

Reclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom:
Articles by Ralph D. Winter
in Chronological Order

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Poverty and the Christian Mission

(*Frontiers in Mission*, 358-60)

In Guatemala, 1958

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf

One's first reaction on arriving to live among people desperately poor is to try to do something helpful. Here in the highlands of Guatemala you see Indians picking up individual grains of corn from the gutters. They sell their few eggs because they get more calories in the monetary equivalent of a grain. At 5 am. little 6-year-old children are out on the roads stumbling along behind their parents, carrying astonishingly heavy loads.

They walk 20 miles to be able to plant another few square feet of corn. Desperate arguments arise over inches of land. Christian families, increasing due to the presence of medical help and the absence of money for birth control materials, present children that are inevitable vagrants and who cannot marry for lack of land inheritance. When Pedro, a Presbyterian elder's son, wanted to marry Tona, the daughter of a leading deacon, her father said no. Pedro has 19 living brothers and sisters—thus he inherits little land.

In Guatemala and in Latin America in general, things are not as well ordered and understood as they are in the U. S. where a pastor rarely needs to worry about his people finding jobs. In the States only the refugee family comes up for such consideration. Even there, many community resources are already available. Automation, railway firemen, and blind type are phrases that remind us that all our problems of transition are not behind us. But here in Guatemala a perfectly vast scramble and shuffle is taking place as the result of the "catching on and catching up" that is the disorder of the decade.

We North Americans come here like men from Mars, so to speak; from a culture that is several stages in growth beyond the largely agrarian, self-subsistent economy that still characterizes 80% of the Guatemalans (most of whom are patient Indians working away in ways that are completely outmoded). If simple hard work could solve their problems there would be no problem. But the road ahead is not straight. It has vicious curves they may go off. They've never had enough money thus far to find out what liquor can do for them. Their sacrificial efforts in learning a new trade—like, say, tailoring—may tomorrow be undercut by the arrival of low-priced machine-made garments from the Capital.

The sensitive Christian conscience is hit and hurt by these things. Furthermore it is not merely that the Indians are poor, especially so the Christians in many cases, but because it is in the nature of the Christian faith to "lift the heavy burdens" (Isa. 58:6) and to share medical progress and modern wonders. Science, as the wonderland of God's handiwork, belongs as much to God's Guatemalan Indian as to God's Californian.

But to obtain outside food donations doesn't really solve the problem. Nor money for food. In our valley of 20,000 Indians a million dollars given outright would supply food for only a few months—and then what?

Nor can these Indians grow a whole lot more corn in the amount of land they have; and population growth can easily outstrip that. Land enough there is, on the

uninhabitable and disease-ridden tropical coast. Here in the cool, beautiful highlands is where most of the people live.

Nor can the missionary readily enter into high-level economic planning. The government offices are buzzing with studies and plans, and with hundreds of U. S. advisors. And with all that help, Government efforts themselves are often shortsighted. Relocating people on the coastal land is merely postponing the evil day when there will come in flood tide the inevitable shift from hand agriculture-of-the masses to mechanized agriculture-of a few - and the secondary result of large-scale technological unemployment. (Who should know this better than those in the U. S.?)

But in any case it is a fact that even if Christians didn't need food, church buildings and pastors' salaries still take money; and a Christian community that is getting the rug pulled out from under it is in no great shape to pour funds into outreach.

On the personal level we can advise young men that there is no future in custom-made clothes (all clothes in rural areas still tend to be made by hand in little one-sewing machine shops). This advice is negatively good. Can we be positively helpful and bring training in skills-with-a future? Do we really need to bother about these problems at all?

As a rule the johnny-come-lately missions in Guatemala (e. g. Pentecostal, Southern Baptist, Mormon) are all strictly gospel preaching and no nonsense about economic problems. They obviously haven't faced nor stopped to think about the physical conditions of their future constituencies. But the older missions that have raised up thousands of believers over more than half a century are faced with the problems of success: do we help the already-Christians in all their problems of development and outreach, individual and church finance? Do we help them to relate to the world as it is today? Or do we let Radio Cuba be the only voice discussing their practical problems?

It may be that the New England Puritans can give us a lead here. They faced desperate economic problems, and their preachers came equipped with a theology that made every task a holy calling. To Rev. John Cotton, "A Christian would no sooner have his sin pardoned than his life established in a warrantable calling." To them getting productively established in (this) God's world was vitally important as a Spiritual task! Vocational rehabilitation—as secular as that phrase now sounds—was part of their theology of redemption.

Every missionary worth his salt, no matter what his agency, bases his work 100% on the assumption that there is nothing really possible in human development except it be built on a transformed inner spirit. Even secular experts, Peace Corps people, or whoever it is at work with human clay, must sense at last that when the inner spirit of man is damaged, dampened, or degraded, there is precious little hope for economic schemes and programs. The Biblical, "I will put Spirit within you" (Ezekiel 11:19), is the only sure foundation you can build on.

This is why all ministers everywhere can take heart. Their work is bedrock. No industrial process is more miraculous than the transformation of the heart and life of man. This phenomenon is taking place daily and progressively in the lives of those who have already surrendered their all to Christ. The secular mind looks the other way, belittles and ignores this kind of work. It is too intangible, unscientific. Yet it is to the glory of the U. S. protestant Christian mission agencies that as the result of their work there are now in the countries of the non-western world something like 60,000,000 (sixty million) followers of Christ (and immeasurable indirect influences), who constitute in their

countries the highest quality sub-community. They are the alert, bright-eyed, honest people who set the standards for morality and hope. This is an immense but "invisible" movement you can never read about in the papers. It isn't the sudden or tragic thing papers feed on.

Yet, believe it or not, there it was in the paper a few days ago—in the leading Guatemalan daily, in letters one half inch high—“Young Protestant wanted,” an ad offering a fabulous salary at least four times as high as the average pastor here gets. The North American company running this striking want-ad apparently believes you can build on a transformed life. I asked the owner of a big factory in the capital city why he advertised for Evangelical workers. Without pausing a split second he shot back, “They don't booze, chase the women, and they come to work.”

It is well and good that we fear the sentimental idealism involved in “social gospel” efforts to build economic progress on untransformed people asking no questions about the sickness of the inner man. But it is probably a mistake to transfer that kind of fear to those who are genuinely transformed. This fear perpetuates itself by stowing away in the memory many examples of how “even Christians in these countries can't be trusted with money,” etc. It doesn't quite jive, of course, with our confident reports of how many have been soundly converted!

It is true that a converted Indian doesn't necessarily immediately know how to handle money as effectively as he has learned over the centuries to save and manage corn. But with such a man you at least have something sound to build on. Shall we teach him everything except how to handle money?

One answer may be to work through a somewhat new kind of pastor, teach him the broad outlines of what the modern world consists of, and among other things *how his people will have to adjust like mad to meet radically changing circumstances*, and that his people desperately need, along with bedrock faith and love, the elements of broad orientation and technical training that will prepare them in creativity, resourcefulness, and durability—with flexibility—to land on their feet like a cat in the rough and tumble ahead. Perhaps these new pastors can both learn and catch up-to-date trades and businesses. The most sturdy and reliable elements in the population are the available raw materials. In the poorest Indian areas both the culture and the economics of the situation may demand that the pastor be self-supporting in part, as were Presbyterian ministers to a great extent a few decades ago in the States. Best of all, occupied in some portable job like weaving, as was the Apostle Paul—and for the same reasons.

It's interesting to speculate what kind of book the New Testament would have been had no one ever taught Paul a trade. Then too, the communistic air Latin America is breathing these days as much as states that the pastor who does no concrete work is a social parasite. Paul worked with his hands in part possibly to set an example for his people to follow: “With toil and labor we worked night and day ... to give you an example to imitate” (2 Thess. 3:8-9). Is this out of date or up to date? What is up to date?

You who are reading this article may well have some keen ideas. Could you afford 13 cents (3 sheets) and a few moments to share them with us? Most of us working with the Guatemalan Presbyterian Church are related to this problem of what kind of direction and leadership is most needed. Some of us spend our whole time wrestling with it. We don't claim to know all the answers. But our hearts have not lost their ache. Send your ideas.

Better still, come and see and study and work and pray with us!

Ralph D. Winter, Ph.D.
MAM Christian Center
San Juan Ostuncalco, Quez.
Guatemala. C.A.

Questions for Discussion 50 years later:

1. How many evidences do you see in this document which clearly indicate that it was written a long time ago?
2. What evidences do you see of an awareness even back then of the phenomenon of “Globalization”?
3. What do you feel is the most radical difference between the Guatemalan situation described and the situation of a U. S. congregation? How easily is this difference understood by U. S. donors?
4. Why, according to this document is the giving of food not an adequate answer?
5. What is the most crucial blind-spot of government-to-government aid, and even international businesses?
6. What example(s) do you find of the relative futility of “local” business activity?
7. Is there evidence of a downplaying of basic spiritual conversion efforts focused on individuals rather than “social concern”?
8. What according to this document is a fundamental contribution of a pastor?
9. How different might the role of pastor be in this situation? How central to solutions (of poverty) might be the role of a pastor?
10. What is the reader of this document, aimed at U. S. supporters, encouraged to do in response to its message.
11. In what way is the perspective of this document acknowledged to be different from that of other missions.
12. Does this document reveal that this perspective differs even from most other members of the Presbyterian Mission in Guatemala? Since that was true does that give you any hint about the future of the work with the transition to different missionary leadership?

Editorial Comment on GCOWE '95

(1995) (*Mission Frontiers*, July)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment71>

It is not remotely possible to convey to our readers in a few pages just what happened in the most important global meeting in history—GCOWE '95, with 4,000 key leaders in Korea May 17-25.

Beyond the New Testament no face-to-face meeting in human history has been more significant.

- Yes, earlier meetings, like stepping stones, have enabled this meeting to do what it did.
- Yes, there have been many crucial, cliff-hanging events earlier in Christian history, etc.

HOWEVER: I would argue with anyone that nothing this significant has ever happened beyond the pages of the Bible. Why? Read on. We need not argue. We need to act!

This cluster of astounding events was on the front page of the National and International Religion Report June 12. That report quoted Dr. Robert Coleman of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: “This is the time for which we were born.” It quoted Director Luis Bush saying, “As he read the declaration, Coleman began to tremble with emotion, and the entire gathering ‘went wild’ in a spontaneous response.” It quotes a denominational leader saying that there was so much networking between leaders “it made the stock market look tame.” Before this event took place I said this would be the most important meeting in human history. The event itself, however, exceeded every hope and aspiration that I ever had for it.

Never in my lifetime have I had the privilege of commenting on as significant an event.

Actually, most of my lifelong interests were dealt with seriously. There is no meeting I would have been more eager to attend. Alas, certain promises kept me home. First, some of the highlights.

In a way, the most momentous event of the conference was not even planned: the pervasive, unexpected, profound mood of confession and repentance between different national groups, bridging centuries of isolation and hatred—Arab and Jewish, Turkish and Armenian, Japanese and Korean. Some of the physical accommodations were so distant that confession and repentance arose when it became clear how hard the Korean hosts had tried to make everything just right.

Speaking of Korean hosts, their energies were everywhere. What they gave in cash alone would have been equal to \$25 million for a country the size of the USA.

The final Korean youth meeting brought out 75,000 young people (in the rain) to a meeting that would have been the equivalent of 350,000 in the USA . And this was a student mission meeting! Has there ever been a more fervent, praying crowd of young people that large in any one place in human history?

This is the only large global Christian mission conference that has ever had more than half of its participants from the former mission fields of the world.

This was probably the most widely represented conference of its size ever held, Christian or non-Christian, with people from 186 countries.

When delegates left they were handed a professionally-edited video tape of the conference! (This was mainly the effort of our USCWM staff—23 of our people went to help, working behind the scenes.) To order this video for \$6.50 postage paid see page 47 for more details. But what now?

The real meaning of this conference is what is going to happen next—differently! That meeting was merely the kickoff of a dazzling countdown that will fill the next five years.

If that tiny, overworked AD 2000 office in Colorado Springs had more than it could handle before the conference, think of what it must shoulder now that this whole global movement has exploded. But read on. Is this crazy stuff?

Is all this realistic? Do sober people talk like this?

One detractor of the frontier mission movement made the following statement—carelessly, no doubt (it was an unguarded comment in an Email exchange): “It’s time for frontier missions to grow up about the year 2000. The year 2000 will be just another year. Come the bi-millennium, the world will probably still look like hell, showing every one of its long 2,000 years. Poverty, hatred, disease, and war will still be with us, and the Great Commission will still be unfulfilled.”

Wait just a minute!

1. First of all, this careless remark talks as if human misery and violence has been a burden in this world for only 2,000 long years. Far more than 2000 years ago, even the most ancient evidences of human remains reveal gruesome homicidal violence and hatred.
2. The AD2000 Movement has never talked in terms of “fulfilling the Great Commission” by the year 2000. Its goal is “A Church for Every People.”
3. The Bible never links the elimination of “poverty, hatred, disease, and war” with the Great Commission OR with the Return of Christ. Indeed, after the end of time God will “wipe away every tear” (Rev 21:4).

I personally think that one main reason Christ will return (Remember? “As in the days of Noah,” when the majority are scoffing or looking the other way) is precisely because of human inability to erase poverty, hatred, disease, and war. More on this in the booklet mentioned in the center of this page.

What is planned now? Three major strategies are in motion right now:

1. Find out exactly what must be done. The goal is clear and measurable: “the establishment of a mission-oriented church planting movement within every people of the world” (by the turn of the century).

Luis Bush is working toward a large workforce of younger people who will go out to the ends of the earth (easier to get to than ever in history) and “survey” the remaining task. Do we need 6,000 to do this? Well, 75,000 volunteered a year of service right there in that meeting—young people from only one country! How about one out of ten of them!

2. Line up the necessary energies. Leaders are now talking about a small meeting of mission organizations which actually have “troops” to put into the field—that is, tried and true mission structures. Mission executives are in a different capacity than pastors or church leaders. It is like contrasting army, navy, air force leaders with mayors and state governors. The two have to work together, but don’t confuse their capacities! Again, see the booklet mentioned in the center of this page. The work has to be parceled out: “Your organization will do this, ours will do that, etc.” Interdev in Seattle and the two major coalitions working in the former USSR, the CoMission and the Alliance, have proven that dozens of totally independent agencies can effectively work together.

3. In line with all this, Patrick Johnstone has already proposed that there be specific conferences focused on the major “affinity blocs” of peoples within which almost the entire remaining task lies—see his point #1 on page 12. What Could Go Wrong?

One excited pastor flew his family to a Muslim country and paraded down the street (the whole family) in long robes, carrying a big cross. They risked an angry mob, finally got safely in jail, and were sent home. Didn’t they know that the last Christians coming at them with a cross were Crusaders who murdered Muslims by the thousands all over the Middle East for over a hundred years?

While the simple faith to hurl yourself out into the unknown is essential, simplistic faith that does not do its homework is dangerous. Amateurish mission is dangerous, plunging heedless mission is dangerous. As usual, there are more wrong ways than right ways. Most people underestimate the complexity of missions. They think that a warm heart is all that is necessary. They want God to take care of them when they do thoughtless things.

I would say that most of the enormous new interest in missions in this country today is flowing into amateurish mission is either useless or counterproductive. We have short termers rushing over for fun, doing lots of things which are not very helpful. They learn. That’s good. But they do not serve effectively in many cases. Some of them do not even meet a missionary family. Not very many ever go back—what they see and do is not all that effective or attractive. More than ever local churches are sending individual families to far off places to start churches like what they have in this country. Unless they find people who are Westernized already this rarely works out.

In a major step forward, Youth With A Mission, has established a new Frontier Mission division and they are now sending hundreds of people on a long term basis and are

endeavoring to do some solid study of the task. This is something to which short terms can contribute little.

What we need is “sober exuberance.” Four out of five who wish to be missionaries must resign themselves to be mission mobilizers. That is the pattern of history.

The Key Issue is You

Thousands of Americans like you can and must simply uproot themselves from what they are doing and join in with the essential mission mobilization, planning, and field efforts. This cannot be done without “Prayer with Feet.”

Look, are you following the O. J. Simpson trial more closely than you are the five-year countdown to the year 2000? If so, it’s partly because your TV is handier than this little bulletin. Why not reconsider your occupation. Are you mainly just staying alive, supporting yourself? Or is what you are doing the most significant thing you can do for the Kingdom during the remainder of your life? This movement needs help! Write to me. Send me your phone number. This is urgent!

Horizon Seven: Microscopic Spiritual Warfare Massive Blind Spot

(1998) (*Mission Frontiers*, Sept.-Dec.).

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/horizon-sevenmicroscopic-spiritual-warfare-massive-blind-spot>

Some “New Horizons” we took to the EFMA conference are not “new and emerging trends” but old problems that are simply blind spots. Puzzling! Are there really “blind spots”? How could there be when so many people are thinking and praying and pouring themselves out to carry Christ’s mission to the world? But, stop and think: Satan is in the business of causing blind spots. We are not just carrying a pleasant Gospel to the ends of the earth. We are engaging in an all-out battle with “the god of this world, against principalities and powers.” Of course we have blind spots! One is so complex we left it out at the last minute.

My editorial on page two also talks about this major but mysterious “new horizon”—which is so complex that when we got to Atlanta I decided the last minute we ought to leave it out.

However, our steady readers will recognize that it is not entirely new to these pages. In the last year-and-a-half, and sprinkled throughout many of my editorials, you will have seen an idea creeping in that is totally new to me. It involves a much larger understanding of God and His mission.

What? Can you get big new ideas at the age of 73? Actually, it seems like age speeds up discovery. Like finishing up a jig saw puzzle. The more pieces you get in, the faster it goes.

You may be surprised or puzzled or disturbed at what I am going to say. But my thoughts are no more spectacular or provocative than the revolutionary idea that God wants us to represent to people the full spectrum of His love by involvement in the entire battlefield of His conquering Kingdom. This pits us against the strategems of the prince of darkness on a wider front. It is more and more clear to me that He is expecting us to work along with Him in that wider front, at His side, fighting back against Satan in every area and every level of Satan's destructive invasion of creation.

Are you and I culturally blind to certain realms of Satan's deadly activity? Take the realm of tiny microbes. Are Evangelicals duped into considering plagues merely a secular or scientific problem, not a Satanic problem, not a mission problem? If so, unknown to us the people we go out around the world to bless may respond,

"If your God is so smart, why can't He prevent my children dying from malaria?"

As we fumble and stumble for an answer to a question like that, our reply may sound flippant, like:

“As missionaries we do lots of things, but we don’t do suffering. We can only put your kids on a bed while they swell up grotesquely and die an agonizing death. We don’t think it is up to us to completely eradicate the malarial plasmodium. Satan might get discouraged! After all, that evil bug is his pride and joy. He’s killed more of God’s people with that missile than any other weapon in his arsenal.”

We apparently don’t see malaria as our problem, as a mission problem. We don’t know what to do about it. The pills are of less and less value. So?

Can we actually eradicate that brilliant, malicious little monster called a plasmodium? Are we washing our hands of something we don’t understand without trying seriously to understand it? Can we feed children but not in Christ’s name wield scientific knowledge to eliminate something that kills four children every sixty seconds—in an excruciating death? Maybe we could, but we aren’t. Does this glorify God?

You may well guess that I got dragged into this line of thinking by discovering that even though 1,500 people die daily in the U.S. from cancer, all forty funded projects of the U.S. National Cancer Institute budget are merely evaluations of radiation and chemo treatments for cancer. Treatment, yes, is a very big business, one which would suffer massively if cancer were eliminated. But, foundational research into the nature of cancer is a very small business, and it is still awkward for me to think that Satan has covered his tracks so well.

What I am saying may thus seem to be a wacky tangent. Dear reader, Satan will rejoice if you draw that conclusion.

A brand new book, *The Gospel of Germs*, tells the social impact of the discovery of germs in Europe. Yet not all of us take germs seriously. Satan is quite happy with that. He may hope that most people will conclude that God’s good creation has been seriously flawed from the beginning.

This, brothers and sisters, is a new horizon: there is more to do than we thought. I propose we roll up our sleeves and do the trench work, risk our very lives working to completely eradicate Satan’s handiwork—in the area of global disease. “The Son of God appeared for this purpose: that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Now, are you still willing to follow Him?

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A Blindspot in Western Christianity?

Transcription of a talk given on June 23, 1999

Foundations Reader, 319-22

http://www.foundationscourse.org/uploads/documents/reader/45_a_blindspot.pdf

I will not be discussing a major correction in one particular stream of Christianity, but rather an urgent Biblical insight lacking in virtually all forms of Western Christianity.

One reason for a correction is that our theological structure of interpretation of the meaning of the Biblical witness took place centuries before we had any inkling of the dark intelligence invested in the micro world of disease germs, and our current theological sensitivities have, amazingly, not yet adjusted to this new information. We do not commonly attribute the origin of destructive germs to an intelligent evil being. We have no theology of mission for destroying such germs!

A Staggering Thought

In the five years of the gradual progress of bone marrow cancer in my wife's physical being, we were both pressed to ask some unusual questions, and have begun to develop some unusual answers.

First came an arresting and even staggering thought that looks upon the need for theological correction as long ago as the fourth century AD. That was the first public and political century of Christianity. It was the kind of mix in which syncretism is often spawned. According to this theory it was the time when a virulent form of pagan syncretism lodged itself deeply into our Western Christian theological tradition. A detailed exposition of this amazing proposal can be found in Gregory Boyd's book entitled *God at War*. Some of the flavor of the entire book can be caught in these few words:

We see...[someone with] polio...and piously shake our heads...saying "It is the will of God...hard to understand...we have to wait to get to heaven [to understand it]"...[By contrast] Jesus looked at [sickness] and in crystal clear terms called it the work of the devil, and not the will of God—[something to be fought, not something to which we should simply resign ourselves.] (Boyd 1997:183)

This contrast, Boyd contends, reveals a pagan neo-Platonist strand in our theology coming through Augustine. It was absorbed further through Boethius and his winsome and incredibly influential *Consolations of Philosophy*. In this line of thinking is an emphasis on a "mysterious good" which stands behind all evil, rather than simply a recognition of the good which God may indeed faithfully work "following" evil. What it then does is distract us and prevent us from turning decisively against and crushing the source of that evil. While pagan, it is imposed on us as an attitude of noble resignation in the midst of suffering. It works itself out as a curious passivity in the presence of evil. It takes the Biblical phrase, "all things work together for good" to mean that God—who does in fact work good out of evil—is somehow the author of the evil itself.

