarianism,” *Faith and Its Counterfeits* (IVP, 1980), 51.

image of enlightened humanity."<sup>117</sup> Feeding, housing, protecting and caring for refugees is both a humanitarian and Christian thing to do, but is not in itself complete from a Christian perspective.

The first antidote against a reduced understanding of humanitarianism is to be sure that our anthropology is theologically sound.<sup>118</sup> The truth about God is that God created human beings as free beings and the truth about humankind is that we are made in God's image and that we are here for a purpose. Our purpose is first to glorify God and then to make the earth productive. This and this alone is the foundation of our humanitarianism as Christians. This and this alone is the test of our humanitarian response. Are we affirming the truth about God and the truth about humankind? Are we removing the limitations that uprooted people face in doing the same?

The second antidote against reductionism is to make sure we remain clear on our role in responding to uprooted people as Christians. *Populorum Progressio* makes the point that truly Christian humanism "points the way toward God."<sup>119</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, speaking to churches and Christians who care for the uprooted and marginalized, reminds them that, while the church is called to care for the poor and must do so, the church nonetheless has a unique task: "The specific responsibility which has been given to the church and to nobody else is the responsibility to bear witness to the reality of Jesus' victory."<sup>120</sup>

Bloesch reminds us "the great saints of the church have revolutionized society because they have given the world a new metaphysical vision, a world and life view anchored in the transcendent. They have provided not simply programs of social change, but a sense of meaning and purpose to existence."<sup>121</sup> As we stand on the shoulders of Christians, who fought for the end of the slave trade and against child labour, piracy and conditions that fostered poverty and refugee movements, we need to take care that we respond out of a truly Christian understanding of humanitarianism and that our partnership with each other and the churches reflects this view.

### **Why Are They Uprooted?**

For many reasons. Some are fleeing conflict, as was the case in Rwanda, Liberia and Angola. Some are trying to flee disastrous economic policies such as is the case today in Zimbabwe and North Korea. Others are displaced by natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and floods in China. Others are fleeing persecution because of religion or ethnicity, as was the case in the Balkans in the 1990s. Others are victims of failed states and the greed and search for power by warlords, as is the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone. Still others are displaced by environmental disasters such as the encroaching Sahel in West Africa and in the poorer parts of El Salvador. Some move because they see opportunities elsewhere such as in Europe and the United States.

### **How Are They Sinned Against?**

In many ways. The places where uprooted people find a home are often temporary and ill equipped. Sometimes this is done intentionally to discourage refugee movements, as was the case of the Afghanistani refugees in Pakistan before the war on Afghanistan in 2002.

Refugees and internally displaced people have been treated as bargaining chips. Local warlords or corrupt officials have used refugees and internally displaced people to get aid that is then misused. In one infamous case in the DRC, people were herded into a refugee camp and,

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<sup>117</sup> Bloesch, 47-48.

<sup>118</sup> Protestants would be helped by reading Catholic social teaching that locates its understanding of caring for the poor on a Creation account of the truth about God and about man. This "true anthropology" is a consistent foundational theme in all of the encyclicals that make up Catholic social teaching beginning with *Rerum Novarum* in 1887.

<sup>119</sup> Paul VI, paragraph 42.

<sup>120</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Signs Among the Rubble* (Eerdmans, 2003), 113ff.

<sup>121</sup> Bloesch, 52.

once the food was delivered, they were driven into the jungle and the food was given to the militia. In another example, warlords in Sudan have been known to ask for a “food tax” in return for security.

In West Africa last year, there was an egregious case of sexual abuse on the part of staff of one or two humanitarian agencies. In many cases, the uprooted become a key part of the local economy and yet provision of social benefits is withheld on the grounds that migrant workers are not legal. Adding injury to injury, after a decade of welcoming refugees and migrants, many countries are closing their borders and seeking forced repatriation.

### ***How Are the Uprooted Sinners?***

In the same way as everyone else, except that poverty and cultural dislocation often exacerbate bad behaviour. Cultural norms break down. Men take more of the food than others. Sexual and physical abuse can be present in such situations. Poverty and refugee situations can also exacerbate religious and cultural differences. Driven by desperation, women sometimes sell themselves and their girl children for food. The strong take advantage of the weak.

### ***What Are Effects of Being Uprooted?***

Many effects are obvious: lack of food, poor sanitation, inadequate shelter and separation of families. Personal safety is an issue, especially in the case of children and women. Children are not in school, and normal socialization is difficult. Cultural and religious life is interrupted.

There are deeper effects of being uprooted. The identity of people is marred in deep and alarming ways. Catholic social teaching on the care of migrants and refugees informs us that “The places which gave meaning and dignity of life are lost. Also lost are the places which recall the events of one’s own history. Lost is the possibility to pray at the graves of one’s own parents. Even when humanely treated the refugee still feels humiliated, no longer able to control his [or her] own destiny and at the mercy of others.”<sup>122</sup>

Deeper still. “The shock caused by their flight brings out aggression, guilt and apathy in them [the uprooted]; emotional loneliness; anxiety and anguish caused by not knowing the fate of their families; disappointment as a result of idealizing their place of refuge; culture shock caused by new surroundings and mentalities foreign to their own; the collapse of ideals and personal goals; the crumbling of religious ideals caused by the impact of other ideologies, etc.”<sup>123</sup>

Lincoln Ndogoni, a Kenyan psychologist working in Rwanda after the genocide, created a simple tool that allowed him to assess clinical depression among the survivors. He found that over 14% were clinically depressed as a result from the horrors they had experienced.<sup>124</sup> Jeremiah said it simply: “The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved. Since my people are crushed, I am crushed. I mourn and horror grips me. Is there no balm in Gilead. Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? (Jeremiah 8:20-22).”

### **Responding**

Since the impact of being uprooted is complex, so the response must be.

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<sup>122</sup> Etchegaray and Chelli, 2.

<sup>123</sup> Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio. “Towards the Pastoral Care of Refugees,” a paper presented at the 1983 Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. See also Isaiah Majok Dau, *Suffering and God: A Theological Reflection on the War in Sudan* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2002), 51ff.

<sup>124</sup> IRIN Mental Health Day report, [www.irinnews.org/webspecials/health/mental\\_health.asp](http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/health/mental_health.asp).

### ***Who Is Responsible to Respond?***

Everyone, of course. However, the first line of response belongs to local churches. Pastoral guidance on the care of migrants and refugees asserts that “The responsibility to offer refugees hospitality, solidarity and assistance lies first of all with the local church. She is called to incarnate the demands of the gospel, reaching out without distinction toward these people in their moment of need and solitude.”<sup>125</sup>

It was Christian families in Albania that first responded to the refugees from Kosovo, taking them into their own homes. Churches around the world temporarily “adopt” refugee families as the first line of response. Recently UNICEF surprised itself by discovering the very significant front-line response of small churches and mosques to HIV/AIDS affected orphans and vulnerable children in Africa. This was being done with unpaid volunteers, no money and no training.<sup>126</sup>

The local host country is next in line and this is a demanding role. Again, Catholic social teaching: “The first point of reference should not be the interests of the State, or national security, but the human person, so that the need of the community, a basic requirement of the very nature of human beings, will be safeguarded.”<sup>127</sup> Local NGOs, faith-based and otherwise, often play a key role in prompting this kind of selfless concern on the part of the State and are often a means of immediate response

Finally, the responsibility also falls on the international community in the form of the UNHCR, World Food Programme, donor governments and international NGOs, mission agencies and Christian relief NGOs.

### ***Ensuring Survival***

This is the most basic element of response. Provision of food, done appropriately and distributed with dignity, is necessary. Shelter must provide protection, safety and privacy. Water and sanitation are critical. People need access to medical treatment. Children need to get back to school. All of this needs to be done in ways that empower and restore lost dignity.

The fact that Genesis 1 closes its creation account with God’s judgment that what God made was good implies that doing good work is a moral imperative. Christians need to engage with and adhere to the international standards for humanitarian response. The NGO Code of Conduct of the International Federation of the Red Cross<sup>128</sup> and the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Responses are the two most commonly agreed international standards today.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Providing Protection***

Protection of refugees is both a practical demand and a matter of basic human rights. “Protection is not a simple concession made to the refugee; he [or she] is not an object of assistance, but rather a subject of rights and duties.”<sup>130</sup> Refugees are to be considered non-combatants and need to be made safe in the midst of conflict. But being safe from bullets is not enough.

Protection of women is a major concern. Women make up a high proportion of refugee populations and there are large numbers of female-headed households. An in-depth study of

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<sup>125</sup> Etchegaray and Cheli, paragraph 26.

<sup>126</sup> UNICEF and the World Conference of Religions for Peace, “Study of the Response of Faith Based Organizations to Orphans and Vulnerable Children” (2003).

<sup>127</sup> Etchegaray and Cheli, paragraph 9.

<sup>128</sup> IFRC NGO Code of Conduct at [www.ifrc.org/pulicat/conduct](http://www.ifrc.org/pulicat/conduct).

<sup>129</sup> The Sphere Standards include standards for food security, food aid, nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter and site selections and health. [www.sphereproject.org](http://www.sphereproject.org)

<sup>130</sup> Etchegaray and Cheli, paragraph 11.

Burundian refugee women documented widespread sexual abuse and domestic violence against refugee women. The UNCHR and some NGOs have learned painful lessons from not focusing on protection of women and young girls.

Children also suffer disproportionately as uprooted people and frequently receive little attention to vulnerabilities unique to children. Separated children are often targets for sexual and domestic abuse. Many are denied access to education because they are required to work by their “caretaker” families. Refugee girls have been forced into prostitution in order to survive. Not all agencies have protocols for the protection of children.

Refugees are often welcomed initially and then later come to be viewed as a problem because of their increasing numbers or confrontation with the receiving culture. Those serving uprooted people, and especially local media, can help by providing positive and clear images of the afflicted and their cultures as an antidote against fear of strangers. A final area of protection is related: uprooted people need to be protected from forced repatriation.

### ***Recovering Identity and Vocation***

The place that is not home must become home at least for now. Families need to be reunited. The psychosocial scars of being uprooted need to be treated. This means trauma and crisis counselling as well as dealing with depression must be part of the humanitarian agenda.

A central ingredient to recovery of identity is reunification of families. The family is the fundamental unit of society and culture, and thus, the problem of dispersed families makes recovery of identity difficult. Any steps, including the application of modern information and communications technology, that can speed reunification, are high priority.

Participation is also a key to recovering a sense of identity personally and culturally. Uprooted people need “the possibility of participating in the decisions that affect their daily living,” according to Catholic social teaching.<sup>131</sup> Uprooted peoples also need the opportunity of “cultivating their own cultures and traditions and freely expressing their own faith.”<sup>132</sup> The fundamental goal is restoration of dignity befitting human beings made in the image of God. This understanding is what prompted Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles. ALNAP, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance, has recently published a practitioner’s guide on participation of disaster affected people.<sup>133</sup>

The rediscovery of hope is one of the most important tasks in the religious life among the uprooted. Lamentations are unavoidable in the short term, but they must eventually take on an element of defiance as hope and identity are recovered.<sup>134</sup> Uprooted people need assistance and encouragement to move beyond their sense of loss toward a determination to be a people once again, either back at home or at home in a new place. In the midst of the Exile, Israel invented the synagogue and relocated the centre of Israel’s faith from a place to inside the heart of every Jew. “Next year in Jerusalem!” is the cry of defiant hope of a dispersed people.

An additional element of assisting the recovery of hope, confidence and identity is addressed through efforts to make the humanitarian responses accountable to the uprooted themselves. This can be done programmatically by setting up complaints committees for food distributions. Christian organizations should also engage and partner with Humanitarian Accountability International in Geneva.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Etchegaray and Cheli, paragraph 15.

<sup>132</sup> Etchegaray and Cheli, paragraph 12.