How has this syncretistic element in our theological tradition surfaced on a practical level? In accord with our by-now instinctive Augustinian neo-Platonism, we

cannot be totally surprised that when a godly young preacher in Puritan Massachusetts sought to fight smallpox, the other pastors with one voice opposed him and formed an “anti-vaccination society.” In the perspective of their Augustinian/Calvinist theology this saintly young pastor was, and I quote, “interfering with Divine Providence.” No wonder that when that young man died in the process of trying out a smallpox vaccine on himself, it was assumed that God killed him. Strangely, that comparatively young man attempting to spare the suffering of the Indians at his mission outpost is known today for his philosophy, not for fighting evil in the form of a virus. I speak of Jonathan Edwards.

But, in actual fact, the problem was that Edwards’ keen thinking challenged a seriously syncretistic element in our theological tradition. By Edward’s day the syncretized Christian tradition was so durable and so impervious to change that not for two hundred years did any individual or group decide to eliminate smallpox. And when that campaign finally occurred, it was not this time to the credit of a preacher, a missionary, or a Christian theologian. That eradication effort took place only 21 years ago!

Edwards’ insight could and should have displaced that particular pagan element in our theology—the passive acceptance of disease as being God’s direct will which we are therefore not to fight against. Edwards’ insight could have replaced the pagan element with a theology informing and guiding a serious attack on what the Bible calls simply “the works of the devil.”

But, that insight died with Edwards. I have concluded with profound sadness that had that insight not died with him, our form of faith might have regained a Biblical zeal to set out deliberately to vanquish the works of the devil—all forms of conquerable evil.

Are We Really Passive before Evil?

You may quite readily wonder if I am unaware of “enormous research” that is going on. Several years ago, when my wife was first diagnosed with cancer, I had the idea that surely a lot of money in this country and around the world was flowing into *foundational* cancer research. Having had since then reason to look into this supposition, I am astounded that actually very little goes into foundational cancer research compared to what we spend on cancer *treatment*—after this deadly malady attaches itself to us. My best estimate is that to *understand and eradicate cancer* we spend less than one thousandth of what we pay for cancer *treatments*. Indeed, it may even be less than that. The truth is actually scandalous—are we living with a deception about this?

However, the main point here is not how little goes to understand disease compared to the perfectly enormous amount we frantically spend for treatments once we are individually attacked. That huge imbalance is, of course, curious and puzzling.

The more significant point is that there is absolutely no evidence I know of in all the world of any *theologically driven* interest in combatting disease at its origins. Not only have I not found any work of theology, any chapter, any paragraph, nor to my knowledge any sermon urging us—whether in the pew or in professional missions—to go to battle against the many diseases we now know to be eradicable. Jimmy Carter, our former president, is the only Christian leader I know of who has set out (in his phrase) “to wipe Guinea worm from the face of the earth.” Note that his insight did not come from a seminary experience, but, perhaps, from being a Sunday school teacher. The Carter Center set out to eradicate two horrible diseases with which missionaries in Africa have had to live for 100 years. They have now done it, and have chosen three more.

Apparently, Carter cannot expect to fund this operation from Christian sources. He gets money from secular corporations.

Christian missions spend literally millions of dollars around the world taking care of sick people. And we nourish hundreds of thousands of children in one program or another, raising them up so they can die of malaria. (Every sixty seconds four children die of malaria.) Yet in all the earth I know of only one very small clinic in Zimbabwe where two ill-equipped missionary doctors are working toward the actual elimination of the astonishingly intelligent malarial parasite that is called a plasmodium. And in secular circles the outwitting of that ingeniously evil bug is not being pursued by the World Health Organization nor the US National Institutes of Health nor even the Atlanta Center for Disease Control. Only the U.S. Navy, amazingly, is seriously involved.

Note that I am not talking about efforts to *avoid* disease but efforts to eradicate the very source of a disease. Thus, I am not talking about contributory environmental factors or nutritional factors. All such good things are *defensive* measures. We recall that people tried their best for centuries to avoid smallpox. But it was better finally to exterminate the virus that was the source cause. We can be glad that destructive virus is behind us, but *we have to admit that its eradication was not because of Christian initiative, much less theological insight.*

Defensive measures are good, but notice our strange theological (and pagan) reluctance to set out to *destroy the disease germs themselves*. To do that would be to go on the offense. We don't do that. Yet isn't it Biblical to *destroy the works of the devil*? In 1 John 3:8 we read very simply, "The Son of God came into the world that He might destroy the works of the devil." We don't hear much of that verse, partly because *we yield in our everyday consciousness to a secular mindset that implicitly denies the very possibility of an intelligent evil destroyer of God's good creation.*

Is There an Active Satan? When Did He Get Started and What Is He Doing?

But an additional reason we don't hear much of that verse is because our theological tradition does not illuminate for us exactly what the works of the devil really are. The respected Dutch theologian Berkouwer made the rare comment that "You cannot have a proper theology without a sound demonology." Another theologian dared to suggest that Satan's greatest achievement is "to cover his tracks." Note that if, in fact, Satan has skillfully "covered his tracks" all of us are likely extensively *unaware* of his deeds. Isn't that logical? Paul suggested that we are not to be ignorant of his devices. We are told that Satan and his angels once worked for God. If so, then precisely what kind of destruction and perversion did Satan set out to achieve when he turned against God? Where would we see evidence of his works? Would he employ powers of deception so that we would get accustomed to evil and no longer connect an intelligent evil power with evil and suffering? Would Satan even successfully tempt us to think that God is somehow behind all evil—and that we must therefore not attempt to eradicate things like smallpox lest we "interfere with Divine Providence"?

In the last 20 years paleontologists have dug up more evidences of earlier life forms than in all previous history. One of their thought-provoking discoveries is that the pre-Cambrian forms of life *revealed no predators*. Then, at a very distinct juncture destructive forms of life suddenly appeared at all levels, from large creatures to destructive forms of life at the smallest microbiological level.

Is this what Satan set out to do from the time he rebelled against the Creator—that is, he set about to pervert and distort all forms of life so as to transform all nature into the arena of tooth and claw that reigns today? Recent lab results indicate that retroviruses are smart enough to carry with them short pieces of pre-coded DNA which they insert into the chromosome of a cell so as to distort the very nature of an organism. Can a lion that would lie down with a lamb become vicious by such DNA tinkering? We do know that many diseases reflect defective genes. Very recent literature indicates that in the case of the major chronic diseases *infections* are now seriously thought to underlie everything from heart disease to cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's and even schizophrenia.

A Double Enigma

But we confront a second and separate mystery here that is beyond mere scientific facts. Speaking in colloquial terms, we face a “double whammy.” We are not only suddenly aware that our medical people have been looking in the wrong direction. That may actually be true if, as is now reported, tooth infections are related to heart disease no matter how low-fat your diet is. Finnish scientists are the ones who are aware of this, and are sure of this.

But a second and more ominous fact confronts us. We must be aware that some force is *delaying that awareness*. For example, it has been two decades since it was clearly proven that 95% of duodenal ulcers are caused by a bacterial infection, yet today half the doctors in the state of Colorado still do not employ the necessary three days of tetracycline. Is this not a clear case of demonic *cultural* delusion piled on top of a demonic *physical* distortion?

Will we now see a similarly ominous and tragic lag in the application of knowledge with regard to the relation between infectious agents and the major killer diseases I just mentioned? Can and should the church speak out on these twin problem areas? *Where are our theologians when we need them?*

The Proposed Institute¹

The proposed *Institute for the Study of the Origins of Disease* will have to confine itself in its early days of severely limited funding to the collection and dissemination of information about what is and is not being done at the roots of disease. It will endeavor to attract serious attention to this sphere. It will use both secular and theological weaponry, especially the latter. It will try to upgrade our desire to bring glory to God by ending our apparently neoplatonist truce with Satan in the realm of all his ingenious and destructive works. Our global mission agencies, which already have to their credit the discovery of the nature of leprosy, will declare war on all sources of disease instead of merely being kind to sick people and preaching resignation amidst suffering.

Our actions (which often speak louder than our words) will no longer proclaim loudly and embarrassingly that our God can get you a hospital bed to lie on plus a ticket to heaven, but that He is either ignorant, uncaring, or impotent to do anything effective about the origins of your disease. We cannot blame Augustine or Calvin or Luther for not knowing anything about germs or the enormous complexities of microbiology. But can we repentantly accept blame for the continuing fact that three-fourths of all Americans die prematurely from major chronic diseases which are now suddenly more defeatable than ever?

The least we can do is set something in motion that may rectify our understanding of a God who is not the author of the destructive violence in nature and who has long sought our help in bringing His kingdom and His will on earth.

I read a true story in *Readers Digest* about a family of three children who lost their oldest child, a daughter, through terrible suffering with cancer. Then, the father, fund raising to raise money to fight cancer among children in general collapsed and died ten feet short of the goal in a marathon race. I do not believe that God was the author of that double tragedy, but I do believe he used it to speed up the fund-raising campaign then carried on by the wife. However, what fairly sprang out at me in this story was the statement of one of the younger children at the news of the father's collapse. This little boy had already learned well our syncretized theology. He said, "God would not do two bad things to us in one year." Isn't it too bad that this innocent little boy was unaware that destructive things are the very hallmark of an intelligent evil person, not the initiative of a loving God? When will this become clearer? When will there be a significant glimmer within Christendom to act accordingly? When will we arise to work with God to destroy the works of the devil?

What is it that allows us to simplify the growing issue of homosexuality—that is, the question of whether it is an organic or cultural distortion—without taking into account the recent research that declares it to be a physical distortion resulting from an infectious agent, perhaps even curable by laboratory insights? We are left to two undesirable alternatives: to think that homosexuality must be perfectly normal or to think that homosexuality is entirely cultural, not stopping to think that it may be the result of a disease.

Christians champion singers, basketball players, pole vaulters. Do we find theological reason to champion those rare few who are at the front line in the fight against disease? And, I don't refer to those who *treat illness* but those who scout the very *origins of disease*. The answer is a thunderous NO which can only be explained as a blind spot in our theological tradition, a fact which is itself one of the diabolic delusions classifying as a work of the devil.

Demonic delusions:

1. When we get sick all we need to do is to pray and inquire of God what his reason is for allowing this kind of thing.

2. In case we did something unwise that caused or invited the sickness we don't need to feel responsible to roll up our sleeves and fight the source of the disease. God is content to use disease to teach us.

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Endnote

1 The article was written before the founding of the Roberta Winter Institute which seeks to address the issue of the war against evil. For more information, see <http://www.robertawinterinstitute.org/>.

Join the World Christian Movement

(1999) (Foundations Reader, 313-18)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

The Perspectives Study Program is a ministry of the U.S. Center for World Mission—a non-denominational parachurch ministry that works with churches, mission agencies, and campus ministries around the world. Perspectives has a long and singular track record in the business of opening students’ eyes to the Bible, world history, international culture, and God’s purpose for it all in a way that no other course can offer. The content of the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course is undergirded by an integrated set of core ideas. To see a detailed description of the core ideas of the Perspectives program and to see if a course might be offered near you, visit the Perspectives Study Program website at: www.perspectives.org.

When you decided to sign up for the Perspectives class you may not have realized what you were getting into—that it is not so much a class as it an introduction to a *movement*. Perhaps you just didn’t catch the full significance of the word *movement* in the title of the course—Perspectives on the World Christian Movement. Now you know. Now you understand you are being seriously invited to join that movement—the World Christian *Movement!*

But what are the next steps beyond spectator status? It may not be clear to you yet just what God has in mind for you. You don’t want to make a false start. What can you do for sure? What do you need to learn next? How is the calling to mobilization different from, but as important as, that of being a front-line missionary?

Most people think of the cause of missions as a bunch of missionaries out there in a tropical forest working with their bare hands. Well, for that matter, some people think wars consist of boys out there on the front lines popping away with guns. But wars are usually a “war effort” encompassing many more people than those right at the front. So, missions is a “mission effort” involving, necessarily, far more people in the support structure than those right at the front.

To be more specific, suppose you grew up with a great interest in the drilling of oil wells. You saw a video as a young person of the “wildcatters” who sometimes strike oil in unexpected places. You decided you would like to become a well-driller.

But, as you studied the subject you discovered the “oil industry.” You learned all about oil refineries, oil diplomats who dicker with foreign governments, geophysicists who make precise measurements of feedback from deep under the earth, etc. So you decided you would rather be a geophysicist! But you wouldn’t have known such a possibility existed if all you knew about were organizations apparently recruiting only well-drillers.

In the same way, the World Christian Movement has become a highly developed international enterprise. At the core of this historic global movement are professionals and hundreds of dedicated, seasoned organizations. It’s proper to look upon this core of the World Christian Movement as the “mission industry.” In the USA alone it’s a two-to-

three-billion-dollar-per-year activity—and its influence is far beyond what that money would do in any commercial venture.

To find your way into this incredibly influential enterprise, it is helpful to distinguish the roles of front-line teams who labor cross-culturally, let's call them *missionaries*, and those who marshal support for them, let's call them *mobilizers*. Whatever your role may be, as a relationship with others in the mission industry. William Carey wasn't a loner.

Next to doing nothing, the most certain way to squander your life's work would be to maintain an ignorant detachment from this astounding movement of dedicated mission professionals. Most of the important mistakes have been made. Most of the crucial matters of missiological wisdom have been explored. If we ignore this seasoned wisdom, the tempered courage, the proven ideas, and the heartfelt prayers of the generations before us, we are simply consigning ourselves to beating the air for quite a while. This may apply even if all you do is join an organization that has not been around for some time.

Never concede to doing something so small that it could be accomplished entirely in your lifetime. Be a part of something that began before you were born, and will continue onward toward the fulfillment of all that God has purposed to accomplish. God has uniquely formed you to be part of this significant movement. You cannot participate in what you do not know. Becoming a student of the mission industry is the best way to become a valuable part of the World Christian Movement.

Mission Agencies

As soon as possible begin to get acquainted with the astounding array of different mission agencies. "Service missions" serve other agencies. Some are purely technical, like Mission Aviation Fellowship, with work ranging from jungle air strips to a marvelous internet service open to all agencies. Others are literature missions, tape-recording experts, or Bible translators, or radio experts. Missionary radio today outranks all secular radio systems for blanketing the earth with the greatest sophistication and highest-powered transmitters in use anywhere.

"Standard missions" concern themselves with every aspect of human need, ranging from medical, educational, church planting, etc.

Place great value on these incredible organizations. No one need start from scratch. Since agencies are designed for teamwork, they are not only able to sustain efforts over many generations, veteran workers are able to pass on to newcomers the cumulative know-how and field knowledge of generations of earlier workers.

Training Institutions

Springing from, but feeding the mission agencies, are mission training institutions, seminaries and Bible colleges which have long offered programs in many disciplines (such as theology, linguistics, anthropology, history, and many more) which together undergird the grand discipline of missiology. Those offering formal degrees in a residential setting are most visible, but it is getting more common for training to take place away from campuses. "Distance education" brings the instruction not only to where the trainees live and work, it often brings to learners the material that they most need and the optimal moment for them to take it in.

Pressing the extension idea further are fully accredited BA and MA degree-granting programs offering training by way of mentoring. Internet connections are fascinating and helpful, but the most effective training resource will continue to be local, face-to-face mentoring.¹

Associations and Societies

All of the people in these various missions and schools are intentionally networked by organizational associations and professional societies. Be a student of the mission industry. No missionary or mobilizer can be fully effective without an awareness of the IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association; now CrossGlobal Link) and the EFMA (Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies; now The Mission Exchange). Avail yourself of their meetings and publications, which are the cutting edge of missiology. Jointly they publish the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*.² You may never become a professor of missions at a graduate institution, but you will likely mentor many others in your lifetime in crucial matters of missiology. What you will do as a missionary or a mobilizer is so important that it is foolhardy not to gain professional skills in your pursuit of this high calling. Why not become an eager participant in the mission industry by joining a professional mission society? The ISFM (International Society for Frontier Missiology) might be the place to start.³

Mission Frontiers talks about the cutting edge of missions in the form of a 60-page newsprint bulletin that goes to 100,000 people all over the world. Produced by the U.S. Center for World Mission on a donation basis, it comes out every two months.⁴

Local Churches

Churches obviously play a crucial role in the missionary enterprise. Many churches offer components of training beyond normal catechism. Some ambitious churches have attempted to send their own mission teams. To succeed, of necessity they form new mission structures. Such overachieving vision is commendable, but is usually best expressed in alignment with existing mission structures. The entire complex tapestry of the mission industry is affected by the vision and knowledge of the sending churches.

The good news is that, more than any other force, the cause of missions unites an enormous variety of otherwise separate church traditions. It is truly amazing what unity and understanding has *flowed back from the field* to the disparate church traditions at home. It turns out that all our home church traditions shine best on the mission field. Seemingly dead traditions often have marvelously devout and competent missionaries on the field. Surprising to many people is the fact that missionaries on the field from many traditions cooperate very readily in all kinds of joint projects. Over 225 mission agencies are involved in 36 regional partnerships with another 25 in the process of formation. Phil Butler of Interdev (a specialized mission that coordinates all this!) calls these “Strategic Partnerships.”

Church people back home don’t know all this. You don’t very often find congregations holding joint picnics—like Presbyterians with Nazarenes. Yet their missionaries cooperate on the field with no trouble at all.

The bad news is that congregations usually need to be extensively educated and mobilized to remain effective in the World Christian Movement. The cultural momentum of church traditions, when imposed elsewhere—on the mission field—is where the World

Christian Movement has often been impeded. It is illusory for any group anywhere to come up with some new emphasis and make it seem so important that all the other traditions are considered wrong or inadequate. Read the story of the last two thousand years in the most balanced account ever written—Kenneth Scott Latourette’s *A History of Christianity*. You will see that every age has been marked by all kinds of spurting out in many different directions as godly people have struggled and groped for better light. We can look back and “improve” on practically everything that we see, but meanwhile our own form of Christianity may be bogged down by all kinds of cultural baggage!

For example, missions itself is a “new” emphasis in the Protestant tradition. Why didn’t the Reformation leaders, who so highly prized the Bible, find the Great Commission in the Bible? It took William Carey, a kid in a poverty-stricken backward gulch in rural England, to come up with clear-eyed questions as to what the Bible plainly said about God’s concern for all of the peoples of the earth. Sure, his elders had all the “right theology” but failed Bible 101 in regard to the main theme of the Bible.

Why do the widely-respected Westminster Confession of Faith, the Lutheran’s Non-altered Augsburg Confession, and even the Nicene Creed (to which we all pledge allegiance) say nothing whatsoever about the Great Commission? It is a wonder that missions ever came up at all. In few Christian traditions around the world is the call of missions anything like a major or even minor concern for the vast majority of their adherents. How strange!

Why Mission Mobilizers?

This strange situation brings us to the very reason mission mobilizers are so crucial for the advance of the World Christian Movement. It is evident that the World Christian Movement has moved forward by a dedicated few calling the church to its central mission. Over the centuries the Church has occasionally exhibited powerful passion for Christ’s global cause, and then, within a few years, sunk into a self-absorbed morass of disobedience.

Congregations which have set their heart on other things need a heart transplant! How would you like to have a heart transplant done by an untrained person? Unthinkable! Transplanting a heart is too important to leave to an untrained person. But, *the task of reaching the nations is the most important task which God has assigned to His Church*. And this requires transplanting a heart of vision and understanding in order to do it right. A mission mobilizer owes it to the church and the nations to acquire the skill and knowledge necessary to help do an effective heart transplant of vision and understanding.

This is equally true of the role of a field missionary. The mobilizer who stays home may need to learn about more parts of the world, but the missionary needs different tools. Missionary skills are different. Mobilizers and missionaries have two very different kinds of jobs, both of them essential—equally essential—to the World Christian Movement. Many people unthinkingly equate “missions” with missionaries. But there would be few missionaries unless there were also intensely committed and skilled mobilizers.

The famous “Cambridge Seven” stayed home long enough—a whole year—to visit the universities of England before they went out to China. Who knows, perhaps 500 missionaries went out because of their pre-field work as mobilizers! C. T. Studd’s older brother never did go as a missionary. But he went from campus to campus in the United

States and, among other things, persuaded John R. Mott to go to the Mt. Hermon meeting. What if that had not happened? Or, *what if Mott had decided to be a missionary rather than a mobilizer?* Probably no two people in history are traceably responsible for more missionaries going to the field than Mott and another SVM student, Robert E. Speer, who also stayed home to be a full-time mobilizer.

But were they qualified to do that without field experience? Oh, they eventually traveled all over the world. In fact, they gained a more comprehensive view of global needs than was possible for any one missionary. Mott could plan and lead the 1910 meeting at Edinburgh in a way no missionary was qualified to do.

But they had signed the pledge to go. That meant that they were qualified to stay—if only because they were willing to go! Note, however, if they had not been willing to go they would not have been spiritually qualified to stay. Why? Because those who are not willing to stay, if that is God’s will, are not—and cannot—be qualified to go!

Yes, being a mobilizer is just as much a spiritual calling as being a missionary. After all, missions is a cause, not just a career. In the end, as we shall see, a mobilizer needs to know a whole lot of things a missionary does not usually know. And vice versa.

But, beware! Just as missionaries face special problems in their cross-cultural work, so do mobilizers. In some ways it is much more difficult to be a mobilizer. Most churches will not readily support mobilizers. Or, worse still, they can “survive” missionary letters but it is too much to have to cope with resident, local mobilizers, constantly reminding them of their global obligations!