<sup>133</sup> *Participation by Crisis-Affected Populations in Humanitarian Actions: A Handbook for Practitioners* available at [www.alnap.org](http://www.alnap.org)

<sup>134</sup> Norwood, 45-47.

<sup>135</sup> [www.hapinternational.org](http://www.hapinternational.org)

### ***Spiritual Care***

The struggle to make meaning of what has happened also needs to be addressed. Just as it was for Israel, the religious heritage of uprooted peoples can be a source of strength,<sup>136</sup> but not without a struggle. There is both the sociological question of who did what to whom, but also the spiritual question about where God is in all this? Is God powerful, but not just; or just, but not powerful? This was the crisis of Israel during the exile. Either choice is a bad one, but how does one make sense in the midst of despair in a place far from home? In Habakkuk 3:17-18, the prophet articulated his answer:

Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,  
<sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD ,  
I will be joyful in God my Saviour.

Somehow it is possible to embrace the truth of loss and displacement and still be able to rejoice in God. God is still God; neither Nebuchadnezzar nor Mugabe has the final say. Uprooted peoples need to be sensitively and appropriately supported as they create meaning for what has happened to them.

Catholic teaching on the care of refugees includes the idea that “All refugees have the right to a type of assistance that includes their spiritual needs...thus they can find comfort to bear their harsh trial and to grow in their own religious experience.”<sup>137</sup> Yet the nature of spiritual care must be carefully crafted to respect the vulnerability of uprooted peoples. This is a time for accompaniment and pastoral care. Christian witness by word in the midst of the powerlessness and pain of being uprooted runs the grave risk of being insensitive and possibly coercive.

### ***Christian Impact***

There are three areas that make up Christian impact: partnering with the church, Christian witness and the Christian formation of relief workers. Because local churches are present before and after the relief response, they are both the first line of response and the key to sustainable care. Christian relief organizations need to take local churches seriously and ensure that they are stronger when we leave than when we came. This is done through sensitive and empowering partnerships.

Christian witness must be done sensitively and appropriately. The vulnerability of uprooted people must be respected. Too close a link between life-saving care and the invitation to respond to the gospel can be coercive and morally wrong. Yet, Christianity is a missionary faith and a true humanitarianism calls us to point people toward God.

Christian witness can be done in appropriate ways. Bible Societies have excellent materials designed to offer comfort from Scripture for people suffering from loss or disaster. Leslie Newbiggin's reflections on the first seven chapters of Acts led him to the idea that Christian witness is often the result of actions that “provoke questions to which the gospel is the

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<sup>136</sup> Norwood, 43.

<sup>137</sup> Etchegaray and Cheli, paragraph 28.

answer.<sup>138</sup> These question-provoking acts can be either the powerful work of God or the eloquent lives of caring relief workers. This approach provides a sensitive alternative in which initiative for the inquiry about spiritual things is left to the people themselves.

If the key to people asking questions of the Christian relief worker is the quality and counter-cultural nature of the way Christian workers live and act, then Christian formation of relief workers becomes central. There is something winsome, attractive and counter-cultural about the fruits of the Spirit. Lifestyles that are sensitive to culture and vulnerability, and that seek the well-being of others at the cost to one's own well being, tend to lead to questions to which issues of faith and God pertain.

### ***Challenges in the Future***

The world of humanitarian response is rapidly changing. We will have to change with it or be left behind. Our challenge is to respond to this change in biblically grounded and theologically sound ways. Ignoring the changes is not an option for God's people.

### ***Basis for Humanitarian Response***

Since the founding of the Red Cross in the middle of the last century, the humanitarian imperative rested on the idea of charity and the principle of our common humanity or human solidarity, both products of a Judeo-Christian worldview. This foundation for humanitarianism made response voluntary on the part of individuals and states. This was an effective frame for over a century.

However, in the last twenty years, its effectiveness is fraying. The power of values like charity and solidarity is waning, especially when it comes to the actions of governments. International response is uneven and declining. For example, the World Food Programme ran out of food for North Korea recently yet millions were starving. In an attempt to find a foundation that compels more consistent action, the humanitarian community is trying to shift the basis for expecting a response from charity and solidarity to human rights and international law.<sup>139</sup> The hope is that Western nations will be more faithful to international obligations incurred through the Conventions – such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child -- and the Optional Protocols that they have signed. A strong movement, especially among European NGOs, toward confrontational advocacy, accompanies this shift.

There is not a consensus on this, however. Some continue to hold that absolute neutrality is the essence of humanitarianism and that humanitarian NGOs are ill equipped to contribute to a culture of national and international legal accountability.<sup>140</sup> They encourage the humanitarian NGO community to embrace its limited role and not succumb to the temptation to devalue itself as a provider of "mere charity." In another example of the lack of consensus, non-Western cultures resist the human rights framework as a Western imposition and point to their own traditions of compassionate care.

Christian agencies need to find their place and their rationale in all this. Charity and solidarity are part of a biblical worldview. But one can also find a pre-Enlightenment view of human rights in the Bible as well. For example, Psalm 82 calls for the nations to "defend the cause of the weak and fatherless and to maintain the rights of the poor." A biblical anthropology grounds the idea of human rights in the idea of human beings as being made in the image of God and the idea of duties in the admonition to steward creation and be fruitful.

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<sup>138</sup> Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, World Council of Churches (1989), 132.

<sup>139</sup> Hugo Slim, "Not Philanthropy But Rights: Rights-base Humanitarianism and the Proper Politicisation of Humanitarian Philosophy," paper presented at a Seminar on Politics and Humanitarian Aid, Commonwealth Institute, London (1 February 2001).

<sup>140</sup> David Rieff, "Humanitarianism in Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, 81, No. 6 (November/December 2002).

### ***Relief in the Context of War***

More and more humanitarian responses take place in the midst of conflict. In 2000, there were 38 major conflicts. Almost half were in Africa, which accounted for 77% of the world's deaths from conflict. The correspondence between these conflicts and uprooted peoples is unmistakable.