Look again at these two different types of work within the World Christian Movement: *the mobilizer and the missionary.*

Mobilizer and Missionary

Which one is for you? God obviously does not want everyone overseas. In the days of the massive Student Volunteer Movement four out of five who volunteered to go to the ends of the earth ended up staying home. That’s right: 20,000 out of 100,000 volunteers were able to make it to the field *only because four out of five were willing to continue to believe and work for the cause of missions back home.* Stirring up the church and keeping it envisioned is a much larger task than the frontline work itself.

I can’t believe that God is content with mobilizers that are not the Bible students and prayer warriors missionaries have to be. I can’t believe that a person doesn’t need to be as committed to the Lord if he stays home to mobilize. Mobilization, either as a full or part-time task, requires intense prayer, vision and commitment. By contrast the missionary task is a relatively well-accepted “calling,” while mobilization is not! All pastors are mobilizers of many good things and can be superb mission mobilizers. They are certainly worthy of support. We think ministers of music and youth workers are worthy of support. Why not mission mobilizers?

Mobilizing Yourself

More basic than anything else: you cannot be a mobilizer if you are not yourself mobilized! But how do you become mobilized?

Feed yourself. Get to conferences, subscribe to periodicals, buy the key books, study the issues for yourself or you will never be all God wants you to be as a mobilizer.⁵

You yourself must be caught up in the drama of the global countdown of the kingdom of God. It is not enough to be caught up in local church goals for next year.

Support missions yourself. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt 6:21). Use the *Global Prayer Digest* daily in a family setting. Pray for specific missionaries. *Nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate your life.* Being a World Christian is of little value, really, unless you are a daily World Christian! The *Global Prayer Digest* can change your life more in one month than many “drive by” experiences that gradually fade away.⁴ Everything grows slowly. How can you keep growing without daily renewal of vision?

Write to missionaries. Be aware of their problems and needs. They may want you to buy something for them and bundle it up and send it to them. Take them in overnight as they pass through your area. Go on picnics with them and their children. Debrief them. Share with them from your studies. Compare notes from one field to another.

Of course, don’t wait to begin mobilizing in your local congregation. Also, be ready to visit other local congregations. Become active in denominational policies and mission strategies as well as interdenominational mission events.

How about You?

And, are *you* thinking clearly about yourself? You need to ask God on your knees where *you* fit in. Maybe the place God has for you is teaching a Sunday School class with a relentlessly international perspective. Maybe God wants *you* to be one more globally-minded pastor—that kind of pastor is worth more than quite a few missionaries. God will likely ask you to do the hardest thing you are capable of!

The key thing is to realize that the development of your own *career* must not be your main concern, but rather the development of the mission cause. *The question of career vs. cause will be an issue in your heart of hearts again and again.* Jesus, today, might have put it, “Seek first the Kingdom of God and your career will take care of itself.” We have already said a lot about preparations, especially those which can be pursued right on the job. But if you are willing to prepare and work, simultaneously, for the rest of your life, God may indeed reward you with a startling career—but *you will probably not know the details in advance.*

Someone has said, “God reserves the best for those who leave the choice with Him.” Another (the founder of the Navigators, Dawson Trotman) said, “Don’t ever do something that others can do or will do if there are things to be done that others can’t do or won’t do.” See, getting what we want—by going after it—is not in the cards for Christians. Jesus turned it completely around the other way: “He that seeks to save himself will lose his life; he that will lose his life for my sake will find it” (Luke 9:24). God’s will for us is not mere *advice*. We can’t “take it or leave it;” we must “accept it or reject it.” His will is His command.

Make no mistake. God honors those who seek His work above their worries. One of our staff members once said, “Now I think I understand what faith is; it is not the confidence that God will do what we want Him to do *for us*, but the conviction that we can do what He wants done *for Him* and let Him take care of the consequences.”

Is your problem that you can’t see very far into the future? As Trotman said, “If you can’t see very far ahead, go ahead as far as you can see.”

Lots of people would be glad to follow God if He would only tell them in advance exactly all the wonderful things He would do for them and what high-sounding job titles they might one day hold. But, remember Genesis 12:1? *It is characteristic of the Christian life that God asks us to go without telling us where!* This is not to be considered unfair or capricious on His part. The fact is that when we walk in the little light we have, and keep going on and on taking steps in faith, the ways in which He leads us are almost always, as we look back, something we could have never been told in advance!

Untold marvels lie *beyond* each step of faith. You don't really have to know what is beyond the next step, and you can't find out without taking the next step. Again, it is characteristic of the Christian life that we do not know very far in advance. In fact, if you think you've got the next few years lined up you may well be mistaken, or you may still be trying to make your plans for God to bless.

Wouldn't His will inevitably focus on your doing "your utmost for His highest?" It is not a question of how much of our own desires we can get away with. Some young people make the final, dramatic decision "to be a missionary" and immediately begin thinking where the climate would be nicest. You can't be any kind of a solid Christian if you are unwilling to do anything He asks. What does he ask? Nothing more than all we are and possess. That's all. He doesn't ask us to do the easiest job we can think of but the hardest we are able to handle. He does not ask us to do what we cannot do, although He often enables us to do what we could not do without His special grace. He is not a tyrant who doesn't care about our welfare in the task. It is amazingly true that when we are willing to do the most difficult thing, we find that we are better off because of it. Oh, sure, missionaries have their share of disease and pain, but some of the most diseased and pained are people who stayed home in order to avoid all that!

Jesus said, "Are you burdened and weary? Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; you will find me gentle and kindly, and you will find rest for your souls. My yoke fits perfectly and my burden is light." Jesus Himself "endured the cross and ignored the shame for the joy that was set before Him."

But we sometimes seem more geared to do our "utmost" than we are to seek out patiently, deliberately, and painstakingly that role which will make the maximum contribution to "His highest"—the coming of His kingdom and power and glory to all the peoples of the earth. Again, beware of how easy it is to make that difficult choice to live for Him rather than for ourselves, throwing away our secular aspirations, and then turning aggressively to try to find out the most pleasing assignment within the new arena of life. It is not to please ourselves that we give our lives to Christ. Yet, we may find that His will involves greater pleasure and fulfillment than anything we ourselves could have chosen!

A famous missionary wrote back to fellow students and pled with them: "Give up your small ambitions and come East to proclaim the glorious gospel of Christ." For me to give "My utmost for His highest" is no guarantee of health, wealth, or happiness—which, incidentally, is true of any choice one can make—but that kind of crucial choice is, in the experience of thousands who have tried it, the most exhilarating and demanding path of all callings. You don't lose if you go with God. But you have to be willing to lose or you can't stick close to God.

Endnotes

1. The World Christian Foundations program allows you to achieve a fully accredited M.A. or B.A. degree while you continue in work or ministry anywhere in the world. Instruction is centered on weekly mentoring sessions which allow both work and study. For more information visit worldchristianfoundations.org.
2. The IFMA (now CrossGlobal Link) and the EFMA (now The Mission Exchange) are each comprised of about 100 mission agencies. The IFMA has Canadian members as contrasted to the EFMA, which represents only the National Association of Evangelicals of the USA. The largest mission agency not affiliated with either the IFMA or the EFMA is the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Another large mission not in either the IFMA or the EFMA is Baptist Mid-Missions, which is the main group within a smaller association—the Fellowship of Missions (FOM). More recently AIMS (Association of International Missions/Services) has arisen within the general sphere of the charismatic tradition. The Association of Professors of Mission (APM) consists of seminary and college professors. The American Society of Missiology was founded from its beginning to intentionally include anyone seriously interested in missiology without regard to his/her denominational orientation. The ASM publishes the journal *Missiology*, *An International Review*. When you join the society you are automatically a subscriber to the journal. The Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS) evolved from the Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions in order to welcome into its membership mission executives as well as professors from fields other than missions. It has a newsletter but no journal; instead it gives members a free book (or two) per year from its new EMS monograph series.
3. The International Society for Frontier Missiology (ISFM) has chosen to focus upon the remaining task in the world today still requiring the earlier type of “pioneer” work—for example, the initial-breakthrough type of mission activity. Its annual dues include a subscription to the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*. For more information about the journal, visit ifm.org.
4. For subscription information, visit www.global-prayer-digest.org.
5. For resources and encouragement in mobilizing, visit www.perspectives.org and watch for future updates.

The Kingdom Strikes Back

(1999) (Foundations Reader, 7-23)

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Man has virtually erased his own story. Human beings as far back as we have any paleological record have been fighting each other so much that they have destroyed well over 90 percent of their own handiwork. Their libraries, their literature, their cities, their works of art are mostly gone. Even the little that remains from the distant past is riddled with evidences of a strange and pervasive evil that has grotesquely distorted man's potential.

This is strange because apparently no other species treats its own with such deadly hatred. The oldest skulls bear mute witness that they were bashed in and roasted to deliver their contents as food for other human beings. An incredible array of disease germs also cuts down population growth.

World population in Abraham's day is estimated at 27 million—less than the population of California in AD 2000. But, the small slow-growing population of Abraham's day is mute, and ominous evidence exists of the devastating combination of war and pestilence, both the relentless impact of the Evil One. World population growth back then was one-sixteenth of today's global rate. As hatred and disease are conquered, world population instantly picks up speed. If today's relatively slow global growth rate were to have happened in Abraham's day, our present world population (of 6 billion) would have been reached back then in just 321 years! Thus, in those days, evil must have been much more rampant than now.

We are not surprised, then, to find that the explanation for this strange evil comes up in the oldest detailed written records—surviving documents that are respected by Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions whose adherents make up more than half of the world's population. These documents called “the Torah,” by Jews, the “Books of the Law” by Christians, and “the Taurat” by Muslims not only explain the strange source of evil but also describe a counter-campaign and then follow the progress of that campaign through many centuries.

To be specific, the first eleven chapters of Genesis constitute a scary “introduction” to the entire problem, indeed, to the plot of the entire Bible. Those few pages describe three things: 1) a glorious and “good” original creator; 2) the entrance of a rebellious and destructive evil—superhuman, demonic person—resulting in 3) a humanity caught up in that rebellion and brought under the power of that evil person.

Don't ever think that the whole remainder of the Bible is simply a bundle of divergent, unrelated stories as taught in Sunday School. Rather, the Bible consists of a single drama: the entrance of the Kingdom, the power and the glory of the living God in this enemy-occupied territory. From Genesis 12 to the end of the Bible, and indeed until the end of time, there unfolds the single, coherent drama of “the Kingdom strikes back.” This would make a good title for the Bible itself were it to be printed in modern dress (with Gen 1-11 as the introduction to the whole Bible). In this unfolding drama we see the gradual but irresistible power of God reconquering and redeeming His fallen creation through the giving of His own Son at the very center of the 4000-year period ending in 2000 BC. This is tersely summed up: “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:6).

This counterattack against the Evil One clearly does not await the appearance of the good Person in the center of the story. Indeed, there would seem to be five identifiable epochs of advance *prior* to the appearance of Christ as well as five after that event. The purpose of this chapter is mainly to describe the five epochs *after* Christ. However, in order for those later epochs to be seen as part of a single ten-epoch 4,000-year unfolding story, we will note a few clues about the first five epochs.

The theme that links all ten epochs is the grace of God intervening in a “world which lies in the power of the Evil One” (1 John 5:19), contesting an enemy who temporarily is “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4) so that the nations will praise God’s name. His plan for doing this is to reach all peoples by conferring an unusual “blessing” on Abraham and Abraham’s seed (Abraham’s children-by-faith), even as we pray “Thy Kingdom come.” By contrast, the Evil One’s plan is to bring reproach on the Name of God. The Evil One stirs up hate, distorts even DNA sequences, perhaps authors suffering and all destruction of God’s good creation. Satan’s devices may very well include devising virulent germs in order to tear down confidence in God’s loving character.

Therefore this “blessing” is a key concept. The English word *blessing* is not an ideal translation. We see the word in use where Isaac confers his “blessing” on Jacob and not on Esau. It was not “blessings” but “a blessing,” the conferral of a family name, responsibility, obligation, as well as privilege. It is not something you can receive or get like a box of chocolates you can run off with and eat by yourself in a cave, or a new personal power you can show off like rippling muscles. It is something you *be-come* in a permanent *relationship and fellowship* with your

Father in Heaven. It returns “families,” that is, *nations* to His household, to the Kingdom of God, so that the nations “will declare His glory.” The nations are being prevented from declaring God’s glory by the scarcity of evidence of God’s ability to cope with evil. If the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the Devil, then what are the Son of God’s followers and “joint heirs” supposed to do to bring honor to His Name?

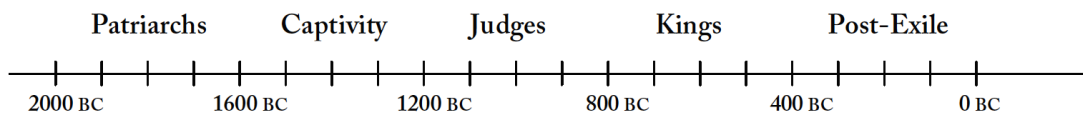
This “blessing” of God is in effect conditioned upon its being shared with other nations, since those who yield to and receive God’s blessing are, like Abraham, those of faith who subject themselves to God’s will, become part of His Kingdom, and represent the extension of His rule, His power, His authority within all other peoples.

The First Half of the 4,000-Year Story

The story of the “strike back” as we see it in Genesis 12 begins in about 2000 BC. During roughly the next 400 years, Abraham was chosen, and moved to the geographic center of the Afro-Asian land mass. The time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (often called the Period of the Patriarchs) displays relatively small breakthroughs of witness to the surrounding nations even though the central mandate to restore God’s control over all nations (Gen 12:1-3) is repeated twice again to Abraham (18:18, 22:18), and once to both Isaac (26:4) and Jacob (28:14,15).

Joseph observed to his brothers, “You sold me, but God sent me.” He was obviously a great blessing to the nation of Egypt. Even Pharaoh recognized that Joseph was filled with the Spirit of God (Gen 41:38, *TLB*). But this was not the *intentional* missionary obedience God wanted. Joseph’s brothers, for example, had not taken up an offering and sent him to Egypt as a missionary! God was in the missions business whether they were or not.

Ten Epochs of Redemptive History: The First Half 2000—0 BC



The next four periods, roughly 400 years each, are: 2) the Captivity, 3) the Judges, 4) the Kings and 5) that of the Babylonian Exile and dispersion (*diaspora*). During this rough and tumble, the promised *blessing* and the expected *mission* (to extend God’s rule to all the nations of the world) all but disappear from sight. As a result, where possible, God accomplished His will through the *voluntary* obedience of His people, but where necessary, He accomplished His will through *involuntary* means. Joseph, Jonah, the nation as a whole when taken captive represent the

category of *involuntary* missionary outreach intended by God to force the extension of ^{the} blessing. The little girl carried away captive to the house of Naaman the Syrian was able to share her faith. Naomi, who “went” a distance away, shared her faith with her children and their non-Jewish wives. On the other hand, Ruth, her daughter-in-law, Naaman the Syrian, and the Queen of Sheba all “came” *voluntarily*, attracted by God’s blessing-relationship with Israel.

Note, then, the four different “mission mechanisms” at work to bless other peoples: 1) going voluntarily, 2) involuntarily going without missionary intent, 3) coming voluntarily, and 4) coming involuntarily (as with Gentiles forcibly settled in Israel—2 Kings 17).

Thus, we see in every epoch the active concern of God to forward His mission, with or without the full cooperation of His chosen nation. When Jesus appears, it is an incriminating “visitation.” He comes to His own, and “His own receive Him not” (John 1:11). He is well received in Nazareth until He refers to God’s desire to bless the Gentiles. At that precise moment (Luke 4:28) an explosion of homicidal fury betrays the fact that this chosen nation—chosen to receive *and to mediate* the blessing (Ex 19:5, 6; Ps 67; Isa 49:6)—has grossly fallen short. There was indeed a sprinkling of fanatical “Bible students” who “traversed land and sea to make a single proselyte” (Matt 23:15). But such outreach was

not so much to be a blessing to the other nations as it was to sustain and protect Israel. They were not always making sure that their converts were “circumcised in heart” (Deut 10:16, 30:6, Jer 9:24-26, Rom 2:29).

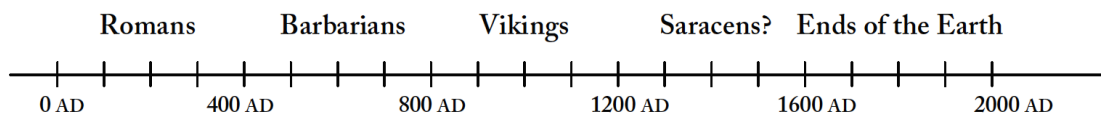
In effect, and under these circumstances, Jesus did not come to *give* the Great Commission but to *take it away*. The natural branches were broken off while other “unnatural” branches were grafted in (Rom 11:13-24). But, despite the general reluctance of the chosen missionary nation—typical of other nations later—many people groups were in fact touched due to the faithfulness and righteousness of some. These groups come to mind: Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines (of the ancient Minoan culture), Hittites, Moabites, Phoenicians (of Tyre and Sidon), Assyrians, Sabeans (of the land of Sheba), Babylonians, Persians, Parthians, Medes, Elamites and Romans.

The Second Half of the Story

The next 2,000-year period is one in which God, on the basis of the intervention of His Son, makes sure that the other nations are both blessed and *similarly called* “to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.” In each case, “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him (of that people) shall much be required.” Now we see the Kingdom striking back in the realms of the Armenians, the Romans, the Celts, the Franks, the Angles, the Saxons, the Germans, and eventually even those ruthless pagan pirates further north called the Vikings. All these people-basins will be invaded, tamed and subjugated by the power of the gospel, and in turn expected to share that blessing with still other peoples (instead of raiding them).

But in one sense the next five epochs are not all that different from the first five epochs. Those nations that are blessed do not seem terribly eager to share that unique blessing and

Ten Epochs of Redemptive History: The Second Half 0—2000 AD



extend that new kingdom. The Celts are the most active nation in the first millennium to give an outstanding missionary response. As we will see—just as in the Old Testament—the conferral of this unique blessing will bring sober responsibility, dangerous if unfulfilled. And we will see

repeated again and again God's use of the full range of His four missionary mechanisms. The "visitation" of the Christ was dramatic, full of portent and strikingly "in due time." Jesus was born a member of a subjugated people. Yet in spite of her bloody imperialism, Rome was truly an instrument in God's hands to prepare the world for His coming. Rome controlled one of the largest empires the world has ever known, forcing the Roman peace (the "Pax Romana") upon all sorts of disparate and barbaric peoples. For centuries Roman emperors had been building an extensive communication system, both in the 250,000 miles of marvelous roads which stretched throughout the empire, and in the rapid transmission of messages and documents somewhat like the Pony Express on the American frontier. In its conquests, Rome enveloped at least one civilization far more advanced than her own—Greece. Highly-educated artisans and teachers were taken as slaves to every major city of the empire where they taught the Greek language. Greek was thus understood from England to Palestine.

Equally important to our thesis is the less known but empire-wide substratum of obedience and righteousness—the massive and marvelous presence of diaspora Jews, more respected in their dispersion than in their home land! Scholars agree that their numbers had grown to 10 percent of the Roman population. The virile element within this Jewish presence—those "circumcised in heart"—played a large part in attracting many Gentiles to the fringes of the synagogues. Many of these Gentiles, like those of Cornelius' household, became earnest Bible readers and worshipers—people the New Testament calls "devout persons" or "God-fearers." This way the faith jumped the ethnic borders! Such *God-fearers* became the steel rails on which the Christian movement expanded. This movement was basically the Jewish faith in Gentile clothing, something—take note—which was understandably hard for earnest Jews to conceive.

How else could a few Gospels and a few letters from St. Paul have had such a widespread impact within so many different ethnic groups in such a short period of time?

Stop and ponder: Jesus came, lived for 33 years on earth, confronted His own unenthusiastic missionary nation, was rejected by many, was crucified and buried, rose again, and underscored the same longstanding commission to all who would respond, before ascending to the Father. Today even the most agnostic historian stands amazed that what began in a humble stable in Bethlehem of Palestine, a backwater of the Roman Empire, in less than 300 years was given control of the emperors' palace in Rome. How did it happen? It is a truly incredible story.

No Saints in the Middle?

It is wise to interrupt the story here. If you haven't heard this story before you may confront a psychological problem. In church circles today we have fled, feared or forgotten these middle centuries. Hopefully, fewer and fewer of us will continue to think in terms of what may be called a fairly extreme form of the "BOBO" theory—that the Christian faith somehow "Blinked Out" after the Apostles and "Blinked On" again in our time, or whenever our modern "prophets" arose, be they Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Joseph Smith, Ellen White or John Wimber. The result of this kind of BOBO approach is that you have "early" saints and "latter-day" saints, but *no saints in the middle*.

Thus, many Evangelicals are not much interested in what happened prior to the Protestant Reformation. They have the vague impression that the Church was apostate before Luther and Calvin, and whatever there was of real Christianity consisted of a few persecuted individuals here and there. For example, in the multi-volume *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*, only half of the first volume is devoted to the first 15 centuries! In evangelical Sunday Schools, children are busy as beavers with the story of God's work from Genesis to Revelation, from Adam to the Apostles—and their Sunday School publishers may even boast about their "all-Bible curriculum." But this only really means that these children do not get exposed to all the incredible things God did with that Bible between the times of the Apostles and the Reformers, a period which is staggering proof of the unique power of the Bible! To many people, it is as if there were "no saints in the middle."

In the space available, however, it is only possible to outline the Western part of the story of the kingdom striking back—and only outline. It will be very helpful to recognize the various cultural basins in which that invasion has taken place. Kenneth Scott Latourette's *History of Christianity* gives the fascinating details, a book extending the story beyond the Bible. (A book more valuable than any other, apart from the Bible!)

Note the pattern in the chart on the following page. Latourette's "resurgences" correspond to our "renaissances."

In Period I, Rome was won but did not reach out with the gospel to the barbaric Celts and Goths. Almost as a penalty, the Goths invaded Rome and the whole western (Latin) part of the empire caved in.

In Period II, the Goths were added in, and they and others briefly achieved a new "Holy" Roman Empire. But this new sphere did not effectively reach further north with the gospel.

In Period III, again almost as a penalty, the Vikings invaded these Christianized Celtic and Gothic barbarians. In the resulting agony, the Vikings, too, became Christians.

In Period IV, Europe now united for the first time by Christian faith, reached out in a sort of pseudo-mission to the Saracens in the great abortion known as the Crusades.

In Period V, Europe now reached out to the very ends of the earth, but still done with highly mixed motives; intermingled commercial and spiritual interests was both a blight and a blessing. Yet, during this period, the entire non-Western world was suddenly stirred into development as the colonial powers greatly reduced war and disease. Never before had so few affected so many, even though never before had so great a gap existed between two halves of the world. What will happen in the next few years?

Will the immeasurably strengthened non-Western world invade Europe and America just as the Goths invaded Rome and the Vikings overran Europe? Will the "Third World" turn on us in a new series of "Barbarian" invasions? Will the OPEC nations gradually buy us out and take us over? Clearly we face the reaction of an awakened non-Western world that is suddenly beyond our control. What will be the role of the gospel? Can we gain any insight from these previous cycles of outreach?

Period I: Winning the Romans, A.D. 0–400

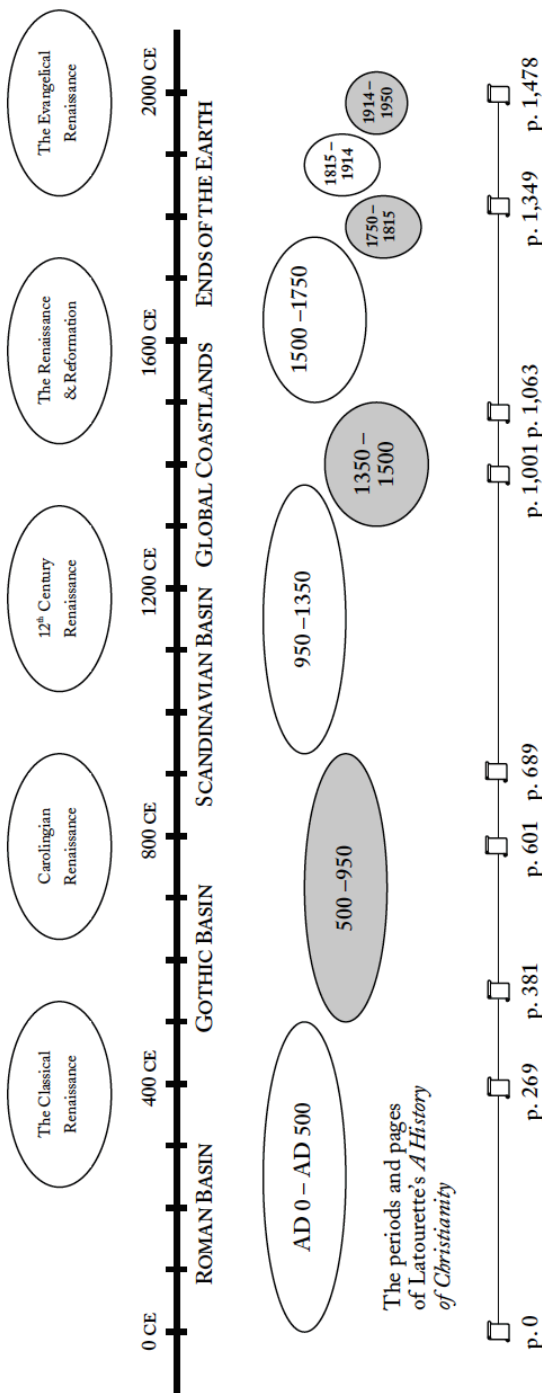
Perhaps the most spectacular triumph of Christianity in history was its conquest of the Roman Empire in roughly 20 decades. There is a lot more we would like to know about this period. Our lack of knowledge makes much of it a mystery, and the growth of Christianity sounds impossible, almost unbelievable—especially if we do not take into account the Jewish substratum. Only the early part of the story starts out emblazoned in the floodlight of the New Testament epistles themselves. Let's take a glance at that.

There we see a Jew named Paul brought up in a Greek city, committed to leadership in the Jewish tradition of his time. Suddenly he is transformed by Christ and gradually comes to see that the essence of the faith of the Jews as fulfilled in Christ could operate without Jewish garments. He realized that an inner circumcision of the heart could be clothed in Greek language and customs as well as Semitic! It should have become crystal clear to everyone that anyone can become a Christian and be transformed in the inner man by the living Christ, whether Jew, Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, male or female. The Greeks didn't have to become Jews—undergo physical circumcision, take over the Jewish calendar of festivals or holy days, or even observe Jewish dietary customs—any more than a woman had to be made into a man to be acceptable to God. What *was* necessary was the "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5, 16:26).

Paul based his work on the radical biblical principle (unaccepted by many Jews to this day) that it is circumcision of the *heart* that counts (Jer 9), and that the new believers of a new culture did not have to speak the language, wear the clothes, or follow all the customs of the sending church. This meant that for Greeks the cultural details of the Jewish law were no longer to be considered mandatory. Therefore, to the Jews, Paul continued as one "under the law of

Pulses in Western Civilization

As the faith moved in to each new cultural basin it struggled before gaining acceptance in a flourishing period which scholars have called "Renaissance."



The periods and pages of Latourette's *A History of Christianity*

Renaissance in Five Epochs

The dark-lined upper grid of 400-year "epochs" is designed to be easy to remember, not to determine the reality of history. However, the most significant expansions of the Christian faith are reflected at least roughly in this way. More importantly, the existence of five "renaissances" is also highlighted.

The lower line represents the pages Latourette devotes to the timeline above. The unshaded ovals represent what Latourette

calls "Resurgences" of Christianity, while the shaded ovals represent "Recessions." The most important thing revealed by this comparison is the fact that all four of Latourette's "Resurgences" correspond to the "Renaissances" of the upper timeline. The only significant difference is that he does not honor the Carolingian Renaissance to the extent many other scholars do.

One reason Latourette saw this differently is that he was concerned strictly with what is called "Christianity" (which is not illogical in a book entitled *A History of Christianity*) and thus does not consider the Islamic movement a largely positive expression of the same "Judaic" tradition.

In any case, Islam, although starting later, became an advance far more illustrious than our Western upbringing normally

allows us to realize. By the time of the Renaissance in fourth epoch, Islam had become politically, culturally, militarily, and even numerically, superior to "Christianity." In many ways this had been true for more than half of the Christian period. This is not surprising since much of the expansion of Islam built on a Christian substratum, just as Christianity had earlier built on a Jewish substratum.

Indeed, as far as the basic purpose of the Mosaic Law is concerned, the Greek believers immediately developed the functional equivalent to it in their own cultural terms while most of them held on as well to what is often called the Old Testament. After all, it was “the Bible of the early church” (as well as of the Jews), that had led them to belief in the first place.

We may get the impression that mission activity in this period benefitted very little from deliberately organized effort. That may well be only because its structure was transparent: Paul apparently worked within a well-known “missionary team” structure used by the Pharisees—even by Paul himself when he was a Pharisee! Paul’s sending congregation in Antioch certainly undertook some responsibility. But, basically, they “sent him off” more than they “sent him out.” His traveling team had all of the authority of any local church. He did not look for orders from Antioch.

There is good reason to suppose that the Christian faith spread in many areas by the “involuntary-go” mechanism, because Christians were often dispersed as the result of persecutions. We know that fleeing Arian Christians had a lot to do with the conversion of the Goths. We have the stories of Ulfilas and Patrick whose missionary efforts were in each case initiated by the accident of their being taken captive.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to suppose that Christianity followed the trade routes of the Roman Empire. We know that there was a close relationship and correspondence between Christians in Gaul and Asia Minor. Yet we must face the fact that the early Christians of the Roman Empire (and Christians today!) were only rarely willing and able to take conscious practical steps to fulfill the Great Commission. In view of the amazing results in those early decades, however, we are all the more impressed by the innate power of the gospel itself.

One intriguing possibility of the natural transfer of the gospel within a given social unit is the case of the Celts. Historical studies clarify for us that the province of Galatia in Asia Minor was called so because it was settled by *Galatoi* from Western Europe (who as late as the fourth century still spoke both their original Celtic tongue and also the Greek of that part of the Roman Empire). Whether or not Paul’s Galatians were merely Jewish traders living in the province of Galatia, or were from the beginning Celtic *Galatoi* who were attracted to synagogues as “God fearers,” we note in any case that Paul’s letter to the Galatians is especially wary of anyone pushing over on his readers the mere *outward customs* of the Jewish culture and confusing such customs with *essential biblical faith* which he preached to both Jew and Greek (Rom 1:16). A matter of high missionary interest is the fact that Paul’s preaching had tapped into a cultural vein of Celtic humanity that may soon have included friends, relatives and trade contacts reaching a great distance to the west. Thus Paul’s efforts in Galatia may give us one clue to the surprisingly early penetration of the gospel into the main Celtic areas of Europe, comprising a belt running across southern Europe clear over into Galicia in Spain, Brittany in France and up into the western and northern parts of the British Isles.

There came a time when not only hundreds of thousands of Greek and Roman citizens had become Christians, but Celtic-speaking peoples and Gothic tribal peoples as well had believed within their own forms for various versions of biblical faith, both within and beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. It is probable that the missionary work behind this came about mainly through unplanned processes involving Christians from the eastern part of the Roman Empire. In any case this achievement certainly cannot readily be credited to the planned missionary initiative of *Latin-speaking* Romans in the West. This is the point we are trying to make.

One piece of evidence is the fact that the earliest Irish mission compounds (distinguished from the Latin-Roman type by a central chapel) followed a ground plan derived from Christian centers in *Egypt*. And *Greek*, not Latin, was the language of the early churches in Gaul. Even the first organized mission efforts of John Cassian and Martin of Tours, for example, *came from the East* by means of commune structures begun in Syria and Egypt. Fortunately, these organized

efforts carried with them a strong emphasis on literacy and the studying and copying of biblical manuscripts and ancient Greek classics.

As amazed pagan leaders looked on, the cumulative impact of this new, much more acceptable clothing of biblical faith grew to prominent proportions by AD 300. We don't know with any confidence what personal reasons Constantine had in AD 312 for declaring himself a Christian. We know that his mother in Asia Minor was a Christian, and that his father, as a co-regent in Gaul and Britain, did not enforce in his area the Diocletian edicts commanding persecution of Christians. However, by this time in history the inescapable factor is that there were enough Christians in the Roman Empire to make an official reversal of policy toward Christianity not only feasible but politically wise. I well recall a lecture by the late Professor Lynn White, Jr. of U.C.L.A., one of the great medieval historians, in which he said that even if Constantine had not become a Christian, the empire could not have held out against Christianity more than another decade or two! The long development of the Roman Empire had ended the local autonomy of the city-state and created a widespread need for a sense of belonging—he called it a crisis of identity. At that time Christianity was the one religion that had no nationalism at its root, partly because it was rejected by the Jews! It was not the folk religion of any one tribe. In White's words, it had developed "an unbeatable combination." However, this virtue became a mixed blessing once it became aligned with the Empire.

Thus, it is the very power of the movement which helps to explain why the momentous imperial decision to *tolerate* Christianity almost inevitably led to its becoming (roughly 50 years later) the *official* religion of the Empire. Not long after the curtain rises on Christianity as an officially *tolerated* religion, the head of the Christian community in Rome turns out astonishingly to be the strongest and most trusted man around. That's why Constantine, when he moved the seat of government to Constantinople, left his palace (the famous Lateran Palace) to the people of the Christian community as their "White House" in Rome. In any case, it is simply a matter of record that by AD 375, Christianity had become the official religion of Rome. If it had merely been an ethnic cult, it could not have been even a candidate as an official religion of the Empire.

Ironically, however, once Christianity became locked into a specific cultural tradition and political loyalty, it tended automatically to alienate all who were anti-Roman. Even being *tolerated* instantly created suspicion and then soon widespread slaughter of "Christians" in Arabia and what is now Iran. This persecution stopped for three years, when a Roman emperor (Julian the Apostate) *opposed* Christianity and tried to roll things back to the pagan gods! Meanwhile, even in the case of anti-Roman populations within the Empire's boundaries, as in North Africa, the foundation was laid for people to turn to Islam as an alternative. This in one sense was a cultural breakaway from Christianity just as Christianity had been a breakaway from the Jewish form of the biblical faith. Similarly "Black Muslims" today deliberately reject the "white man's religion."

Thus, the political triumph of what eventually came to be known as *Christianity* was in fact a mixed blessing. The biblical faith could wear other than Jewish clothes; it was now dressed in Roman clothes; but if these new clothes were normative, it would not be expected to spread far beyond the political boundaries of the Roman Empire. It didn't, except in the West. Why was that?

No one questions that when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, it became ill-equipped by its very form to complete the Great Commission with any populace that was anti-Roman. As we might expect, only Christianity of a heretical variety was accepted by the Germanic tribes while Rome was still strong militarily. But once the tribal peoples discovered it possible to invade and conquer the western half of the Roman Empire, the Catholic and Orthodox forms of the faith became less threatening because the Goths and others could now try to acquire the prestige of the Roman language and culture without being dominated by the Roman legions.

Note, however, the domino results of partially Christianized Gothic barbarians

threatening Rome: the Romans in defense pulled their legions out of Britain. As a result, four centuries of Roman literacy in southern Britain were soon extinguished by a new form of invading barbarians—Angles, Saxons and Frisians who, compared to the Goths, were total pagans, cruel and destructive. What would happen now? Thus began the “First” of the two Dark Ages.

Period II: Winning the Barbarians, A.D. 400–800

It is a fact that when the earlier (Gothic) tribal peoples became Christianized into an antagonistic Arian form of the faith, they became a greater and greater military threat to Rome. All it took for this threat to become a true menace was for the feared Huns to punch into Europe from Central Asia. This pushed the panicked Visigoths (and then the Ostrogoths and then the Vandals) inside the Empire. In the turmoil and confusion these tribal incursions somewhat unintentionally wrecked the entire network of civil government in the West (in today’s Italy, Spain and North Africa). Later they tried seriously to rebuild it.

(Was all this something like the post-colonial chaos in Africa after the Second World War?) In fact, the only reason the city of Rome itself was not physically devastated by the invasions, which arrived finally at the gates of Rome in 410, was that these Gothic Barbarians were, all things considered, really very respectful of life and property, especially that of the churches! It was a huge benefit to citizens of Rome that earlier informal missionary effort—for which Latin Roman Christians could claim little credit—had brought these peoples into at least a superficial Christian faith. Even secular Romans observed how lucky they were that the invaders held high certain standards of Christian morality. Not so the Angles and Saxons who invaded Britain.

We are tantalized by the reflection that this much was accomplished by informal and almost unconscious sharing of the gospel—e.g., the news and authority of the *blessing* being extended to all Gentile nations. How much better might it have been if the Romans—during that brief hundred years of official flourishing of Christianity (310-410) prior to the first Gothic invasion of the city of Rome—had been devoted to energetic and intentional missionary effort. Even a little heretical Christianity prevented the Barbarians from that total disregard of civilization which was to be shown by the Vikings in the third period. Perhaps a little more missionary work might have prevented the complete collapse of the governmental structure of the Roman Empire in the West. Today, for example, the ability of the new African states to maintain a stable government is to a great extent dependent upon their degree of Christianization (that is, both in knowledge and morality).

In any case, we confront the ominous phenomenon of partially Christianized barbarian hordes being emboldened and enabled to pour in upon a complacent, officially Christian empire that had failed effectively to reach out to them. The tribal peoples were quick to acquire Roman military skills, often serving as mercenaries in the Roman legions.

[These events may remind us of our relation to the present-day colossus of China. The country of China, like the Barbarians north of Rome, has been crucially affected by Christianity even though bitterly opposed to its alien connections. And they have gained nuclear power. Can you imagine why they vigorously opposed the Pope’s appointment of a Cardinal within their midst? After the Second World War they adopted “Chinese communism” extensively and profoundly, which was a kind of superficial “faith” embodying a number of distinctively Christian ingredients—despite the often grave distortion of those Christian elements. Just as a modicum of Christian faith in some ways strengthened the hand of the Barbarians against the Romans, so the country of China today is awesomely more dangerous due to the cleansing, integrating and galvanizing effect of the Communist philosophy and cell (structure which is clearly derived from the West, and indirectly from the Christian tradition itself). You can imagine the Barbarians criticizing the softness and degeneracy of the Roman Christians just as the

country of China denounced both the Russians for failing to live up to Communist standards and the West for its pornography and crime.]

Whether or not the Romans had it coming (for failing to reach out), and whether or not the Barbarians were both encouraged and tempered in their conquest by their initial Christian awareness, the indisputable fact is that while the Romans lost the western half of their empire, the Barbarian world, in a very dramatic sense, gained a Christian faith.

The immediate result: right within the city of Rome appeared two “denominations,” the one Arian and the other Athanasian. Also in the picture was the Celtic “church,” which was more a series of missionary compounds than it was a denomination made up of local churches. Still less like a church was an organization called the Benedictines, which came along later to compete with the Celts in establishing missionary compounds all over Europe. By the time the Vikings appeared on the horizon there had spread up through Europe over 1,000 such mission compounds.

Mission compounds?

Protestants, and perhaps even modern Catholics, must pause at this phenomenon. Our problem in understanding these strange (and much misunderstood) instruments of evangelization is not so much our ignorance of what these people did as our prejudice which developed because of decadent monks who lived almost a thousand years later. It is wholly unfair for us to judge the work of a traveling evangelist like Columban or Boniface by the stagnation of the wealthy Augustinians in Luther’s day—although we must certainly pardon Luther for thinking such thoughts.

It is indisputable that the chief characteristic of these “Jesus People” in this second period, whether they were Celtic *peregrini* (wandering evangelists) or their parallel in Benedictine communes, was the fact that they held the Bible in awe. They sang their way through the whole book of Psalms each week as a routine discipline. It was primarily they who enabled the Kingdom and the power and the glory to be shared with the barbaric Anglo-Saxons and Goths.

It is true that many strange, even bizarre and pagan customs were mixed up as secondary elements in the various forms of Christianity that were active during the period of the Christianization of Europe. The headlong collision and ongoing competition between Western Roman and Celtic (mainly of Eastern origin) forms of Christianity undoubtedly resulted in an enhancement of common biblical elements in their faith. But we must remember the relative chaos introduced by the invasions, and therefore not necessarily expect to see the usual parish churches that once were familiar in rural America dotting the landscape.

Enter: The Orders

Under the particular circumstances of that time, similar to many chaotic corners of the world today, the most durable structure around was the *order*—a fellowship much more highly disciplined and tightly-knit than the usual American Protestant congregation today. Its “houses” came to dot the landscape of Europe. We must admit, furthermore, that these novel Christian communities not only were the source of spirituality and scholarship during the Middle Ages, but they also preserved the technologies of the Roman industrial world—tanning, dyeing, weaving, metalworking, masonry skills, bridge building, etc. Their civil, charitable and even scientific contribution is, in general, grossly underestimated—especially by Protestants who have developed unfriendly stereotypes about “monks.” Probably the greatest accomplishment of these disciplined Christian communities is seen in the simple fact that almost all our knowledge of the Roman world is derived from their libraries, whose silent testimony reveals the appreciation they had, even as Christians, for the “pagan” authors of ancient times.

Thus, in our secular age it is embarrassing to recognize that had it not been for these highly literate “mission field” Christians who preserved and copied manuscripts (not only of the Bible but of ancient Christian and non-Christian classics as well), we would know no more about

the Roman Empire today than we do of the Mayan or Incan empires, or many other empires that have long since almost vanished from sight.

Many Evangelicals might be jolted by the Wheaton professor who wrote an appreciative chapter about these disciplined *order* structures entitled, “The Monastic Rescue of the Church.” One sentence stands out: “The rise of monasticism was, after Christ’s commission to his disciples, the most important—and in many ways the most beneficial—institutional event in the history of Christianity” (p. 78).

Curiously, our phrase *Third World* comes from those days when Greek and Latin were the first two worlds and the barbarians to the north were the *Third World*. Using this phrase, Barbarian Europe was won more by the witness and labors of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon converts of the Celts—“Third World missionaries”—than by the efforts of missionaries deriving from Italy or Gaul. This fact was to bear decisively upon the apparently permanent shift of power in Western Europe from the Mediterranean to northern Europe. Even as late as AD 596, when Rome’s first missionary headed north (with serious faintheartedness), he incidentally crossed the path of the much more daring and widely-traveled Irish missionary, Columban, one of the scholarly Celtic *peregrini* who had worked his way practically to Rome’s doorstep and who was already further from his birthplace than Augustine was planning to go from his.

We are not surprised that Constantinople was considered the “Second Rome” by those living in the East, nor that both Aachen (in Charlemagne’s France) and Moscow were later to compete for recognition as new Romes by the descendants of the newly Christianized Franks and Slavs, respectively. Neither the original Rome as a city nor the Italian peninsula as a region were ever again to be politically as significant as the chief cities of the new nations—Spain, France, Germany, and England.

Enter Charlemagne

Toward the end of the second period, as with the end of each of these periods, there was a great flourishing of Christianity within the new cultural basin. The rise of a strong man like Charlemagne facilitated communication throughout Western Europe to a degree unknown for 300 years. Under his sponsorship a whole range of issues—social, theological, political—were soberly restudied in the light of the Bible and the writings of earlier Christian leaders in the Roman period. Charlemagne was a second Constantine in certain respects, and his influence was unmatched in Western Europe during half a millennium.

But Charlemagne was much more of a Christian than Constantine and as such industriously sponsored far more Christian activity. Like Constantine, his official espousal of Christianity produced many Christians who were Christians in name only. There is little doubt that the great missionary Boniface was slain by the Saxons because his patron, Charlemagne (with whose military policies he did not at all agree) had brutally suppressed the Saxons on many occasions. Then, as in our own recent past, the political force of a colonial power did not so much pave the way for Christianity, as turn people against the faith. Of interest to missionaries is the fact that the great centers of learning established by Charlemagne were copies and expansions of newly established mission compounds deep in German territory, themselves outposts that were the work of British and Celtic missionaries from sending centers as far away to the west as Britain’s Iona and Lindisfarne.