The wars that uproot people are unusual in the history of war: the combatants are civilians organized into informal militias, the motive is profit, brutalization of women is a normal tool of war, many soldiers are children and terror and atrocity are the tools of war. Refugee camps were militarized as in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. Local warlords used displaced people and refugees as hostages in their search for money and power in Sudan, Somalia, Angola and Sierra Leone. These complex emergencies require a new set of skills. Programming requires an understanding of the local politics, economics, power relationships and who is "winning" and "losing" in the midst of the conflict.<sup>141</sup> Not having a working knowledge of who is doing what to whom, and how power is being applied and for what ends, opens the relief response to the dangers of doing harm while meaning to do good (more on this below). Tools have been developed to help relief workers do this kind of assessment on the run.<sup>142</sup>

Relief in the midst of conflict means that staff safety is an issue as never before. The days in which the relief worker was neutral, protected and respected are gone. In the last decade, humanitarian workers were at risk both as incidental casualties and as deliberately targeted victims. During the mid 1990s Great Lakes refugee crisis, 36 UNHCR staff were killed or went missing. The Red Cross, a famously neutral group of humanitarians, has lost dozens of staff that were deliberately targeted. Many agencies have been forced to create security manuals and do security training for front-line staff.<sup>143</sup> Larger agencies have full-time security staff.

The most distressing example of the convergence between humanitarianism and war is the increasing politicization or instrumentalization of humanitarian aid. In Afghanistan, and even more so with Iraq, the governments driving the conflicts attempted to co-opt the humanitarian response as part of the cover for the conflict itself and the geopolitical agendas that the conflict served. The logic was "we have to destroy this place, but we will get the humanitarian community to fix it." Humanitarian neutrality and impartiality are eliminated when this happens.

### ***Ethical Choices***

This changing context of relief also creates a new set of ethical dilemmas. We can no longer assume that being humanitarian and doing good are always the same thing. A series of major studies following the refugee crisis triggered by the Rwandan genocide have documented compelling evidence that aid can do harm as well as good.<sup>144</sup> Relief goods can be diverted into the military economy. The presence of relief goods frees up other resources for war, as was the case in the 2002 Ethiopia famine when the world fed starving Ethiopians as the Ethiopian

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<sup>141</sup> Philippe Le Billon, "The Political Economy of War: What Relief Agencies Need to Know," Network Paper 33 of the Humanitarian Practice Network (July 2000).

<sup>142</sup> Stephen Jackson and Siobhan Calthrop, "Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts: Analysis Tools for Humanitarian Actors," World Vision International (July 2002).

<sup>143</sup> Chuck Rogers and Brian Sytsma, World Vision Safety Manual: Safety Awareness for Aid Workers and David Lloyd Roberts, Staying Alive: Safety and Security Guidelines for Humanitarian Volunteers in Conflict Areas, ICRC.

<sup>144</sup> Mary Anderson, International Assistance and Conflict: An Exploration of the Negative Impacts, Issues Series 1, Local Capacities for Peace, Cambridge, USA, (1994) and J. Prendergast, "Minimizing the Negative Externalities of Aid: The Ten Commandments," paper for the US Institute of Peace conference on Humanitarian Aid and Conflict in Africa (1995).

government spent US\$1 million a day fighting Eritrea over a patch of desert. Relief goods can become just another scarce resource over which uprooted people fight.

Food distribution can provide succour to militia who use refugee camps to rest and recover in order to go back to the fighting; many NGOs left the Goma refugee camps in the mid 1990s when confronted with this difficult reality. What choice does one make when a warlord says that 10% of the food is the price for safe delivery of the rest. Aid in the midst of conflict also means that agency staff are at risk; when is it too much to ask them to stay? Ethical decisions everywhere you turn.

Hugo Slim, of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva<sup>145</sup> and a friendly critic of NGOs, suggests that relief in conflict situations creates “four risks to altruism.”<sup>146</sup>

- Risk to the person doing the helping
- Risk to the people you are trying to help
- Risk to helping the perpetrators
- Risk to the moral integrity of the helper

Slim explains that duty-based ethics argues that actions are simply good in themselves and that one has the duty to do good without regard for the outcome. If people are hungry, we have a duty to feed them. Goal-based ethics are more concerned with the outcome or consequences of an action. They conclude that it is not always good to feed people if they then return to the conflict and kill others.

Another ethical dilemma is a result of the fact that famines are now increasingly man-made such as the 2003 famine in Southern Africa in which the effect of drought was greatly exacerbated by poor governance and bad public policy. What does an agency do: feed the starving or pressure the leaders whose policies are creating the emergency or both?

Some agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and most American and Christian NGOs tend to be more duty-based in their thinking. European agencies such as Médecin Sans Frontières and Oxfam use a more outcome-based approach. In today's complex world of relief, each has merits and demerits. Christian agencies need to decide for themselves where they stand and be prepared to accept responsibility for the consequences.

### ***Cooperating with the Military***

Adding to the ethical confusion is the issue of whether humanitarian agencies should cooperate with peacekeeping military forces. In Bosnia, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cambodia, NGOs have had to learn to cooperate with troops intent either on keeping the peace or imposing the will of external powers. To make things more confusing, the bitter experience of Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia has led to military forces requesting assistance from humanitarian NGOs in developing new military doctrine and terminology.

The sword of humanitarianism is double edged. The lessons of Rwanda remain deeply imprinted on the NGO consciousness and it is clear that timely external military intervention can save lives. Civilian deaths continue to be a consequence of conflict and thus there are situations in which military protection for the uprooted will be essential. Yet at the same time, NGOs are keenly aware that military forces are designed to kill and destroy. Further, and more problematic, militaries are ultimately instruments of national foreign policy, meaning that humanitarian action can itself be a mask for geopolitical objectives.

In spite of these ambiguities, it is nonetheless true that the military as peacekeepers are increasingly part of the world of relief and disaster mitigation. On occasions the military will

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<sup>145</sup> Chief Scholar, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, [www.hccentre.org](http://www.hccentre.org).

<sup>146</sup> Hugo Slim, “Doing the Right Thing: Relief Agencies, Moral Dilemmas and Moral Responsibility in Political Emergencies and War,” *Studies in Emergencies and Disaster Relief*, No 6, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (1997).

appear as instruments of salvation. In other instances, military peacekeepers will be objects of suspicion and concern.

### ***Disparity in Response***

It is obvious that not all humanitarian emergencies are equal. Some receive international media attention, a gush of private donations, and subsequent bilateral and multilateral funding. Bosnia and Kosovo are cases in point. In 1999, the UNHCR reported that the international community spent US\$120 per person in the former Yugoslavia, while the UNHCR was unable to raise any funds for its US\$4 million appeal to move the refugee camps away from the border with Sierra Leone.

Sadly, there are other humanitarian emergencies that simply never make the global radar screen.<sup>147</sup> There are over 3 million internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the most invisible and long-running complex humanitarian emergencies in history. In another example, over 2 million Internally Displaced People are trying to stay alive in the context of the continuing conflict and narco-trafficking in Colombia.

The response of the donor community to emergencies is now under study and the results are disappointing. In a major report last year, Ian Smillie and Larry Minear concluded, "humanitarian action is largely imbedded within competing and sometimes inconsistent domestic and foreign policy priorities. Much donor behaviour reflects foreign policy concerns, as was the case in the Cold War, but domestic politics now plays an even greater role."<sup>148</sup> If the humanitarian crisis is not on CNN, and if it doesn't matter at home, then it is politically safe to ignore it. This is one of the drivers to shift the basis for humanitarian response from charity to international law.

### ***HIV/AIDS***

Southern Africa in 2003 saw a new kind of famine. Drought reduced crop yields. Destructive government policies in Zimbabwe reduced a net grain exporting country into a major food distribution hub. This was sad, but not abnormal. On top of this, HIV/AIDS is ravaging the adults, taking farmers off the land, creating millions of child-headed households and eliminating a whole generation of extension officers, health care providers and teachers. Even if the drought ends, and it appears to be doing so and even if Zimbabwe somehow begins to recover its agricultural production, it is very doubtful that Southern Africa will be food secure for a very long time. Combining HIV/AIDS and relief situations may mean relief situations that last a generation or more.

Refugee camps are hotbeds for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Women are vulnerable anyhow and all the family and social norms that might be called on to limit sexual behaviour are gone. The call for abstinence and faithfulness in the midst of suffering, divided families and despair is hard to hear.

This pandemic threatens to take over and transform the nature and longevity of famines.

### ***Developmental Relief***

Historically, it was assumed that relief was what was done when a crisis disrupted the "normal" development process. Relief programs were simply social welfare interventions that ended as the drought or war ended. The industry spoke of a relief to development continuum.

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<sup>147</sup> Médecin Sans Frontières issues a "Top Ten" list of the year's most underreported humanitarian stories. The January 2003 list is listed on [www.doctorswithoutborders.org/2004/01-06-2004](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/2004/01-06-2004)

<sup>148</sup> Smillie, Ian and Minear, Larry, "The Quality of Money: Donor Behaviour in Humanitarian Financing," Humanitarianism and War Project, The Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University (April 2003).

Experience tells us that this is naïve.<sup>149</sup> Relief done poorly can create dependency and, in a few sad cases, permanent “famine camps” have resulted. In other cases, recovery methodologies failed to create the processes and attitudes that support ongoing development. Worse, as Mary Anderson, points out, relief can exacerbate or sustain the conditions that led to the problem in the first place.

Contemporary relief work is now being framed as developmental relief in recognition that communities actually need relief, recovery and development all at the same time. This focus on both the short and long term simultaneously assists the transition as the crisis situation eases. Finally, the design and carrying out of relief programs must see sustainable development and peacemaking as the ends toward which short-term responses must point.

Because droughts and natural disasters can reverse development, developmental relief calls for development programmers to pay attention to disaster mitigation. Tearfund’s recent report, “Before Disaster Strikes,” raises the issue and proposes more deliberate action to empower poor communities to better cope with hard times.<sup>150</sup>

### ***A Bias Toward Peace***

For Christians doing relief in the context of war, the issue of peacemaking and reconciliation is inescapable. We are told that the sons [and daughters] of God are peacemakers (Matt 5:9) and Paul says that the fact of our being reconciled to Christ means that we have the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Mary Anderson, of The Collaborative for Development Action, has made a key practical contribution as to how this might happen working with uprooted people. Her work on Rwanda convinced her that humanitarian aid could be a force for or against reconciliation. She further observed that outsiders can never make nor keep the peace. It is up to the people themselves to create their own systems for achieving peace and for resolving internal dissensions.

In her important book, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*, Anderson provides practical insights as to how an agency can “figure out how to do the good they mean to do without inadvertently undermining local strengths, promoting dependency and allowing aid resources to be misused in the pursuit of war.”<sup>151</sup> Anderson has developed a simple analytical tool for identifying “connectors” and “dividers” in a conflict setting in order to help the responding agency do relief in a way that reinforces “connectors” and avoids aggravating “dividers.”

For example, an NGO was asked to rebuild the water system of a small town in Bosnia. The three local ethnic groups asked for three separate water systems, reasoning that this would safeguard the water supply if they ever started fighting again. The NGO refused to begin work on water system until the three groups agreed to work together to design and maintain a new common water system.

### ***Uprooted Muslims***

The context of relief is shifting. In the 1950s, Muslim refugees represented only 12% of the refugee population. By the 1970s, the proportion was 50% and it has been between 60% and 75% during the 1990s. In the last two years alone, Afghanistan, Turkey (twice), Iraq and Iran have dominated the relief news. Neither the international relief system nor the Christian relief NGOs are prepared for dealing with Muslims. It is difficult to approach women and

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<sup>149</sup> Ian Smillie, “Relief and Development: The Struggle for Synergy,” Occasional Paper 33, Thomas Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University (1998).