Indeed, the first serious attempt at anything like public education was initiated by this great tribal chieftain, Charlemagne, on the advice and impulse of Anglo-Celtic missionaries and scholars from Britain, such as Alcuin, whose projects eventually required the help of thousands of literate Christians from Britain and Ireland to man schools founded on the Continent. It is hard to believe, but formerly “barbarian” Irish teachers of Latin (never a native tongue in Ireland) were eventually needed to teach Latin in Rome. This indicates extensively how the tribal invasions of other barbarians had broken down the civilization of the Roman Empire. This reality underlies Thomas Cahill’s book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*.

The Celtic Christians and their Anglo-Saxon and Continental converts especially treasured the Bible. Mute testimony to the Bible as their chief source of inspiration is that the highest works of art during these “dark” centuries were marvelously “illuminated” biblical manuscripts and devoutly ornamented church buildings. Manuscripts of non-Christian classical authors, though preserved and copied, were not illuminated. Through the long night of the progressive breakdown of the Western part of the Roman Empire, when the tribal migrations reduced almost all of life in the West to the level of the tribesmen themselves, the two great regenerating ideals were the hope of building anew the glory that was once Rome, and the hope of making everything subject to the Lord of Glory. The one really high point, when these twin objectives were most nearly achieved, was during Charlemagne’s long, vigorous career centered around the year 800. As one recent scholar put it,

In the long sweep of European history, from the decline of the Roman Empire to the flowering of the Renaissance nearly a thousand years later, his [Charlemagne’s] is the sole commanding presence.

No wonder recent scholars call Charlemagne’s period the Carolingian Renaissance, and thus replace the concept of a single lengthy “dark ages” for a more precise perspective of a First Dark Ages early in this period, and a Second Dark Ages early in the next period, with a “Carolingian Renaissance” in between.

Unfortunately, the rebuilt empire (later to be called the Holy Roman Empire) was unable to find the ingredients of a Charlemagne in his successor; even more ominously, a new threat now posed itself externally. Charlemagne had been eager for his own peoples to be made Christian—the Germanic tribes. He offered wise, even spiritual leadership in many affairs, but did not throw his weight behind any kind of bold mission outreach to the Scandinavian peoples to the north. What missionary work was begun under his son was too little and too late. This fact contributed greatly to the undoing of the his empire.

Period III: Winning the Vikings, A.D. 800–1200

No sooner had the consolidation in Western Europe been accomplished under Charlemagne than a new menace appeared to peace and prosperity. This new menace—the Vikings—would create a second period of at least semi-darkness to last 250 years. These savages further north had not yet been effectively evangelized. While the tribal invaders of Rome, who created the First Dark Ages, were rough forest people, they were, for the most part, nominally Arian Christians. The Vikings, by contrast, were neither civilized nor even lightly Christian. There was another difference: the Vikings were men of the sea. This meant that key island sanctuaries for missionary training, like Iona, or like the offshore promontory of Lindisfarne (connected to the land only at low tide), were as vulnerable to attacking seafarers as they had been invulnerable to attackers from the land. In this new period both of these mission centers were sacked more than a dozen times, their occupants slaughtered or sold off as slaves. It seems unquestionable that the Christians of Charlemagne’s empire would have fared far better had the Vikings had at least the appreciation of the Christian faith that the earlier barbarians had when they overran Rome. The very opposite of the Visigoths and Vandals who spared the churches, the Vikings seemed attracted like magnets to the monastic centers of scholarship and Christian devotion. They took a special delight in burning churches, in putting human life to the sword right in the churches, and in selling monks into slavery. These depraved people even sold into North African slavery the raided daughters of nearby antagonistic Vikings. A contemporary’s words give us a graphic impression of their carnage in “Christian” Europe:

The Northmen cease not to slay and carry into captivity the Christian people, to destroy the churches and to burn the towns. Everywhere, there is nothing but dead bodies—clergy and laymen, nobles and common people, women and children. There is no road or place where the

ground is not covered with corpses. We live in distress and anguish before this spectacle of the destruction of the Christian people.²

No wonder the Anglican prayer book contains the prayer, “From the fury of the Northmen, O Lord, deliver us.” Once more, when Christians did not reach out to them, pagan peoples came after what the Christians possessed. And once more, the phenomenal power of Christianity manifested itself: the conquerors became conquered by the faith of their captives. Usually it was the monks sold as slaves or Christian girls forced to be their wives and mistresses who eventually won these savages of the north. In God’s providence their redemption became more important than the harrowing tragedy of this new invasion of barbarian violence and evil which fell upon God’s own people whom He loved. After all, He spared not His own Son in order to redeem us! Thus, again, what Satan intended for evil, God used for good.

In the previous hundred years, Charlemagne’s scholars had carefully collected the manuscripts of the ancient world. Now the majority were to be burned by the Vikings. Only because so many copies had been made and scattered so widely did the fruits of the Charlemagnic literary revival survive at all. Once scholars and missionaries had streamed in peace from Ireland across England and onto the continent, and even out beyond the frontiers of Charlemagne’s empire. Under the brunt of these new violent invasions from the north, the Irish volcano which had poured forth a passionate fire of evangelism for three centuries cooled almost to extinction. Viking warriors, newly based in Ireland, followed the paths of the earlier Irish *peregrini* across England and onto the continent, but this time ploughing waste and destruction rather than new life and hope.

There were some blessings in this horrifying disguise. Alfred the Great, a tribal chieftain (“king”) of Wessex, successfully headed up guerrilla resistance and was equally concerned about spiritual as well as physical losses. As a measure of emergency, he gave up the ideal of maintaining the Latin tongue as a general pattern for worship and began a Christian library in the vernacular—the Anglo-Saxon. This was a decision of monumental importance which might have been delayed several centuries had the tragedy of the Vikings not provided the necessity which was the mother of this invention.

In any case, as Christopher Dawson puts it, the un-paralleled devastation of England and the Continent was “not a victory for paganism.” The Northmen who landed on the Continent under Rollo became the Christianized Normans, and the Danish who took over a huge section of middle England (along with invaders from Norway who planted their own kind in many other parts of England and Ireland) also were soon to become Christians. The gospel was too powerful. One result was that a new Christian culture spread back into Scandinavia. This stemmed largely from England from which came the first monastic communities and early missionary bishops. What England lost, Scandinavia gained.

It must also be admitted that the Vikings would not have been attracted either to the churches or to the monasteries had not those centers of Christian piety to a great extent succumbed to luxury. The switch from the Irish to the Benedictine pattern of monasticism was an improvement in many respects, but apparently allowed greater possibilities for the development of an unchristian opulence and glitter which attracted the greedy eyes of the Norsemen. Thus, another side-benefit of the new invasions was their indirect cleansing and refinement of the Christian movement. Even before the Vikings appeared, Benedict of Aniane inspired a rustle of reform here and there. By 910, at Cluny, a novel and significant step forward was begun. Among other changes, the authority over a monastic center was shifted away from local politics, and for the first time beyond anything previous whole networks of “daughter” houses arose which were related to a single, strongly spiritual “mother” house. The Cluny revival, moreover, produced a new reforming attitude toward society as a whole.

The greatest bishop in Rome in the first millennium, Gregory I, was the product of a Benedictine community. So also, early in the second millennium, Hildebrand was a product of the Cluny reform. His successors in reform were bolstered greatly by the Cistercian revival which

went even further. Working behind the scenes for many years for wholesale reform across the entire church, he finally became Pope Gregory VII for a relatively brief period. But his reforming zeal set the stage for Pope Innocent III, who wielded greater power (and all things considered, greater power for good) than any other Pope before or since. Gregory VII had made a decisive step toward wresting control of the church from secular power—this was the question of “lay investiture.” It was he who allowed Henry IV to wait for three days out in the snow at Canossa. Innocent III not only carried forward Gregory’s reforms, but had the distinction of being the Pope who authorized the first of a whole new series of mobile mission orders—the Friars.

Our First Period ended with a barely Christian Roman Empire and a somewhat Christian emperor—Constantine. Our second period ended with a reconstitution of that empire under a Christianized barbarian, Charlemagne, who was devoutly and vigorously Christian. Can you imagine an emperor who wore a monk’s habit? Our third period ends with a pope, Innocent III, as the strongest man in Europe, made strong by the Cluny, Cistercian and allied spiritual movements which together are called the Gregorian Reform. The scene was now an enlarged Europe in which no secular ruler could survive without at least tipping his hat to the leaders in the Christian movement. It was a period in which European Christians had not reached out in missions, but they had at least with phenomenal speed grafted in the entire northern area, and had also deepened the foundations of Christian scholarship and devotion passed on from the Europe of Charlemagne.

The next period would unfold some happy and unhappy surprises. Would Europe now take the initiative in reaching out with the Gospel? Would it sink in self-satisfaction? In some respects it would do both.

Period IV: Winning the Saracens? A.D.1200–1600

The fourth period began with a spectacular, new evangelistic instrument—the Friars—and after the disaster of the prolonged plague would end with the greatest, the most vital, and most disruptive reformation of all. However, the Christian movement had already been involved for a hundred years in the most massive and tragic misconstrual of Christian mission in all of history. Ironically, part of the “flourishing” of the faith toward the end of the previous period led to disaster: never before had any nation or group of nations in the name of Christ launched as energetic and sustained a campaign into foreign territory as did Europe in the tragic debacle of the Crusades. This was in part the carry-over of the Viking spirit into the Christian Church. All of the major Crusades were led by Viking descendants.

While the Crusades had many political overtones (they were often a unifying device for faltering rulers), they would not have happened without the vigorous but misguided sponsorship of Christian leaders. They were not only an unprecedented blood-letting to the Europeans themselves and a savage wound in the side of the Muslim peoples (a wound which is not healed to this day), but they were a fatal blow even to the cause of Greek/Latin Christian unity and to the cultural unity of eastern Europe. In the long run, though Western Christians held Jerusalem for a hundred years, the Crusaders by default eventually gave the Eastern Christians over to the Ottoman sultans. Far worse, they established a permanent image of brutal, militant Christianity that alienates a large proportion of mankind, tearing down the value of the very word *Christian* in missions to this day.

Ironically, the mission of the Crusaders would not have been so appallingly negative had it not involved so high a component of abject Christian commitment. The great lesson of the Crusades is that goodwill, even sacrificial obedience to God, is no substitute for a clear understanding of His will. Significant in this sorry movement was an authentically devout man, Bernard of Clairvaux, to whom are attributed the words of the hymn *Jesus the Very Thought of Thee*. He preached the first crusade. Two Franciscans, Francis of Assisi and Raymond Lull, stand out as the only ones in this period whose insight into God’s will led them to substitute for warfare

and violence the gentle words of the evangel as the proper means of extending the blessing God conferred on Abraham and had always intended for all of Abraham's children-of-faith.

At this point we must pause to reflect on this curious period. We may not succeed, but let us try to see things from God's point of view, treading with caution and tentativeness. We know, for example, that at the end of the First Period after three centuries of hardship and persecution, just when things were apparently going great, invaders appeared and chaos and catastrophe ensued. Why? That followed the period we have called the "Classical Renaissance." It was both good and not so good. Just when Christians were translating the Bible into Latin and waxing eloquent in theological debate, when Eusebius, as the government's official historian, was editing a massive collection of previous Christian writings, when heretics were thrown out of the empire (and became, however reluctantly, the only missionaries to the Goths), when Rome finally became officially Christian... then suddenly the curtain came down. Now, out of chaos God would bring a new cluster of people groups to be included in the "blessing," that is, to be confronted with the claims, privileges, and obligations of the expanding Kingdom of God.

Similarly, at the end of the Second Period, after three centuries of chaos during which the rampaging Gothic hordes were eventually Christianized, tamed and civilized, Bibles and biblical knowledge proliferated as never before. Major biblical-missionary centers were established by the Celtic Christians and their Anglo-Saxon pupils. In this Charlemagnic (actually "Carolingian") renaissance, thousands of public schools led by Christians attempted mass biblical and general literacy. Charlemagne dared even to attack the endemic use of alcohol. Great theologians tussled with theological/political issues, The Venerable Bede became the Eusebius of this period (indeed, when both Charlemagne and Bede were much more Christian than Constantine and Eusebius). And, once again, invaders appeared and chaos and catastrophe ensued. Why?

Strangely similar, then, is the third period. In its early part it only took two and a half centuries for the Vikings to capitulate to the "counterattack of the Gospel." The "renaissance" ensuing toward the end of this period was longer than a century and far more extensive than ever before. The Crusades, the cathedrals, the so-called Scholastic theologians, the universities, most importantly the blessed Friars, and even the early part of the Humanistic Renaissance make up this outsized 1050–1350 outburst of a Medieval Renaissance, or the "Twelfth Century Renaissance." But then suddenly a new invader appeared—the Black plague—more virulent than ever, and chaos and catastrophe greater than ever occurred. Why?

Was God dissatisfied with incomplete obedience? Or was Satan striking back each time in greater desperation? Were those with the blessing retaining it and not sufficiently and determinedly sharing it with the other nations of the world? More puzzling, the plague that killed one-third of the inhabitants of Europe killed a much higher proportion of the Franciscans: 120,000 were laid still in Germany alone. Surely God was not trying to judge their missionary fire. Was He trying to judge the Crusaders whose atrocities greatly out-weighed the Christian devotional elements in their movement? If so, why did He wait several hundred years to do that? Surely Satan, not God, inflicted Christian leadership in Europe so greatly. Would not Satan rather have that happen than for the Crusaders to die of the plague?

Perhaps it was that Europe did not sufficiently listen to the saintly Friars; that it was not the Friars that went wrong, but the hearers who did not respond. God's judgment upon Europe then might have been to take the Gospel away from them, to take away the Friars and their message. Even though to us it seems like it was a judgment upon the messengers rather than upon the resistant hearers, is this not one impression that could be received from the New Testament as well? Jesus Himself came unto His own, and His own received Him not, yet Jesus rather than the resisting people went to the cross. Perhaps Satan's evil intent—of removing the messenger—God employed as a judgment against those who chose not to hear.

In any case, the invasion of the Bubonic plague, first in 1346 and every so often during the next decade, brought a greater setback than the Gothic, the Anglo-Saxon or the Viking invasions. It first devastated parts of Italy and Spain, then spread west and north to France,

England, Holland, Germany and Scandinavia. By the time it had run its course 40 years later, one third to one half of the population of Europe was dead. Especially stricken were the Friars and the truly spiritual leaders. They were the ones who stayed behind to tend the sick and to bury the dead. Europe was absolutely in ruins. The result? There were three rival Popes at one point, the humanist elements turned menacingly humanistic, peasant turmoil (often based in justice and even justified by the Bible itself) turned into orgies and excesses of violence. “The god of this world” must have been glad, but out of all that death, poverty, confusion and lengthy travail, God birthed a new reform greater than anything before it.

Once more, at the end of one of our periods, a great flourishing took place. Printing came to the fore, Europeans finally escaped from their geographical cul de sac and sent ships for commerce, subjugation, and spiritual blessing to the very ends of the earth. And as a part of the reform, the Protestant Reformation now loomed on the horizon: that great, seemingly permanent, cultural decentralization of Europe.

Protestants often think of the Reformation as a legitimate reaction against the evils of a monstrous Christian bureaucracy sunken in decadence and corruption. But it must be admitted that this reformation was much more than that. This great decentralization of Christendom was in many respects the result of an increasing vitality which—although this is unknown to most Protestants—was just as evident in Italy, Spain and France as in Moravia, Germany, and England. Everywhere we see a return to a study of the Bible and the appearance of new life and evangelical preaching. The Gospel encouraged believers to be German, not merely permitted Germans to be Roman Christians. Nevertheless, that marvelous insight was one of the products of a renewal already in progress. (Luther produced not the *first* but the *fourteenth* translation of the Bible into German.) Unfortunately, the marvelous emphasis on justification by faith—which was preached as much in Italy and Spain as in Germany at the time Luther loomed into view—became identified and ensnared with German nationalistic (separatist) hopes and was thus, understandably, suppressed as a dangerous doctrine by political powers in Southern Europe.

It is merely a typical Protestant misunderstanding that there was not as much a revival of deeper life, Bible study and prayer in Southern Europe as in Northern Europe at the time of the Reformation. The issue may have appeared to the Protestants as faith vs. law, or to the Romans as unity vs. division, but such popular scales are askew because it was much more a case of over-reaching Latin uniformity vs. national and indigenous diversity. The vernacular had to eventually conquer.

While Paul had not demanded that the Greeks become Jews, nevertheless the Germans had been obliged to become Roman. The Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians had at least been allowed their vernacular to an extent unknown in Christian Germany. Germany was where the revolt then reasonably took place. Italy, France, and Spain, which were formerly part of the Roman Empire and extensively assimilated culturally in that direction, had no equivalent nationalistic steam behind their reforming movements and thus became almost irrelevant in the political polarity of the scuffle that ensued.

However—here we go again—despite the fact that the Protestants won on the political front, and to a great extent gained the power to formulate anew their own Christian tradition and certainly thought they took the Bible seriously, they did not even talk of mission outreach. Rather, the period ended with *Roman* Europe expanding both politically and religiously on the seven seas. Thus, entirely unshared by Protestants for at least two centuries, the Catholic variety of Christianity actively promoted and accompanied a worldwide movement of scope unprecedented in the annals of mankind, one in which there was greater Christian missionary awareness than ever before. But, having lost non-Roman Europe by insisting on its Mediterranean culture, the Catholic tradition would now try to win the rest of the world without fully understanding what had just happened.

But why did the Protestants not even try to reach out? Catholic missionaries for two hundred years preceded Protestant missionaries. Some scholars point to the fact that the

Protestants did not have a global network of colonial outreach. Well, the Dutch Protestants did. And, their ships, unlike those from Catholic countries, carried no missionaries. This is why the Japanese—once they began to fear the Christian movement Catholic missionaries planted—would allow only Dutch ships into their ports. Indeed, the Dutch even cheered and assisted the Japanese in the slaughter of the budding Christian (Catholic) community.

Period V: To the Ends of the Earth, A.D. 1600–2000

The period from 1600 to 2000 began with European footholds in the rest of the world. Apart from taking over what was relatively an empty continent by toppling the Aztec and Inca empires in the Western hemisphere, Europeans had only tiny enclaves of power in the heavily populated portions of the rest of the non-Western world. By 1945, Europeans had achieved virtual control over 99.5% of the non-Western world. This would not last. The peoples inhabiting the colonial empires had grown significantly in knowledge and initiative, just as the Goths had grown strong outside the bounds of the Roman empire. The Second World War mightily distracted the Western nations from their colonial hold on the rest of the world. That did it. Nationalism exploded.

Twenty-five years later, the Western nations had lost control over all but 5% of the non-Western population of the world. This 1945–1969 period of the sudden collapse of Western control, coupled with the unexpected upsurge of significance of the Christian movement in the non-Western world, I have elsewhere called “the twenty-five unbelievable years.” If we compare this period to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire’s domination over its conquered provinces of Spain, Gaul and Britain, and to the breakdown of control over non-Frankish Europe under Charlemagne’s successors, we might anticipate—at least by the logic of sheer parallelism—that the Western world itself will soon be significantly dominated by non-Westerners.

With some reason, ever since the collapse of Western power became obvious (during “the twenty-five unbelievable years”), there have been many who have decried the thought of any further missionary effort moving from the West to the non-Western world. Perhaps they have confused the inappropriateness of political control with a need to cut ties of faith in any further foreign missions.

The true situation is actually very different. In fact, the absence of political control for the first time in many areas has now begun to allow non-Western populations to yield to the Kingdom of Christ without simultaneously yielding to the political kingdoms of the Western world. Here we see a parallel to the Frankish tribal people accepting the faith of Rome only after Rome had lost its military power. This new openness to Catholic Christianity continued among the Anglo-Saxons, Germans and Scandinavians up until the time when the emergence of strong papal authority, mixed with power politics, became a threat to legitimate national ambitions, and led to a Reformation which allowed nationalized forms of Christianity to break away.

The present spectacle of a Western world flaunting the standards of Christian morality in more obvious ways than ever may dissuade non-Christian nations from embracing the Christian faith; but it may also tend to disassociate the treasure of Christian ideals from a Western world which has, until this age, been their most prominent sponsor. When Asians accuse Western nations of immorality in warfare, they are appealing to Christian values, certainly not the values of any nation’s pagan past. In this sense, Christianity has already conquered the world. No longer, for example, is the long-standing Chinese tradition of ingenious torture likely to be boasted about in China nor highly respected anywhere else, at least in public circles.

But this worldwide transformation has not come about suddenly. Even the present, minimal attainment of world-wide Christian morality on a tenuous public level has been accomplished only at the cost of a great amount of sacrificial missionary endeavor (during the four centuries of Period Five), missionary labors which have been mightier and more deliberate than at any time in 2,000 years. The first half (1600–1800) of this fifth period was almost

exclusively a Roman show. By the year 1800 it was painfully embarrassing to Protestants to hear Roman missionaries writing off the Protestant movement as apostate simply because it was not sending missionaries. But by that same year, Roman missionary effort had been forced into sudden decline due to the curtailment of the Jesuits, and the combined effect of the French Revolution and ensuing chaos which then cut the European economic roots of Catholic missions.

However, the year 1800 marks the awakening of the Protestants from two-and-a-half centuries of inactivity, if not theological slumber, in regard to missionary outreach across the world. The 1800 to 2000 year period is treated in the chapter “Four Men, Three Eras, Two Transitions: Modern Missions.” During this final period, for the first time, Protestants equipped themselves with organizational structures of mission comparable to the Catholic orders and began to make up for lost time. Unheralded, unnoticed, and all but forgotten in our day except for ill-informed criticism, Protestant missionary efforts in this period, more than Catholic missions, led the way in establishing throughout the world the democratic apparatus of government, the schools, the hospitals, the universities and the political foundations of the new nations. Rightly understood, Protestant missionaries, along with their Roman Catholic counterparts, are surely not less than the prime movers of the tremendous energy that is mushrooming in the Third World today. Take China, for example. Two of its greatest modern leaders, Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, were both Christians. Teng Hsiao-P’ing’s “Four Modernizations” were principal emphases of the Western mission movement in China. Missions had planted a university in every province of China, etc.

But, if the Western home base is now to falter and to fail as the tide is reversed through the rising power of its partially evangelized periphery (as is the pattern in the earlier periods), we can only refer to Dawson’s comment on the devastation wrought by the Vikings—that this will not be a “victory for paganism.”

The fall of the West will, in that case, be due in part to a decay of spirit. It will also be due to the pagan power in the non-Western world emboldened and strengthened by its first contact with Christian faith. It may come as a most drastic punishment to a Western world that has always spent more on cosmetics than it has on foreign missions—and lately ten times as much.

From a secular or even nationalistic point of view, the next years may be a very dark period for the Western world. The normal hopes and aspirations of Christian people for their own country may find only a very slight basis for optimism. But if the past is any guide at all, even this will have to be darkness before the dawn. The entire Western world in its present political form may be radically altered. We may not even be sure about the survival of our own country. But we have every reason to suppose from past experience that the Christian, biblical faith will clearly survive in one form or another.

We can readily calculate that during the 20th century, Westerners dropped from 18% to 8% of the world population. But we cannot ultimately be pessimistic. Beyond the agony of Rome was the winning of the Barbarians. Beyond the agony of the Barbarians was the winning of the Vikings. Beyond the agony of the Western world we can only pray that there will be the defeat of Satan’s power holding millions of people hostage in thousands of peoples—peoples which have too long “sat in darkness” and who “shall see a great light” (Matt 4:16). And we can know that there is no basis in the past or in the present for assuming that things are out of the control of the Living God.

If we in the West insist on keeping our blessing instead of sharing it, then we will, like other nations before us, have to lose our blessing for the remaining nations to receive it. God has not changed His plan in the last 4,000 years. But how much better not to focus on how to retain but to strive intentionally to extend that marvelous “blessing”! That way “in you and in your descendants all of the peoples of the world will be blessed.” This is the only way we can continue in God’s blessing. The expanding Kingdom is not going to stop with us (although it may leave us behind). “This Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all

peoples, and then shall the end come” (Matt 24:14). God can raise up others if we falter. Indeed, the rest of this book indicates that is already happening.

Basic Concepts

(2000) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 26-27)

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- There is no more impressive measure of the impact of Christ on this planet than the nearly global celebration of the year 2000.

To Understand the Role of Our Faith

- The understanding of the last 4,000 years as a single story of the expansion of the Kingdom of God, the progressive conquest of the earth and evil is highly nourishing to our faith. The very acceleration of global population growth reflects extensive progress in reducing both war and pestilence.

- It is not Christianity we are trying to spread in the world but Christian faith. That can be done without duplicating or extending our present concept of church-going activity, of “churchianity.”

- The renewal of faith in the West must include a fundamental restructuring of Church life in favor of recognition of Christian faith in the home.

- Home-based faith in Christ is the bedrock goal of our concern. Therefore, the kind of church activity which takes the place of worship in the home is not even good as a second best.

- A detailed knowledge of our Christological formulations has never been essential to the kind of fellowship with God the Bible portrays as available to those who diligently seek Him, although even this seeking assumes and builds upon at least a Biblical knowledge of God’s existence.

To quote Karen Armstrong:

Increasingly, Western Christians would come to equate faith with belief in official doctrine. Even though Luther did not see faith in this way, an obsession with intellectual conformity would become one of the legacies of the Reformation and is peculiar to Reformed Christianity. In traditions such as Judaism, Islam or Buddhism, religion is not about believing obligatory propositions but about behaving differently. The emphasis on doctrinal correctness has been experienced by many as intellectually damaging and as a reason for Christianity's decline in Europe.

- The “man of peace”—the people of faith—whom we seek will not necessarily be open to Jesus Christ at first, especially if they have a Jewish background, but that does not mean that they have nothing to gain from Biblical, New Testament witness.

- The history of the Jews reflects the presence of both legalistic futility and an element of true faith, obedience, and righteousness. This is true both before and after Christ.

- In general it is neither wise nor to be expected or desired that a believing Muslim would adopt the name “Christian.” Thus, the often referred to category of “Muslim Background Believers” represents, generally, an undesirable evangelistic achievement. We need to be able to conceive of “Muslim Foreground Believers.”

- The same is true of Hindus who have put away their idols, revere and study the Bible, and revere and worship Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God—whether or not they identify with any of the current traditions of Christianity in their land.

- Extolling the glory of God is the most basic endeavor in missions compared with efforts to assure individuals of their salvation, which at best are a means to that end.

To Understand the Phenomenon of Life

- Since the Christ Event, the strongest new evidence of the very nature of God’s glory is the immense insight into His handiwork revealed only recently by microbiological studies. By comparison, astronomy does not so much reveal the role of His intelligence as the vastness of His creation.

- There is evidence in the record of the rocks that at one point predatory forms of life suddenly appeared—that is, there appeared forms of life that are life-destroying, whether microbiological in size or visible forms of life. Prior to that time life forms were not dangerous to each other—in the so-called Ediacaran period just before the Cambrian explosion of life.

- It is also true that Genesis portrays the existence of an Evil One prior to the temptation of Adam. The rest of the Bible makes clear that this Evil One did not always exist but formerly served God and then rebelled at a given point in time.

- The thought therefore occurs that the time of Satan’s rebellion may coincide with, and explain, the appearance of life-destroying forms of life, such that nature—not just man—from that point on has become a vast scene of constant violence in which we see life destroying life. The number of life forms being driven extinct today is on the order of 30,000 per year. The number of life-forms now in existence is about 1,000th of all that have existed. More than half of two million existing life forms are destructive (parasitic).

- Thus, the “works of the devil” would seem to include the perversion of the very structure of life at DNA levels. The discovery of thousands of defective genes in the human genome is possibly evidence of demonic activity at the DNA level. Even the violent traits of animals and man may exhibit the same kind of distorting influence at that level.

- To do this we may understand the possibility that Satan’s angels of darkness, some of them, may be so small as to be capable of tinkering directly with the DNA molecule.

- Disease is thus a result of hereditary factors as well as external assaults of destructive microbes, and often both working in coordination.

- That is, 1) we inherit genetic defects—defects that are both accidental such as would be caused by cosmic rays or radiation but also defects which seem to be highly intelligent distortions.

- We also, 2) “contract” diseases coming from outside our bodies, like flu or colds or pneumonia or tuberculosis or malaria. Not only that but some of the specific perversions of our genetic inheritance are preyed upon by external disease factors with considerable, obvious intelligence.

- Promoting God’s glory is inextricably related to destroying the works of the devil— “The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8.

- The Garden of Eden is portrayed in Genesis as a locality which differed from the disorder of the surrounding world and that the evil outside the Garden existed prior to the creation of man.

- The Genesis mandate to man to care for life would thus seem to include serious human efforts in collaboration with God to work with Him to restore (to redeem) all perversions of disease or violence in the various forms of life. In this activity we can “Let our light so shine among men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.” (Matt 5:16). This is part of “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:9-13)

To Understand the Nature of Society

- The multilevel family—where a child growing up can witness an obedient relationship between his parents and his parents’ parents—is an element essential to social stability. No amount of focus on the monogenerational, or nuclear, family can enable it to be an ideal environment for children to be raised or for even parents to properly mature. This state of affairs is all the more difficult to attain when the marriage ceremony itself does not define which set of parents is to have the primary continuing parental role.

- The society that has banished young people from the work force is thus forced to reassign children’s work to adults. This, in turn, misuses and abuses both adults and children, and it cuts the natural bond within families and between generations in favor of an age-stratification which destroys the normal function of learning passing from older to younger.

- In the light of the latter point, the comparatively recent achievement of a large proportion of U.S. population becoming involved in the phenomenon of a seventeen-year tunnel in non-productive school experience represents the largest and most stubborn obstacle to the normal maturation of young people as well as the maintenance of cohesive families and a cohesive society.

- The arrangement by which each husband and wife pursue different careers independently in separate social environments must be considered a dubious attainment which puts great strain upon the marriage and further distances the children from the parents.

Editorial, Three crucial mission frontiers (holism)

(2001) (*IJFM* 18:2)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/18_2_PDFs/Rdwed.pdf

Three very crucial mission frontiers are addressed in this issue. But, they should not, at this date, still be frontiers. They should have been settled by now. They aren't. In each case enormous tension, confusion and misunderstanding reigns—politely of course.

The first frontier—the first two installments of which appear here—is the question of who ultimately calls the shots in mission operation and strategy decisions, especially delicate ones. This seemingly technical issue, amidst the gush of emotion, enthusiasm and heady commitment young people and congregations carry into the mission soup (all of which is essential to mission) is a small matter with big implications in the long run.

When a young man named Hudson Taylor first went to China one thing he learned, vividly: the board back in Britain under which he served did not know what it was doing. With fear and trepidation but firm in faith he later started a new board. All by himself. No discussion about who ultimately calls the shots.

And only 25 years later was this issue (home board or field council calling the shots) the cause of five long years of anguish and confusion. He very nearly resigned from the mission he started. I have often wondered if he knew nothing of the similar and tragic case of that other young man, William Carey, years earlier, which turned out the opposite (the home board pulling the rug out from under Carey)?

Note that while Joseph and Michele C. discuss the issue in terms of field versus home control, the issue is basically the same as that of an internal versus an external board. In the history of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, internal boards were always allowed until certain pressures pushed the IFMA into suggesting member missions have a board with a majority of outside members—a real step back. An external board is a good idea where an organization employs and pays its people. But when the members of a mission society are themselves the largest contributors (in the sense of accepting a relatively modest support), an internal (or field) board makes a lot more sense.

Joseph and Michele were asked to explore this issue by their own mission, *Frontiers*, which is already grappling with such concerns. Their amazingly detailed treatment will extend into the next two issues of *IJFM*. But it begins solidly here with two of its five parts.

The second frontier in *IJFM* 18:2, namely, the challenge of the unreached peoples, also ought not still to be a frontier. But this subject has special significance to the very existence of this journal as well as the society (the International Society for Frontier Missiology). As with Joseph and Michele, Alan Johnson, a field missionary, was asked by higher-ups in his mission to explore this frontier in a special study. He tackles the entire emergence of the now virtually completed transition in mission strategy from missions setting out to 1) win individuals in countries to 2) seeking to plant churches within unreached peoples. He also deals with the larger question of what a mission frontier really is. Again, the first two of five parts of this study appear here.

The third frontier is the least resolved. But it is not going away. In a way it is the most crucial of all—if we will allow it to be what it truly is. Ted Yamamori, who addresses this frontier, has had a long and varied career, from doing his Ph.D. at Duke in church growth theory to being academic dean at Biola University, to running Food for the Hungry where he forged ties between field service and U.S. academic credit. He seeks to sanctify the word holism. It has become the settled term among those who use it. The word wholism would seem to be better, would seem to mean getting the whole together. But holism, which would seem to mean a hole is left, is nevertheless the in-word in this vast sphere of mission endeavor. If we want to speak their language and understand their insights we might as well get used to it.

But the frontier here is not the question of which of these two words to use. It is the exceedingly profound issue that is unavoidably raised when the work of the holism sphere of mission agencies is compared to standard missions. The public perspectives are perhaps wider apart than the actual work, since holists like Yamamori have always understood the importance of church planting and evangelism.

But Yamamori brings out a new angle. He claims that “the gospel of the Kingdom,” which focuses on God’s authority and His glory “coming on earth,” cannot be properly be pursued unless both “holistic” and standard mission is seen as part of a single engagement of the forces of evil on earth, and indeed, the attempt to redeem and restore all of God’s creation. I have myself wondered what kind of a gospel we promote if we may leave the impression that God can-not—or does not wish to—deal with earthly problems such as disease and injustice but really can only get people tickets to heaven.

Roberta Winter Institute Explanation

(2003)

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*Compiled and condensed by Beth Snodderly from the writings and speeches of Ralph D. Winter. February, 2003. He included this in his *Frontiers in Mission* book, pp. 177-80).*

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The Roberta Winter Institute will try to upgrade our desire to bring glory to God by ending our apparently neo-platonist truce with Satan in the realm of all his ingenious and destructive works.

Our global mission agencies, which already have to their credit the discovery of the nature of leprosy, will declare war on other sources of disease in addition to being kind helpfully to sick people and preaching resignation amidst suffering.

Mobilized Christian response did not come soon enough to materially help my wife, and may not help you or yours. But the least we can do is set something in motion that may rectify our understanding of a God who is not the author of the destructive violence in nature and who has long sought our help in bringing His kingdom and His will on earth.

We are in a war against an intelligent enemy

What I am trying to do, groping into it gradually but as fast as I can, is to try to undo a huge and diabolical complex of misunderstandings which enervates and destroys any resistance we might offer to the distorting works of the Devil.

My pastor (Gordon Kirk, Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena, California) who is a former theology professor at Biola has observed that “Satan’s greatest achievement has been to cover his tracks.” This urges us to recognize that we are extensively unaware of diabolic activity in the world.

In scripture we see the prominence of the emphasis on the coming of God’s Kingdom, and note that “the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).” What if all disease pathogens as well as all violent forms of life are the work of Satan? How would that amplify and refocus our global mission?

When Satan turned against God precisely what kind of destruction and perversion did he set out to achieve? Where would we see evidence of his works? Would he set out to pervert the DNA of originally tame animals? Would he employ powers of deception so that we would get accustomed to pervasive violence in nature and no longer connect an intelligent evil power with evil and suffering? Worse still, would Satan even successfully tempt us to think that God is somehow behind all evil—and that we must therefore not attempt to eradicate things like smallpox lest we “interfere with Divine Providence”?

In the last 20 years paleontologists have dug up more evidences of earlier life forms than in all previous history. One of their thought-provoking discoveries is that pre-Cambrian forms of life *revealed no predators*. Then, at that juncture destructive forms of

life suddenly appeared at all levels, from large creatures to destructive forms of life at the smallest microbiological level.

Is this what Satan set out to do from the time he fell out with the Creator—that is, did he set about to pervert and distort all forms of life so as to transform all nature into an arena “red in tooth and claw” that reigns today?

We need to recognize and ponder more seriously the kind and degree of harm Satan is able to cause. We need to unmask the works of Satan.

Are we fellowships of survivors or of soldiers? We are all enlisted to war against the works of Satan.

Attributing evil to God/distortion of God’s character

There are very many people, even Bible-believing Christians not just non-Christians, who are profoundly puzzled, perplexed, and certainly confused by the extensive presence of outrageous evil in the created world of all-powerful, benevolent God. In coping with this, they may frequently attribute to God what is actually the work of an evil intelligence, and thus fatalistically give not the slightest thought to fighting back.

The assumption that all evil comes from God is pagan, coming from neo-Platonism which taught there is one God who is the source of both evil & good. We have inherited this thinking in our view of Romans 8:28.

The Intelligent Design people don’t take into account that they are attributing the creation of evil to God. Darwin did not do this. Instead he invented the wacky theory of unaided evolution. But Darwin at least recognized the presence of evil if not intelligent evil, and even the need to protect the reputation of a benevolent God. In that he scored higher than what we see in the written materials of Intelligent Design.

The corollary to this mistaken assumption that all evil comes from God is that we can’t go after evil because we’d be going after God. The pattern is to be “resigned” to evil, even to presume that God is behind all things rather than that God is in front of all things, turning Satanic evil into good, but by no means initiating the evil, much less suggesting that we do nothing about it.

Free Will/God works through intermediaries

We need to recognize the very radical and significant decision of God to create beings, angelic and human, with true free will and to work through those intermediaries.

We may frequently ask God to do things which He has been expecting us as intermediaries to do. Our mission then may need to include things for which we ordinarily only pray.

The concept of inappropriate prayer. This is seldom discussed in Evangelical circles. As a result, we fail frequently to distinguish between what part God wants us to play and what part only He can play. Confusion in this area is clearly in Satan’s favor. He is glad when he can get us to ask God to do something God expects us to do. But it must be true that God empowers those who seek him and want to do His will.

We don’t ask God to paint the back fence.

We don’t ask God to evangelize the heathen (as they did in William Carey’s day).

We should not ask God to take care of disease.

God, we know, invites us to bind up the wounds we can see with our eyes and to ward off evil which is large enough to see without a microscope, but He also has seemed to want to await human collaboration in fighting the microbiological roots of evil for some reason we may not fully understand.

We have an un-updated theology, thinking that we aren't responsible to do something about something we can't see (microbes). But we CAN see these now and do something. We are casting aside a whole arena of responsibility.

Un-updated theology that doesn't take new knowledge about microbiology into account

It seems likely that now that we have new knowledge about the outside sources of several massive diseases that we cannot in good conscience fail to do what we can to mount new offensive warfare with those attacking sources.

From "Theologizing the Microbiological World": Our theologies, that is, *our formalized ways of attempting to think Biblically*, were hammered out during centuries that were totally blind to the microscopic world.

Evangelicals have recently stressed the inevitable *intelligence* and *design* in nature, but they have not, to my knowledge, attempted to suggest that there is evidence of any evil intelligence and design.

This is perhaps due to a theological tradition which does not understand demonic powers to have the ability to distort DNA. Our Evangelical theological tradition is so old that it also would not conceive of good angels working at the DNA level. In other words, we have no explicit theology for intentional modification of either good or bad bacteria. Our current theological literature, to my knowledge, does not seriously consider disease pathogens from a theological point of view—that is, are they the work of God or Satan? Much less does this literature ask the question, "Does God mandate us to eliminate pathogens?"

Discover and eradicate the origins of disease rather than treatment and prevention

Surprising recent insights show that many diseases are basically caused by outside invaders which we need to fight in the same sense as we fight the crime of visible terrorists. Does nutrition, exercise, banishing anxiety, etc. protect you or cure you of Malaria? Are our immune systems normally capable of defeating Malaria, Tuberculosis, Smallpox, Anthrax, etc.? No, not normally. And, if the latest thinking is correct slow-acting viruses underlie heart disease as well as cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, and Schizophrenia. So, do we go on just praying in addition to making sure we heed these other things (nutrition, exercise, peace of soul and mind, etc.)? It is understandable, of course, that we would not automatically think about going beyond prayer and taking concrete measures to quell the source of these destructive diseases if we did not know that they are caused by attacking pathogens which our immune systems, no matter how healthy, cannot always overcome.

I spent a couple of hours [recently] prayerfully perusing a book that patiently, detailedly, describes how over 200 years of missionary work went down the drain. The word Florida in the 16th century included not only our present state by that name but also the entire southeast of the USA, in the triangle from Virginia to Alabama to Miami. In that area lived literally hundreds of thousands of Indians (native Americans). Well,

between about 1530 and 1800 primarily Spanish work was undertaken employing both soldiers and missionaries, the latter very faithfully. Lots of good things and unwise things happened, but eventually “missions” (outposts) of the kind we see still standing in California, 150 of them, were planted. Each one was a worship center, an educational center, and an industrial center. However, today there is not a physical trace of a single one of those painstakingly established missions. Worse still the entire Indian population, as in Cuba, has totally vanished, dying primarily of European diseases. All of those hundreds of thousands of people! Their religion certainly did not save them, at least not in this life. ... I admit that I cannot easily shake off the sensation of strangeness and tragedy hovering over those 250 years during which Spanish, French, and British fought each other and in some cases Indian uprisings, without realizing that their real and common enemy was Satanically devised pathogens.

Missions implications/bringing glory to God

Are we to send missionaries around the world simultaneously to implant disease and offer eternal salvation? You will say no, not intentionally. But what about the diseases they already have? Are we to help them to eradicate those diseases (not just be kind to those who get sick)?

To destroy the works of the devil is one major way in which our testimony of word and deed can glorify the true nature of our living God, our heavenly father. It is not an alternative to evangelism, it will make our evangelism more credible. It is to *rectify our God's damaged reputation*. It is to avoid extending the implicit and embarrassing policy of almost constantly misrepresenting Him in our mission work around the world. Attacking the roots of disease is part and parcel of our basic mandate to glorify God in all the earth.

The principal concern in all of this is the distortion we can see in many people's ideas of God. Pause and consider Tozer's statement that “*The most important thing about you is what comes to your mind when you think of God.*” Our theological inheritance was hammered out before germs were known of. A full awareness of the larger scope of the battle against God is not yet ours. In regard to horrifying violence in nature, people have become so used to it, so accustomed to it, so hardened to it, so calloused about it that they have drifted into suppositions that this must be the way God created things. (Only Satan is happy about that.) And, people get to thinking that a God who does not mind violence, cruelty and suffering, whether among animals or man, is not the most appealing kind of a God when we set out to win people to Christ, His Son.

The Purpose for the Roberta Winter Institute

At this point it is time to ask the question why it is that the mounting muscle of the very considerable movement of all those globally who are moved by Jesus Christ has not weighed in either theologically or practically in the area of working to correct distortions of nature and of God's will *by going to the roots of the problem*. In a way this is the most ominous fact of all.

I know of no theological tradition, no denomination, no Christian school—or hospital for that matter—that has seriously accepted the roots of the challenge of the enormous and continuing and growing factor of disease in this world of ours.

Meanwhile constantly both believers and non- believers are stumbling about wondering over the amount, the harshness, and the unpredictability of evil in our world. Indeed, the credibility of an all- powerful and loving God is constantly being called into question by people who are no longer content to suppose “that God has His reasons.” We may indeed not know all His reasons. But do we have reasons for our inaction?

It is truly astonishing how much greater we can make the impact of our missionary evangelism if the true spectrum of concern of our loving God is made clear and is backed up by serious attention not only to treating illness but to eradicating the evil causes, the works of the devil.

Gordon Kirk says that “Satan’s greatest achievement is to cover his tracks.” That, surely, is why we get out of practice speaking of him or recognizing his works or even recognizing his existence. Yet, when we reinstate his existence as an evil intelligence loose in God’s creation only then do a lot of things become clear and reasonable. Otherwise God gets blamed for all kinds of evil: “God took my wife,” etc.