<sup>150</sup> See also the “Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge to Development,” [www.undp.org/bcpr/disred/rdr](http://www.undp.org/bcpr/disred/rdr) and “Addressing the Root Causes: Relief and Development Assistance Between Peacebuilding and Preventing Refugee Flows,” *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, (February 27, 2004), [www.jha.ac](http://www.jha.ac)

<sup>151</sup> Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*, Lynne Rienner (1999).

children. Human rights are seen as Western and Christian. Finally some Muslim governments are slow to accept responsibility for leading response efforts such as the case in Somalia.<sup>152</sup>

Christian relief NGOs have a very fundamental decision to make. If they wish to continue to be relief responders without geographical limits, a lot of theological and missiological work is required and a great deal of cross-cultural training is needed.

### **Addressing the Causes**

Lack of political will is a complicating factor in today's humanitarian world. Many believe that a quicker, more substantive response in the early days of the Rwanda genocide would have had a mitigating effect. Famine early warning systems are well developed and accurate, yet the response seldom starts until the fields are full of dust and children have dull eyes and distended stomachs. The challenge to the NGO is how to respond and this brings us to the idea of "preventive advocacy, defined as those actions taken to raise awareness in time to avert the fulfilment of the worst case scenario."<sup>153</sup>

This is a touchy area for some, especially Christian organizations and NGOs. It feels political. It seems to threaten the cherished idea of humanitarian neutrality and impartiality. This need not be the case according to Hugo Slim, "More and more NGOs and UN forces are adopting a robust form of impartiality which allows them not to just dish out relief in proportion to needs, but also to dish out criticism [advocacy by NGOs] or military bombardment [by peacekeepers] in proportion to human rights wrong doing. Preventative advocacy would appear to be a necessary consequence of the kinds of war that relief situations experience, the ethical issues of today's humanitarian response and the unworthy motivations of the international community when it comes to deciding if and how to respond.

Slim challenges us further with a highly recognizable metaphor. He contrasts what he calls the priestly role of humanitarian response – the succour and care of the afflicted – with the prophetic role that "confronts society with the truth and is concerned with personal, social and political transformation."<sup>154</sup> Slim argues that the principle of human solidarity is a universal ethic and so relief agencies have a responsibility both to respond to the victims with a ministry of helps and reconciliation and to make a call for justice and righteousness to the perpetrators, international politicians and international businesses that are complicit in the conflict.

This then means that Christian organizations have to come to grips with the idea of changing public policy. We need to remember that the Judeo-Christian tradition recognizes word as deeds. "The prophetic tradition believes that speaking truth is not just hot air, but a process of change and transformation. Words confront people. Words change people. Words usher in events. Words are actions. This has always been true of the word of God."<sup>155</sup>

There are a variety of ways to go about advocacy as Christians. Calling down authorities publicly on issues of the well being of people seems acceptable in light of Jesus publicly rebuking the teachers of the law and the Pharisees for interpreting the Law in a way that did not release and give life to the people. Queen Esther, on the other hand, pursued a personal form of advocacy behind closed doors. The church's history of martyrdom teaches us

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<sup>152</sup> This issue is developed with insight by Fred Cluny, "Humanitarian Assistance in the Post-Cold War Era, Frontline: The Lost American, [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cuny/laptop/coldwar](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cuny/laptop/coldwar) (July 1993).

<sup>153</sup> Alan Whites (World Vision International Director of Policy and Advocacy), "NGOs, Disasters and Advocacy: Caught Between the Prophet and the Shepherd Boy," *Development in Practice*, 10, No. 3 (2000).

<sup>154</sup> Hugo Slim, "Sharing an Universal Ethic: The Principle of Humanity in War," *International Journal of Human Rights*, 2.4 (June 1998).

<sup>155</sup> Hugo Slim, "An Advent Reflection," a paper presented to the December 2001 World Vision Relief Forum in Barcelona, 4.

that sometimes we need to act in a way that unmasks the truth about what is true and what is not really true. Hosea's marriage to a prostitute was a message to all Israel. Prayer is a form of advocacy, addressing the Lord of all creation. Christ is our advocate at the right hand of our Father after all.

### ***Increasing Demands on Practitioners***

Emergency response has always been challenging in terms of the attitudes, skills and behaviour of practitioners. Driven by altruistic motives, these people are type A personalities, good at problem solving, administration and interpersonal and cross-cultural relations. They are willing to live in hardship conditions and are able to operate in a climate of urgency amidst human anguish. They often have technical skills in logistics and camp management with a general knowledge of nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation and public health.

In the changing world of relief, new skills are being demanded of practitioners.<sup>156</sup> Conflict situations demand the ability to carry out on-the-run political and conflict economy analysis. Skills are needed in negotiation, conflict management and camp and staff security. Propaganda monitoring and media relations are ignored at the peril of the safety and the future of the uprooted people. A broader understanding of the vulnerability of uprooted people is now essential. This includes political vulnerability as well as ethnic and gender based vulnerability. Skills in protecting children and women must be part of the toolkit. The increasing presence of peacekeepers means skills in terms of military liaison. Finally, the relief practitioner must be an on-the-run moral philosopher and theologian deciding among competing values, including the Hobson's choice between neutrality and solidarity.

### ***Care for the Caregivers***

By now any relief practitioner reading this paper is sighing and perhaps a little discouraged. Relief work has always been hard, but now it seems almost beyond the ability of ordinary human beings. This creates a demand that agencies provide a better level of care for the relief practitioner. There are a variety of things that can be done.

Training and retraining is an important key in a changing humanitarian world. Some suggest the idea of a ten-month year, with the other two months equally shared between leave and some kind of learning experience. Paying attention to reasonable staff rotations is helpful.

There are a variety of organizational policy decisions that can help. An aggressive leave policy and an insistence on trauma counselling helps as does insisting on time in retreat from time to time. Insisting on funding for or provision of specialists in conflict management and resolution, analysis of conflict environments, cooperating with the military and some of the other new and specialist skills is now essential to taking the load off the relief administrators.