I find it difficult, after making this switch, not to conclude that Satan's angels are the source of life-destroying forms of life, vicious animals, bacteria, viruses. Not that he created them but that he tampered with their DNA to distort them. To “destroy his works” means thus to take it as part of our efforts, our mission, to glorify God to restore, with God's help, what Satan has distorted. Thus, you see the rationale for establishing the Roberta Winter Institute.

The primary focus of this new institute will not be laboratory science but public and mission awareness of the need for a new theological sensitivity for destroying the works of the devil.

Beyond Unreached Peoples

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 186-87)

One of our recent publications states the following for the general public:

We're glad you're here! Our purpose in meeting each Thursday night is to celebrate what God is doing around the world and to learn how we can better participate in His purposes for the nations. In particular, we come to give special attention to frontier mission among 10,000 unreached peoples without strong, culturally relevant church movements in their midst. Let's seek God together for how we should respond to what we hear.

Note the fact that the phrase by itself, Unreached Peoples, could easily be misunderstood by visitors apart from the additional defining phrase, "without strong, culturally relevant church movements in their midst." It is very good for that to be added. The need for that additional phrase, incidentally, explains why, as an institution, we had earlier objected to the phrase, Unreached Peoples, preferring our own phrase, Hidden Peoples, as well as a different definition.

Thus, I approve of the helpful "appositional" phrase that explains to the general public very accurately what Unreached Peoples means to us.

Here is a statement from another document that attempts to state what we are all about:

The over-arching vision within the Frontier Mission Fellowship group of projects is to see all unreached peoples reached with the gospel and the kingdom to come among them. In evangelical terms we would know when a group was reached when there was an indigenous church planting movement among them.

I would like to see if we can go beyond these statements to something more.

If we think of the remaining unreached peoples as enemy occupied territories, rather than merely unenlightened areas, "reaching" them with "a viable, evangelizing, indigenous church movement" could seem to assume the possibility that the problem of unreached peoples is merely the absence of good news.

I continue to believe that "reaching unreached peoples" with a viable, evangelizing, indigenous church movement is a most worthy and important thing to do. However, it may involve unexpected, perplexing opposition and danger. In that case is it fair to prospective missionaries to talk as though it is merely a communication problem? And, is it fair to the people within the group we are trying to reach, for them to think that we see no use for the significant knowledge we in fact possess that could enable many of them not to become victims of disease?

Otherwise it would seem to be sort of like telling willing recruits that they need merely to walk into Falouja thinking that the only thing they need to do is inform the people that democracy is the answer to all their problems. In other words after we make the missiological breakthrough and see a people movement to Christ, what do we do with the fact that most of the new believers will die very, very prematurely because of pathogens about which neither Jesus or Calvin said a word, but pathogens about which we now know a great deal?

Jesus extensively demonstrated God's concern for the sick. Are we today under any obligation to demonstrate even more cogent ways of fighting off illness, due to the additional insight God has allowed us to gain? Or is it no longer important for people to know that sickness is very definitely a concern of God? Are those who hear our words and witness our work and our concerns supposed to think that our God is just the God of the next world?

This morning Gordon Kirk at Lake Avenue delivered a powerful sermon in effect galvanizing believers to shape up, quit quibbling over peripherals, regain their faith and joy and demonstrate unity. It was all to the good.

However, it was somewhat like giving a rousing charge during wartime to the individuals in an army to stop quarrelling, vying for leadership, grumbling, living with disunity in the ranks, etc. without mentioning the crucial additional truth that there is a war to fight. What unifies disparate, normally quarrelsome men is precisely the unity of fighting the same war. No wonder so many veterans groups emerge from a war, groups of men who are astounding disparate otherwise.

Churches that are riven by internal disunity may often be plagued in part by the lack the unifying power of a significant external goal. Even if that goal is merely getting pamphlets to Iraq it will certainly help unify the church. However, if the goal is to confront a hideous, invisible enemy that has infiltrated the bloodstream of every member of the church and will be causing pain and suffering and premature death, that unity might come much more quickly and solidly.

I had similar concerns recently as I listened to Greg Livingstone share his experiences with several key Muslims who were apparently glad to talk to him but did not appear to be seeking God. They are Muslims, perhaps, only in the sense that they may be caught up in a cultural tradition they felt they could not abandon. I wonder what would have happened if he had shared with them his awe for the glory of God? How would he have done that and how would these men have reacted? Maybe their disinterest would have turned them away and he would then have had to spend time with others whose hearts toward God were more tender?

The average missionary in a Muslim village does not share with the people many similar goals. The one common denominator which might possibly draw both missionary and Muslim together could be to share, positively and humbly, genuine awe for the glory of God as seen in a microscope, and negatively, to share genuine awe and fear for the additional evidence in that same microscope of an intelligent, malicious enemy of them both. The missionary and the Muslim can both be awed (and worship) as they contemplate God's glory together, and they can together be gripped by the urgent, crucial task of fighting a common enemy that is constantly tearing down that glory. Isn't that what Jesus' extensive healing ministry would teach us to do?

Letter to David Hesselgrave

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 161-62)

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Frontier Mission Fellowship

1469 Bresee Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91104-2604

Ralph D. Winter, General Director
Work: 626-296-7501, Fax 626-398-2185
Home Phone/fax: 626-794-5544, Cell 626-354-9391
Email: rdw112233@aol.com

David Hesselgrave
4345 Terrace View Ln
Rockford IL 61114-4707



Sunday, July 4, 2004

In reply refer to 4704.756

Dear David,

I append my brief letter to Art Glasser about Cornelius.

Having read your Chapter Two and done some more thinking I can make the following comment.

A small point: I note that in your text you first quote, "a message through which you and all your household will be saved." But later you paraphrase, "in order to be saved." This bends things in the conventional direction all right.

Much more important is the constantly repeated statement in 10:14 as the essence of the angel's message to Peter, in 10:28 as the essence of his visit to Cornelius, and in 11:8 as the essence of his recapitulation, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." The issue is whether or not Cornelius, as is, is acceptable to God. And all this is in the past tense, "God has made clean."

Especially note that this is the sentence Peter quotes immediately upon meeting Cornelius BEFORE Peter says anything at all about Jesus Christ.

On the other hand there is no suggestion here that the blood of Christ or the Name of Jesus was not the basis of Cornelius's salvation. That is the only way anyone has ever been saved, but this is not to say that "a knowledge of Jesus" in the purely intellectual narration Peter gave is the crucial element. No one before or after Christ was ever saved by His blood without something more than Gnostic knowledge. The only route known to the Jews (and to us) is as in 11:18, "repentance unto life."

In Peter's stunned, reflective summary in 10:34, 35, he is saying that Gentiles everywhere in the "God Fearer" category are, as is, acceptable to God as Jews, they are not to be considered unholy. He does not add, "if they can just get the facts about Jesus."

In other words, the overwhelming Biblical evidence negates our contemporary additional stricture about the utter necessity of additional head knowledge beyond OT special revelation. And, it shows that the issue of General vs Special revelation is an issue that is very different from that of Cornelius and the NT "God fearers" in general, all of whom had had extensive contact with Special Revelation. The glorious Fact enabling this startling truth, of course, is the blood of Christ not an animal sacrificial system, which is the "good" news to the Gentiles, upsetting to Jews.

David Hesselgrave, Sunday, July 4, 2004

Ralph D. Winter
Frontier Mission Fellowship



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Thus, the whole dichotomy between circumcized and uncircumcized is irrelevant, and the Gentiles who did not follow the law abjectly were as acceptable to God as Jews, both equally able to find "repentance unto life (11:18)."

Now, I have to say that the question of General versus Special Revelation is an associated topic, and whether Paul was talking about General or Special revelation in Romans two is a key question.

My intuition in this case is that we do not apparently possess the necessary knowledge about God's ways to come down with a dogmatic assertion. Obviously, all people and their fellowship with God, their growth in grace, are eminently better off the more they know of Jesus Christ. We do not need to argue that point.

As you know I believe that we can speed up evangelization and empower our message greatly by including as much knowlege of God's glory as possible. This means first of all to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It also means ripping back the cloak we have put artificially over all of the glory of God to be seen in the microbiological world, etc. Irwin Moon style.

To do this is urgent, imperative, and of higher priority than 98% of what the average believer and the church is actually doing.

Okay, these are some thoughts.

Cordially in Christ,

Ralph

In Pursuit of the Full Gospel

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 167)

What is inadequate with this statement?

“The over-arching vision within the Frontier Mission Fellowship group of projects is to see all unreached peoples reached with the gospel and the kingdom to come among them. In evangelical terms we can know when a group is reached when there is an indigenous church planting movement among them.”

This paragraph fairly well describes the way we looked at things when we were in the founding period of the FMF. Things are now seen—by me anyway—as both simpler and more complex. We do not intend to give up the priority this statement express for those people groups which have no access to Christ. But we recall that to “reach” a people merely by eliciting a church planting movement among them has never been all that God might want accomplished. To add “and the Kingdom to come among them” is helpful but woefully unspecific.

Today, more than a quarter of a century after our founding, I would think we would speak of the four levels of strategy and purpose rather than one or two:

Level 1: Getting people “saved.”

Level 2: Winning them to the Lordship of Christ and into His family

Level 3: Glorifying God

Level 4: Distinguishing evil from God and fighting “the works of the Devil” as a means of glorifying God, that is, understanding the lordship of Christ as involving us in an all-out war against evil, disease, corruption, a war in which we can expect suffering, hardship and death.

The biggest change of perspective for me is the shift away from a picture of man vs. God, which is a polarization that enabled the commercialization of religion at the time of the Reformation, but before and after as well. The service being sold by religious functionaries in many societies is a service which allows, for a price, a better relationship with God or the gods.

The New Testament picture is much more a picture of two sides, the one, that of the god of this world, the other, God along with man working together to destroy the works of the Devil and reclaim the full glory of God. Currently, the “salvation of man” shoulders out a balanced view of the far more serious cleavage between Satan and God, in which dichotomy man was created to be on God’s side.

In so far as Satan has corrupted man and gained his help in opposing God it is true that man can be on both sides of the struggle. However, it is to Satan’s advantage for the whole conflict to be seen as one of Man vs. God.

A great deal of the conflict between man and man is due to the absence of a clear understanding of the larger conflict between Satan and man and Satan and God. What would immediately and dramatically unify the nations of man would be the sudden exposure of that great enemy Satan. If humans could wake up to the fact that their far greater enemy is rampant in the form of disease germs they might well rally around that common enemy rather than fight each other. In time of war you do not see so much fighting for status, for position, for fame—precisely due to the far greater looming common enemy.

Logically, then, Satan's most strategic influence on humans is lead them blindly to downplay and ridicule or at least misconstrue his very existence—that is, the existence of an intermediate being of awesome power who is an evil opponent of God (and man). Getting human beings to concentrate totally on their own waywardness toward God is very clever because that tactic easily monopolizes their consciousness and diminishes their awareness of the larger struggle. Indeed, the bulk of all theologizing has to do with “getting man right with God” rather than with restoring full glory to God by distinguishing His works from Satan's works. The final achievement of Satan is, indeed, the human delusion that evil is from God, and due to His “mysterious purposes.”

Beyond Transformation: An Ancient Syncretism as a Handicap to a “Public Theology,”

Chicago, American Society of Missiology, June 2005 (*Frontiers in Mission*, 279ff).

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf

In mission circles we have harbored for many years a phobia of what we call syncretism. We have assumed syncretism can readily occur if we are not very careful whenever a church movement on a mission field is created and becomes autonomous. Less attention is given to the possibility of syncretism that may have long been part of our own religious tradition. I would like to address the latter.

Introduction

The reader may understand my train of thought better if I begin with some personal references.

In 1996 my first wife was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a somewhat rare form of cancer of the bone marrow. She lived for five more years, albeit with increasing difficulties. During her illness I experienced a crash course in cancer, disease in general, and the entire medical/pharmaceutical industry. Unexpectedly, all this converged to spark some serious new thinking in the area of theology and missiology. I doubt if all this intense thinking would have occurred had my wife’s disease not taken five long years. After marrying again I have been pressed into thinking even more deeply about these issues now that I, too, have been diagnosed with the same disease.

The first thing that came to my attention in this bedeviled period was the fact that almost all medical funds are focused on caring for the dying, curing the sick, and preventing disease—all worthwhile things, of course. However, virtually pennies make their way into efforts to combat and eradicate the causal germs of disease. Indeed, the whole history of medicine is, you might say, the slow and almost reluctant understanding that most diseases are not conditions, but infections. Germs themselves have been discovered fairly recently, speaking historically, and have been recognized only very reluctantly, speaking psychologically. Even today for many it is counter to all common sense that tiny organisms too small to see without a microscope could sicken, much less kill, human beings. Most people in the world still do not believe it.

Furthermore, only very recently have we had strong evidence for the infectious origins of heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s, and schizophrenia. In other words, it is scary but true that today only a pittance is focused on eradicating the pathogenic origins of disease. By contrast, a billion dollars a day goes to patching up people who have suffered heart failure or stroke. An ominous absence of attention?

The second thing I ran into is the curiously widespread absence in Western Christian circles of a corresponding theology of disease. Of course, until recently (historically speaking), virtually no one has puzzled over this gap in our theology, since Calvin and Luther had no idea of germs. Is it not time to call into question the carry-over today of many of our pre-germ theological assumptions? Those assumptions are what

seem to justify our attributing evil to God, saying again and again, in one way or another, “God in His mysterious ways orchestrates all disease and evil.”

When my wife finally died, sincere Christian friends urged me to recognize that “God knows what He is doing,” as if her premature death was obviously God’s mysterious initiative, not the result of an intelligent—and conquerable?—disease pathogen. Long before she died hundreds of friends assured me they were praying for her. I never said this, but I often wondered, “Is prayer all that can be done?”

Both Yancey’s famous book, *Where is God When it Hurts?* and James Dobson’s book, *When God Doesn’t Make Sense* echo the same point of view: we cannot fully know God’s mysterious purposes. So there would seem to be nothing to do but resign ourselves to unexpected tragedy and evil. In neither book is prayer advised, nor are we urged to deploy efforts to discover and eradicate attacking pathogens (whether viruses, bacteria or parasites) in the Name of Christ, as a logical result of our efforts for the Kingdom and His glory.

I am sure that neither Yancey nor Dobson would question the necessity for society to do something to rid our streets of muggers, attack dogs, and, in California, mountain lions. Intelligent enemies of the kind we can see with the naked eye, we should fight, of course. But apparently, if such dangers are too small to see—even if we can now see them in a microscope—they must be *ipso facto* part of God’s mysterious will! Isn’t this a theological hiatus? While we may try to avoid such pathogens, we have no theology—no reasoned or mandated mission—to *eradicate* them. Over the centuries the church has successfully primed the “world” to do many good things, an entire range of things (from hospitals to ramps for handicapped people). However, if “non-spiritual” efforts at eradication are pursued at all, we have loftily left that for the world to do.

Thus, as I see it, key elements of “the work of the church” are actually being done by the world—it is not a part of the articulated mission of church people. They are off singing hymns and dreaming about heaven. Calvin said nothing about germs, of course, and since his era we have developed and embraced no significant “public theology” in that sphere.

Somewhere along the line I ran into Gregory Boyd’s Intervarsity Press book, *God at War*, and was introduced to the idea that Augustine had incorporated a syncretic element into his thinking that has for sixteen centuries bedeviled Western theology, especially public theology.

Historical Background

However, before looking into the source of Augustine’s alleged syncretism, it may be helpful to generalize about the feasibility of public theology in the case of different Christian traditions in history.

For example, the type of Christianity that flourished among African slaves in America is noted for a hymnology of the next world. Similarly, the enormous, mainly lower-class movement brought into being by D. L. Moody focused for many years on dispensational and eschatological exegesis, not public theology. For slaves, theologizing about how governments should be run or even how civil society might be improved would have been of little practical value. In the same way, the Anabaptists in Reformation times had little or no possibility of effecting changes in this world at the social and political level of the ruling class.

By contrast, Calvin himself pushed through legislation requiring banisters on second-floor balconies in every house within his considerable political influence. Indeed, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans, and, of course, Roman Catholics, historically, have all usually participated in—or even dominated—the ruling class.

In the United States the fruits of middle 19th century revivals energized a wide spectrum of social reforms precisely because the very subjects of revival included social and political leaders.

But when in the late 19th century the churches became flooded by a torrent of immigration representing older European Christian traditions (e.g., Presbyterian, Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist and Roman Catholic), the weight of the newcomers tended to water down the earlier (often idealistic) revival distinctives that had so dramatically affected the public domain.

This explains how it is that two remnants of the revival ethos of the 1850s have survived without heavy European immigration: the Mormon and Adventist traditions. To this day they maintain what used to be advanced ideas about nutrition and education. They peeled off from the mainstream and were thus isolated from the influence of the new immigrants with their more traditional European and contrary pre-revival opinions. Thus, in some cultural features, the Mormon and Adventist traditions today are museum pieces of mid-19th century revival Evangelicalism.

Unlike the extensive social activism of the Wesleys and Whitefields of the Great Awakening of the 18th century, and the Charles Finneys of the 19th century revivals, the biggest negative impact on an awareness of public theology was that of D. L. Moody in the early 20th century. Millions of poorer and less-educated people got swept into church life, carrying with them their social distance from college education and the college educated. This made their participation in the professions and civil government very unlikely.

Furthermore, their schools—Moody Bible Institute faculty, for example—determinedly distanced themselves from the cultured proponents of the Social Gospel, emphasizing eschatology instead. They abandoned the school system of the civil order, preferring for more than a half century the newly developed Bible Institute model. However, despite a relatively isolationist social detour of 50 to 90 years, the 157 Bible institutes created in the Moody era gradually became Bible colleges, Christian colleges, and more recently, Christian universities. Only now in just the past few years have people whose background of faith originated in the Moody period begun to move into the professions, public life, Congress, and even the White House staff. This new visibility and influence is creating a renewed (and scary) symbiosis between faith and society, one which at least superficially is more open to public theology than at any time since the mid 19th century.

In this large sphere, then, public theology is now once more *feasible*. Unhappily, however feasible, the *clarity* of the “horizon of the coming Kingdom,” on which George Hunsberger has urged us to keep our eyes fixed, is, as I see it, mainly unimproved or maybe blurred or even invisible. Public theology, in order to become significant, needs to be both *feasible* and *visible*.

The Visibility of the Horizon

Speaking of our present horizon, an understandable range of perspectives has rippled through Western churches and missions over the past two centuries.

Many pastors and missionaries have continued to replace the Biblical agenda with one of the central (somewhat artificial?) issues of the Reformation, namely, mission that simply offers (sells) advice to people on the attractive subject of “how to get to heaven,” or “how to be assured of eternal salvation.”

Other missionaries, with better phraseology, seek to reconcile people into ongoing fellowship with God by “winning people to Christ.”

Still others have earnestly sensed the importance of “Kingdom Mission,” which implies much more (and many different things), especially the reevaluation of culture in the light of Christian perspective.

Recently the word “transformation” has been resurrected from the past and has now become a buzzword. This is good insofar as it helps us rise above a purely otherworldly concept of salvation. But the word itself is weak, implying no specific direction of transformation. The whole of society is, after all, constantly undergoing *transformation*, though not necessarily in the right direction. The word *transformation* is thus not an inherently positive term. A better one might be *restoration*, which is teleological and moves in a certain direction.

There is also the Biblical emphasis on glorifying God in all the earth. This is what we sing about all the time with little concrete reference. “Glorifying God” often sinks to the level of a meaningless, intangible catch phrase that is usually redefined in terms of whatever ministry is being promoted. Is any agency today mainly expounding the glory of God? It is hard to imagine a global educational enterprise focused exclusively on, say, the wonders of God’s Creation. That would be nice, and did indeed happen back in the 1930s–50s in the days of the Moody Institute of Science films.

However, what if the God of whom we speak is, by default, understood to be cruel and destructive, the sponsor of deadly germs and all of the violence in nature? What if God’s reputation, His glory, is severely tarnished and needs to be defended? What if God is thought to be the direct perpetrator of all that happens, good and evil (such that His purposes must be understood to be mysterious)? If these things are true, one can easily imagine the problem they pose for evangelism in the public sphere. Do not all these “ifs” cry out for any activity that could counteract them and more adequately defend and exposit the unmarred, unstained glory of God? And would that not be a valid definition of a larger “public” mission? That sounds reasonable, perhaps, but is still desperately platitudinous.

Are we in an improved position now in the 21st century to get a better handle on what our mission is supposed to be? I think so. I would hope so. To do so may have a lot to do with the difference between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. It may also be a problem made more difficult by Augustine’s flight from Manichaeism.

Another Rosetta Stone

A further factor in the picture: I feel it is important to acknowledge that our Christian Bibles reveal many evidences of having incorporated perspectives from outside the Abrahamic genetic lineage. Furthermore, it is plain that our Bibles display a

progressive unfolding of insight, such that while New Testament insights do not necessarily invalidate Old Testament insights, in some cases they clearly add to them.

Thus, without throwing out the entire OT as having been outmoded and superseded—as Marcion did—it is yet possible to discern significantly new features in the latter parts of the OT and especially in the NT.

To me one of the most striking contrasts between OT and NT insights is what I have playfully called “The Rosetta Stone of Biblical Hermeneutics.” I refer to the contrast (which is quite shocking at first glance) between the earlier and later Biblical accounts of the famous event in which King David went wrong in numbering his people. The earlier account in II Samuel 24:1-25 (NIV) is repeated verbatim in I Chronicles chapter 21 (NIV), with the change of a single word. The earlier account says plainly that “God incited” David to do this wrong. The later version in I Chronicles replaces the word God with the word Satan. Now it says “Satan incited” David to do wrong.

A possible explanation of this seemingly monumental difference may be seen in the similarly paradoxical contrast between the initial straightforward account of Joseph’s being sold into slavery *by his brothers*, and then Joseph’s own declaration later (to his brothers), “*You did not send me to Egypt, God did*” (Genesis 45:8).