Seeing some people die while others live in squalor weighs on one's soul. The urgency of saving lives takes a toll physically and emotionally. The importance of helping staff with traumatic and critical incidence stress is inescapable.<sup>157</sup> No one should go in and out of a relief environment without some form of debriefing. A study by the Fuller Seminary School of Psychology showed that stress accumulates in relief practitioners as they move from one assignment to another. Repeated assignments, without a significant break spent doing

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<sup>156</sup> Hugo Slim, "The Continuing Metamorphosis of the Humanitarian Practitioner: Some New Colours for an Endangered Chameleon," *Disasters*, 19, No. 2 (1995).

<sup>157</sup> John Fawcett, ed., *Stress and Trauma Handbook: Strategies for Flourishing in Demanding Environments*, World Vision, 2003 is a resource. Dr. Jim Guy, The Headington Institute ([www.headington-institute.org](http://www.headington-institute.org)); Fuller School of Psychology and Dr. Gladys Mwititi of the Oasis Centre in Nairobi are also resources.

something more relaxed like policy formulation, training or evaluation, is not a good example of care.

Finally there is the question of fostering an environment that encourages development of a spirituality that sustains. Christ's final admonition to Peter was not to save the world, but to feed Christ's sheep. One cannot give what one does not have. Practitioners on the front line need time on the sidelines. This means time for physical and psychological rest and for spiritual retreat. They need the time and a place where they can be reminded that God's world is not a refugee camp, that there are places of beauty, quiet and peace. They need time to hear the music and listen to the silence of the living Word. Smelling the flowers, walking on the beach, and reading a good book are key to sustaining our humanity.

### ***Holistic Mission and AIDS: The Challenge of Our Time to World Evangelization***

HIV/AIDS is the greatest humanitarian emergency in the history of the human family. Almost 40 million people are infected with the virus. Almost eight thousand people died of AIDS every day in 2003. At 2003 infection rates, 92,000 people are being infected every week. It is forecast that about 70 million people will die by 2020.<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen million children have lost one or both of their parents worldwide. Teenagers are heading households, raising their siblings. Grandmothers are raising their grandchildren, having buried their own children behind their simple house because of AIDS. AIDS is creating widows and orphans at an incredible rate.

Today, the centre of gravity of the pandemic is Africa. The pandemic has been raging for over twenty years, while most of the world has slept. African pastors are burying people every day of every week; they are in the burial business. Many of those impacted by HIV/AIDS are our sisters and brothers in the Lord.

We are at the beginning of the pandemic, not the middle nor the end. Africa is only the first wave of an emerging global pandemic. China, India, and Russia – home to almost one-third of the world's population – have growing HIV prevalence rates and poor prevention efforts that could lead them to the situation that Africa is now in.

Many African churches have taken the lead in responding in prevention and care. A few Asian churches are doing the same. Churches in other parts of the world have been slower to respond. What is missing is global commitment on the part of all evangelicals to provide what God has given them to the fight against this scourge.

HIV/AIDS is a complex and multifaceted pandemic with a wide variety of interacting causes, sustaining factors and impacts. Therefore this pandemic demands a holistic mission response from the churches. We must make our contribution to fighting this disaster by drawing on a Christian worldview that seamlessly unites the material, psychosocial, social, cultural, political and spiritual aspects of life, a worldview that unites evangelism, discipleship, social action and the pursuit of justice.

HIV/AIDS is a **biological issue**. The virus destroys the immune system God created to sustain human life. The virus is complex and mutates easily. There is an enormous challenge of developing vaccines; promoting prevention and providing medical care for the infected.

HIV/AIDS is a **behavioural issue**. Values formation takes place in communities of faith. Where churches call for saving sex for marriage and faithfulness in marriage, infection rates are declining. The moral authority of Scripture empowers us to speak to the cause of this pandemic's spread.

HIV/AIDS is a **child and youth issue**. Children form the values that shape their behaviour at an early age, thus stressing the importance of targeting a biblical education of children. Today's youth generation is the largest in human history; they have never known a world without AIDS. On the one hand, youth account for half of all new infections. On the other hand, youth are the greatest hope of turning the tide against AIDS.

HIV/AIDS is a **gender issue**. The virus disproportionately singles out women. In Africa women and teenage girls are 5-6 times more likely to become infected than men. HIV/AIDS takes advantage of the low economic and social status of women, who have little control over sexual practice. Men's sexual behaviour is one of the major drivers of this pandemic.

HIV/AIDS is a **poverty issue**. HIV/AIDS reveals the fracture, stresses and strains in society, exploiting disorder, inequality and poverty. The virus seeks the weak, the poor and the vulnerable. It spreads where nutrition is low, where health systems are weak and where governments do not govern effectively.

HIV/AIDS is a **cultural issue**. Sexual practices are imbedded in culture. Changing culture is hard work. People suffering with HIV/AIDS are stigmatized and there is reluctance to discuss sex, death and dying.

HIV/AIDS is a **socio-economic issue**. Pastors, evangelists, doctors, teachers, civil servants are dying when they are in their most productive years. Fewer have the strength to farm and famine follows. Livelihoods are lost and economic opportunity fades. Losing productive adults, combined with children raising their siblings, tears the fabric of society with implications for generations. HIV/AIDS is consuming the future of nations.

HIV/AIDS is a **justice issue**. People living with AIDS can extend their lives through use of antiretroviral drugs if only treatments become affordable. Debt, trade, corruption and poor governance affect accessibility to adequate health systems, nutrition and livelihood. Women, too often, are not permitted to inherit land when their husbands die.

HIV/AIDS is a **deception issue**. Too quickly and uncritically some churches have yielded to the temptation to wonder who sinned, this man or his father. Condemnation and judgment have replaced grace and compassion. Another deception is that HIV/AIDS can be reduced to biology and condoms alone.

HIV/AIDS is a **compassion issue**. Throughout history, the church has cared for the sick and comforted the dying. We must do the same today.

HIV/AIDS is a **world evangelization issue**. At the end of this century, the question will be: Where were you when this diabolical holocaust worked its course in human history? We evangelicals need to decide now what we need to be and what we need to do in order to be able to face our Lord when this question comes.

If the evangelical church cares for the sick and the dying, comforts the orphan and widow, shares its message of redemption and transformation, disciples its members and works for justice, then the worth and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ will shine like a light on the hill and the nations will stream toward it.

Our call to action begins with a repentant spirit. Our past practice of evangelism was better at saving souls than creating Christian minds and Christian behaviour. Some of us have been slow to respond HIV/AIDs. Acknowledging this, we encourage:

- Lausanne to speak out as a movement making a global call for action on HIV/AIDS to the evangelical churches
- Lausanne to celebrate and learn from those among us who are already engaged.
- Lausanne to encourage and speak prophetically to those who are not.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics taken from the UNAIDS 2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic and the June 2004 UNICEF/UNICEF Children on the Brink Fact Sheet.

## **The Role of the Church**

*Bob Moffitt*

The above chapters often refer to the importance of the church, and especially the local church, as a representative of God's cosmic, encompassing and multifaceted agenda. Because of the importance of the church in the advance of this, God's holistic purpose, we close with this prayerful observation and admonition.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians contains one of the clearest and most succinct descriptions of the purpose of the church. He says that God has chosen the church to administer his agenda for the reconciliation of all things and that it is through the church that God will demonstrate this, his manifold and eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:9-11 and Colossians 1:20). Redemption was completed on the cross, but God has given the church the task of administering the process of restoration until his return.

The staggering implication of Paul's assertion is that the church is more important to the healing of human brokenness — hunger, sickness, political corruption, and economic injustice — than civil leaders, state governments, economic policy and development, or scientific advance. God will use these and other modalities to advance His purpose, but the church holds the principle ordination for this supreme assignment. However, the church cannot fill her role until it understands her significance, and equips and mobilizes individual members to purposefully represent God's holistic agenda in their respective worlds. The church must equip and disperse her people into every sector of society as intentional advocates for the will of God being done where those members live and serve.

Those of us who wrote this paper believe with all of our beings that Christ can and will empower the church to fulfil her task as she grasps the significance of her role and obediently follows the strategy He left her. We therefore call on the leaders of the church to the overriding and ultimate job description of all who lead God's people — to equip each saint to demonstrate and proclaim God's whole concern for the restoration of all that was broken in the fall (Ephesians 4:12).

## Recommended Reading

*Dewi Hughes*

Bartholomew, Craig and Thorsten Moritz, eds., Christ and Consumerism: A Critical Analysis of the Spirit of the Age. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000.

*A timely and challenging multi-author volume as consumerism spreads so penetratingly all over the world.*

Bauckham, Richard. The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically. Westminster: John Knox Press, 2002.

*Does not summarize the political teaching of the Bible and is not a programme for Christian political action, but rather provides guidance on "how to read the Bible politically."*

Chester, Tim, ed. Justice, Mercy and Humility: Integral Mission and the Poor. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002.

*The meaning of integral mission and its implications for the poor, the church, advocacy and lifestyle are discussed by key figures in the movement including René Padilla, Archbishop Donald Mtetemala, and C. B. Samuel.*

Chester, Tim. Good News to the Poor: Sharing the Gospel Through Social Involvement. Leicester: IVP, 2004.

*A powerful case for integral mission.*

Escobar, Samuel. A Time for Mission: The Challenge for Global Christianity. Leicester: IVP, 2003.

*A concise and helpful book from one of the key advocates of integral/holistic mission. Chapter 11 contains a very useful annotated bibliography.*

Gordon, Graham. What If You Got Involved? Taking a Stand Against Social Injustice. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003.

*A practical book enabling readers to move from having an opinion on injustice to taking action.*

Haugen, Gary. Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

*On the basis of strong biblical exposition and historical precedent, provides practical help with involvement in justice issues on the side of the weak and vulnerable.*

Moffitt, Bob. If Jesus were Mayor. Phoenix, AZ: Harvest, 2004.

*Provides a biblical vision and concrete suggestions for local churches to impact their communities.*

Myers, Bryant L. Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

*A must for anyone wishing to understand contemporary development theory and how it can be utilized and critiqued by evangelicals working with the poor.*

Peskett, Howard and Ramachandra, Vinoth. The Message of Mission: The Glory of Christ in All Time and Space. Leicester: IVP, 2003.

*A volume in the Bible Themes series of IVP's 'The Bible Speaks Today.' Presents a thoroughly biblical and integral view of mission.*

Samuel, Vinay and Chris Sugden, eds. Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel. Oxford: Regnum, 1999.

*A very helpful selection of articles, mainly from the periodical Transformation, reflecting the development in thinking about integral mission from 1985 to 1999.*

Sider, Ronald J. Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, 4th ed. London: Hodder, 1997.

*With over 350,000 copies sold this is the classic statement of the case for holistic/integral mission.*

Sider, Ronald J., Philip N. Olson and Heidi R. Unruh. Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002.

*A careful analysis of fifteen urban churches committed to holistic/integral mission, most in Philadelphia, USA. Many of the principles for helping a church to 'move into a life-changing outreach of holistic ministry' can be applied anywhere.*

Stott, John. Issues Facing Christians Today. London: Marshall Pickering, 1990.

*A magisterial volume on the many aspects of Christian social responsibility. A completely new edition is in preparation.*

Volf, Miroslav. Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.

*An insightful contribution to political theology by a Croat intimately acquainted with ethnic conflict.*

Wright, Christopher J. H. Old Testament Ethics for the People of God. Leicester: IVP, 2004.

*A magnificent examination of the theological, social, and economic framework for Old Testament ethics and an exploration of their relation to contemporary issues.*

Yamamori, Tetsunao and C. René Padilla. The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology of Integral Mission. Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004.

*Provides a theological framework for an ecclesiology of integral mission and then offers models of four churches engaged in integral mission.*

## Participants

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