In the case of both Joseph and David, one of the two perspectives is that of God’s ultimate sovereignty, the other perspective is that of immediate instrumentality. Joseph’s brothers were the ones who—in the immediate, instrumental sense—sent him into slavery, even though God somehow in His sovereignty was involved. In the case of David, Satan “incited” him to do wrong in the immediate and instrumental sense in I Chronicles, but, in terms of God’s sovereignty, in II Samuel, God did it.

In fact, throughout the OT, the perspective of sovereignty is very common, almost pervasive, and, it would seem, easily misleading. This is where Augustine apparently got stuck. The word *satan* in most of the OT simply means “opponent,” or, “adversary.” God himself, in opposing a false prophet is said to be a “*satan*.” Even in the NT this earlier meaning, which is more typical of the OT, still lingers: when Peter objects to Jesus’ will, Jesus calls Peter an adversary; not Satan, but a *satan*.

Thus, in almost all cases the word *satan* in the OT means opponent or adversary while in most of the NT it almost always refers to an enormously powerful “god of this world,” a specific, personal, intelligent, intermediate being.

In this case, then, the difference between the OT outlook on things and what we find in the NT is decidedly different, and the implications for public theology are massive. Where did the Jews, specifically the NT authors, get this new insight?

Where Augustine Comes In

It seems possible that this new understanding of an opposing intelligent being is an insight picked up by Jewish scholars in captivity in Zoroastrian territory where followers of Zoroaster believed in an evil second god, thus two equal gods, one good and one evil. While the NT did not accept the full Zoroastrian dualism, the NT, as we have seen, is full of references to a Satan as a powerful *intermediate* being, and, in this case, not merely any “adversary” as in the OT.

Significantly, one of the early church traditions, Manichaeism, did retain the full Zoroastrian dualism. One of the substantial differences in the two main branches of Islam may be the continuing influence of Zoroastrianism in the Shiite branch. In the Christian

sphere, as late as the latter part of the fourth century, Manichaeism was a strong stream encompassing Augustine in his initial entry into Christianity. It hung on clear into the fifteenth century in the form of the violently destroyed Cathari tradition in southern France.

Thus, while the NT does not reflect the entire Zoroastrian dualism, at least one of the church traditions did. Eventually, Manichaeism was mainly driven out of existence as a heresy. However, according to some modern scholars (such as Gregory Boyd), Augustine's eventual rejection of it swung him all the way over into a neo-Platonic view that imputed all or most Satanic initiatives to God as part of God's "mysterious purposes." The threat of Zoroastrian influences was durably difficult for the Roman church to root out entirely. Augustine's neo-Platonism may be equally durable.

I must pause here, so that I can apologize for appearing to presume the existence of "intermediate beings" such as Satan and his intelligent angelic accomplices. I don't want anyone to feel this idea is forced upon them, or that it is absolutely essential to what else I say. I realize that today in most of Western Christianity the idea of intermediate beings belongs in the category of Santa Claus and Harry Potter. I will say, however, that most of the ever-present discussion down through history of the so-called "problem of evil" seems to have been fueled and prolonged by ignoring or forgetting the possibility of evil, powerful, intermediate beings.

The Impact on Mission Strategy

In any case, the plot thickens, since Augustine is perhaps the most influential theologian in history. What he thought and wrote has gained far more significance than the writings of most other scholars, and both Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin leaned heavily on him. My main concern with this particular element of Augustinian neo-Platonism is that such a perspective tends to lead to a dysfunctional syndrome in which people tend automatically to identify evil with God and thus hesitate to engage in any human all-out mission aimed deliberately at countering evil. Why waste one's time fighting God?

Let's look at two examples of this syndrome. One of my seminary professors of church history told of a mother superior in a thirteenth-century convent who awakened one morning to find something moving under her skin in the center of her forehead. In a few days a worm broke the skin so as to become visible. This dear woman, perhaps with an Augustinian understanding of a micromanaging God, was so confident that the worm had been sent by God that whenever the worm fell out, she quickly replaced it.

A second example, a bit closer to our own day, would be the experience of Jonathan Edwards, who was for seven years exiled for his revivalist mutation to an artificial missionary village in the far west of Massachusetts. The village, Stockbridge, as it was named, was established to teach Indians who were hunters and gatherers how to be farmers (probably not a sound missiological idea). While pastor of that missionary congregation Edwards did some of his most advanced writing, but also was horrified by the annual toll of smallpox on his Indian charges, death by smallpox being possibly the most painful way to die.

However, when he sought to employ the then-recent Turkish idea of cowpox vaccine against smallpox, he faced the stern warning of many Massachusetts pastors that if he sought to destroy smallpox he would be "interfering with Divine Providence" (Clark

1995, 25). Those pastors actually formed an “Anti-vaccination Society.” Theologians and church historians may have conveniently forgotten this incident, but not the medical historians!

Despite some effort, I have not been able to determine what was going on in Edwards’ mind—perhaps someday an Edwardian scholar will discover this—but Edwards decided to try out the vaccine on himself just three months after being called to be president of what today is Princeton University. The experiment did not work. He died of smallpox. Quite likely the pastors concluded that God killed him for interfering with His mysterious workings.

Two centuries earlier neither Luther nor the younger Calvin were aware of the existence of germs—any more than was Augustine a millennium earlier still. However, even today we have no noticeable theology on the status of deadly germs to tell us whether they are of God’s direct initiative or not. No wonder then that thus far we have no substantial missiology of pathogens.

Reverberations Today

Missions have planted hospitals all over the world to deal with the effects of pathogens. There is, however, to my knowledge no Christian institution on the face of the earth that considers its mission to be the destruction of the pathogens themselves, whether those pathogens are viruses like smallpox, bacteria like staphylococcus, or parasites like malaria.

Are we doing any better at facing this attacking evil here in the USA? Here the facts are quite available. The perfectly enormous American medical/pharmaceutical industrial has such a voracious appetite for funds that it has now become the number one reason for bankruptcy in the USA. Each day Americans are called upon to spend over a half billion dollars for prescription drugs alone. They are also squeezed for a full billion dollars a day just to deal with heart and stroke problems. Our military efforts cost pennies by comparison.

Yet all of this is almost entirely “defensive” activity, whether it is caring for the sick or pursuing measures to prevent or avoid disease. These activities are called curative and preventive medicine, both *defensive* in nature. By comparison, perhaps less than 1% of the torrent of money that goes to the medical and pharmaceutical worlds is focused on an offensive action aimed specifically to eradicate the disease pathogens underlying most diseases. Infections are now recently suspected of being the cause of even heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s and schizophrenia (Hooper 1999).

Well, you may be thinking, is this a major matter, and is it really a theological problem? Consider these facts: less than one percent of the deaths in the USA per year are due to murder—7%. Twice as many people die from suicide—1.4%. More than five times as many people die of accidental deaths (mostly automobile accidents due to alcohol addiction)—4%. That’s a total of six percent. However, over 90 percent of Americans die prematurely because of the relentless attack of pathogens—viruses, bacteria, or parasites.

To get this into perspective, on the average ten Americans died every day in the Vietnam War. About the same is happening in Iraq. Ten a day. But in the USA alone just two diseases kill ten times that many? 50 times as many? No, 300 times that many per day. It is as though we are involved in 300 Iraq wars simultaneously because of just two

diseases, cancer and cardio-vascular disease. The issue of disease is understandably even much larger in the non-Western world. Part of the problem is that many diseases have until fairly recently been assumed to be conditions, not infections, such as peptic ulcers.

The Larger, “Public” Mission

Thus, it seems clear to me that we have drastically underestimated the mission to which all followers of Jesus are called. You may not be prepared for what I am about to say, but you will have to admit that, if what I suggest turns out to be true, it will mean that current concepts of the Christian mission fall drastically short of what God is asking us to do.

If we can lift away from our thinking Augustine’s reluctance to recognize a large role for Satan, I believe our eyes will suddenly be opened to the pervasive distortions of an intelligent evil throughout all of nature. Many things will begin to appear differently.

The event portrayed by *The Passion* (motion picture), for example, will not mean the total defeat of Satan at that time, but simply a definitive conquest and *the turning point* in a battle against the Satanic campaign to tear down God’s glory. That gruesome event will also clearly exemplify the reality of an unspeakably cruel enemy, not merely a salvation from sin to be greeted with joy and praise.

The saving of souls will no longer be the central strategy of mission, but will in large part be merely a means, the means of the recruitment of human beings into the ongoing war against the distorting work of a formidable evil intelligence utterly opposed to the restoration of all creation and the re-glorification of God.

Glorifying God will become more than a worship exercise. It will require all-out war against all distortion of creation, including the carnivorous state of present-day destructive animal life (that is, all life forms except those like dogs and horses which have been deliberately and intelligently genetically restored). Yes, if wolves have been genetically altered through selective breeding we can begin to understand how that might be done even more efficiently through genesplicing with animals that are still violent. Feeding man-eating tigers grass won’t restore them to a non-carnivorous state, but genesplicing might. Humans going vegetarian may not change their carnivorous nature. Also, fighting pathogens at the molecular level, if possible, would seem to have to be added to limited understandings of the Christian mission.

If the “horizon” of the coming Kingdom is drawn from the Bible, it would appear that the horizon requires the restoration of all animal life from vicious and carnivorous states. Note this is not a case of elevating animals in God’s sight to the level of importance of human beings. It is to elevate neither one but to portray more accurately the nature and purposes of our Father in heaven. Our God is the one who, in Genesis 1, brought into being both animals and humans that were non-carnivorous. The lion must again lie down with the lamb.

Both Hindu and Muslim traditions in some ways treat taking animal life as a sacrament. Our “Christian” slaughterhouses involve little or no spiritual sensitivities. Yet, even our secular society prohibits bull fights, cockfights, and artificial killing farms for bloodthirsty hunters.

Judging by the immense achievement of early humans 11,000 years ago which developed dogs out of wolves, it is apparent that even the rather blunt instrument of selective breeding can restore the wild to the tame. How much more can genesplicing do?

Is the only solution to “kill or cage” the man-eating tiger—and the same for all wild animals as well?

Don’t worry if it looks like we can’t do all this. It is not at all clear that we humans are going to set everything right, eliminate all pathogens, tame all forms of life and usher in the millennium. What we do know that must be done is to work urgently to clear the name of God in matters of evil.

We can do that only by allying ourselves clearly and urgently with God’s kingdom efforts to fight all evil. Jesus said we are to be salt and light in this world and immediately followed those statements with the explanation that people who see our good works (not good words) will glorify our Father in Heaven. That is the primary way we can clarify His nature and glory—which, in turn, is essential to our most potent evangelism.

We may have become specialists in all those verses that speak of human redemption, such as “the angels rejoice when one sinner repents.” We may even misinterpret the NT statement about the gates of hell notwithstanding the offensive onslaught of the kingdom, assuming somehow that our new kingdom will merely be called upon defensively to resist the onslaught of Satan. It is just the opposite. What is needed is for the redeemed to move from survivors to soldiers, whose God is no longer just a Savior but a Commander in Chief.

I know this seems far out. I have been reflecting on the wild violence and suffering throughout nature for many years. At 80 I have had more time to reflect on this than most readers. And do listen to Hindus and Muslims on this point.

I conclude with an interesting quote from a pastor who also has a doctorate in science from MIT:

According to Scripture, the universe was originally good and the glory of God is still evident in it (Rom 1:20). But something else—something frightfully wicked—is evident in it as well. Of their own free will, Satan and other spiritual beings rebelled against God in the primordial past and now abuse their God-given authority over certain aspects of creation. Satan, who holds the power of death (Heb 2:14) exercises a pervasive, structural, diabolic influence to the point that the entire creation is in bondage to decay. The pain-ridden, bloodthirsty, sinister and hostile character of nature should be attributed to Satan and his army, not to God. Jesus’ Earthly ministry reflected the belief that the world had been seized by a hostile, sinister lord. Jesus came to take it back (McLaughlin 2004, 237).

Thus, the question arises: Is a syncretized theology blinding us to the existence and actions of a hideously evil, highly intelligent, intermediate being often described as an agent of masterful deception? It has been said that his greatest achievement is to cover his tracks. If that is true, then we need to look more closely for what other destructive deeds that kind of an intelligent evil may be performing.

Is our mission that broad? If so, then we have drastically underestimated what it should involve. Is it time to unravel a 1,600-year-old syncretism? If we do, that would seem to require a much larger public theology.

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The Bible and Saving Faith

(Seminar, June 1, 2005). From audio CAS1026.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ebf0dbd2667ae6f525e30c7/1589579197694/The+Bible+and+Saving+Faith.pdf>

This is an edited transcription of a seminar Ralph Winter gave on June 1, 2005.

When we go back to the Bible we meet both Jesus and the Bible. As I was growing up I somehow got the idea that you could be saved by quote, “accepting Jesus as Savior.” Or that there was such a thing as a quote, “saving knowledge of Christ.” Or that you could, quote, “pray to receive Jesus.”

But there is nothing in the New Testament that would lead to the conclusion that accepting Christ as Savior is saving faith. Even the phrase “saving faith” is dangerously likely to imply the adequacy of a purely intellectual faith. This latter idea led easily to the idea that the New Testament brought a new, easier way to belong to God. Of faith, not works. In the Old Testament people had to obey to be saved. Ugh. In the New Testament they just had to believe. Believe certain doctrines like Jesus died for my sins.

The common view of things is getting people across a line into a circle, a bounded set. The idea is that if you get inside the boundary you go to heaven. If you’re still outside you won’t. Rather we should talk about a centered set. A center to which we are all drawing closer, and I assume only God knows where a boundary is.

I once read a book in which I discovered to my surprise the statement that certain forms of Christianity were further from the Bible than certain forms of Islam. I’m not sure if he was referring to the 14 million Ismailis in Northern Pakistan, who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Later I learned that Mohammed, in insisting that Jesus did not die but was taken directly to heaven, was not denying the deity of Christ but was protecting it from the implication that the Jews had the power to kill him.

I learned that in all the Koran, no one is more highly exalted than Jesus who is presented, unlike Mohammed himself, as having the attributes of divinity, and that the concept of the Trinity refused by Mohammed, was in fact a perverse concept that we ourselves today reject.

Then in my own teaching at Fuller I finally realized that the volcanic blast of the Greek Bible, that is to say, when the Bible finally appeared in the Greek language, which was a very, very widespread language, that sent ripples in all directions. When it invaded the Greek and Latin world it produced Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholic traditions. Its later impact on the Semitic world was Islam. Its later impact on the Teutonic world was Protestantism. Its impact on the Anglo-Saxon world was Anglicanism.

All these traditions are quite defective in many ways if we compare them to the Bible. Islam is, in some ways, more defective, because Mohammed did not have access to the entire Bible, any more than the Christians he dealt with had. But Luther did. But in other ways, Islam is closer to the Bible than evangelicalism. And unlike the Catholic traditions, Muslims at least don’t have a goddess to whom they must pray.

I continue to understand the Bible better. None of the early followers of Jesus called themselves Christians. That term meant something like “Messiah-nut,” and was an outsiders’ term of derision that only 300 years later became a political term for the Greek

and Latin forms of Christianity and by now is claimed by people from Jehovah's Witnesses to Mormons to Christian Science.

What did believers in the New Testament call themselves? It is even possible that in a Semitic language, like Aramaic, that Jesus spoke, or Syriac, or Arabic, they called themselves Muslims. And of course, for 600 years, Christians in the Semitic sphere prayed to Allah, before Mohammed was born. And 30 million pray to Allah today with Allah right there in the Bible.

The Bible also liberated me from the zany idea that at a certain time in history God switched gears, to which a distinct knowledge of Jesus was from that point on, in the entire world, essential to salvation. Now that idea, this insight, in turn liberated me from the idea that Cornelius would not have made it to heaven had Peter not gone to his house and told him about Jesus. By contrast it is now clear that if anyone in the Bible was headed for heaven, Cornelius was. Peter enabled Cornelius to be saved from the assumption that God preferred the Jews and their culture and that to please God you had to become a Jew. He was rescued from that delusion, which of course didn't prevent him from talking to God and God talking to him, as the Bible portrays.

That is, Peter did, as we do today, introduce people to Christ as the Redeemer of all mankind, not just the Jews. Indeed, that he is the only means of salvation, whether in the Old Testament they knew a lot about him or not. Knowing details about Jesus was a marvelous new insight, but it was not itself essential to salvation.

We have to get back to the Bible. We have got to realize that our Christianity has developed a sales talk that isn't really faithful to the Bible, and that many of our traditions are really foreign to the Bible, and that doesn't mean we should throw them all out, but that doesn't mean that some of them are in contrast to the Bible, which is very, very dangerous.

Now, to me, the biggest difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, in some ways, anyway, is not that we now have superior knowledge of the nature of God, by looking at the face of Jesus Christ, and seeing the glory of God. Now that, of course, is spectacular, even if not essential. But the really astounding difference between the Old and New Testaments, is the fact that you have 237 references to Satan in the New Testament and not one in the Old Testament, practically. As a person. The word *satan* in the Hebrew simply means adversary. God himself is a *satan*. God was a *satan* when he opposed a certain prophet. He was an adversary.

But it was not until the New Testament that there was deeper understanding of the fact that there is an intelligent adversary personality which we must fight against. If Satan is the one who perverted and distorted all of nature, and developed the outlandishly violent suffering that goes on every moment of the day in all of nature, with all kinds of creatures killing each other, if this was Satan's activity, along with dragging down Adam into a post-fallen original sin, a new damaged creation, we have monumental obstacles in becoming what God wants us to be. We were born depraved to some extent because of the Fall. Because of Satan's influence.

It isn't just getting saved, getting secure, but it's getting enlisted. When you were listed in the Lamb's Book of Life, you're also enlisted in an armed force, in a military operation. Disease, which is probably the most prominent reality among human beings today, and also among animals—disease is primarily the work of Satan. And we should be deliberately focusing on that.

It makes sense to say that as long as people get to heaven it doesn't matter how soon they die or how badly they suffer. Just so long as they get to heaven. You can easily say that, and that's logical.

But you can't quite say that it doesn't matter to the glory of God. It doesn't affect our understanding of the glory of God for people to be dragged down prematurely into death, into disease, into suffering. We can't say that, can we?

We talk about evangelism and social action as if they are both nice things to do. But we do not normally understand the fact that the very gospel we preach is undermined by the pervasive assumption since Augustine that evil in the world is primarily God's initiative and it's our part to resign ourselves to it and to ask God what his mysterious purposes are, and maybe have to wait until heaven to find them out. That does not empower our gospel at all. Thousands and thousands of marvelous evangelicals live in two worlds. One the church world and one the real world, in which, as a matter of fact, it doesn't make any sense.

Ruth Tucker's recent book, *Walking Away from Faith*, underscores the fact that a very large number of thinking adults really don't respond positively to that kind of a God.

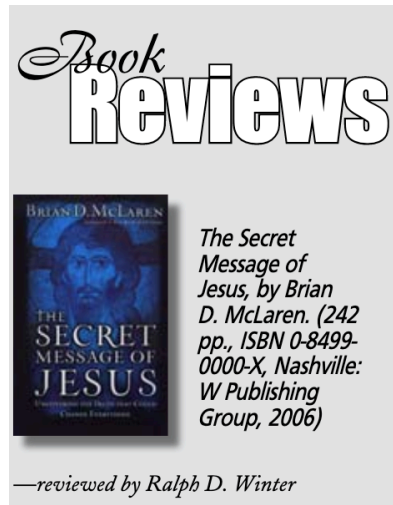
What are we trying to get people inside this line for? Not merely that they should be saved, of course, and that gets them closer and closer to Jesus. Not merely that they would understand the wonders of God himself in the flesh. But that we would become enlisted. That, with Jesus we would be focused on a battle in which we would be involved. We would be following him not only as Savior and Lord, but also as Commander-in-Chief of an army.

The evils and corruptions and diseases and suffering of our time and poverty and injustice, and the terrible things that are happening—these are the work of Satan. We don't fight them because we believe in social action as well as evangelism. We fight them because we do believe in evangelism—of a God who does not identify with those things. If we want to come to the Bible, the Bible talks about “the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). The implications of that for mission and for restoring the glory of God in the minds and hearts of the peoples of the world, is very, very prominent, in my opinion.

Book Review: *The Secret Message of Jesus* by Brian D. McLaren

(2006). (*IJFM* 23:2)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/23_2_PDFs/Book_Reviews.pdf



Brian McLaren is a superb writer. This book is just as interesting as his earlier books but is his most systematic and comprehensive statement to date. It is a richly rewarding must-read.

Part 1 describes the world in which Jesus lived. Part 2 engages Jesus' message specifically. Part 3 explores the contemporary significance of that message which he feels is usually misunderstood.

He interprets in a fresh, arresting way dozens of familiar passages. In Part 2 he describes the five stages through which a follower of Jesus should move to experience His full will: "Rethinking (repenting), believing, receiving, going public (baptism), practicing a new way of life." (p. 113)

The first four stages, despite the new terms, describe the basis for his greatest interest in the fifth. He writes eloquently of the freshness, newness, radical difference and wonderful things that a new life in Christ brings. For him it is not merely a sober, crucial struggle against evil.

However, in Part 3 he expounds his understanding of the Kingdom of God the way it ought to be, but demures when it comes to the use of the phrase itself. Instead he tries out on the reader a whole series of phrases each of which portrays certain aspects of the Kingdom without the use of that word. He prefers "The dream of God." He believes this phrase,

gives us the language to talk about evil and sin in the world: these are nightmares for God. In creating our world, God wasn't dreaming of prisons and kidnapping, child abuse and racism, greed and poverty, pollution and exploitation, conformity and chaos. God's dream was for freedom and creativity, kindness and justice, generosity and peace, diversity and harmony. (p. 141)

He now says that the dream “metaphor gives us a responsible and creative role to play.” But that role is described as merely not “ruining” the dream, not as a role of fighting evil, which involves risk, cost, and sacrifice.

Note further that his list of the terrible things God was not dreaming about is a list that confines itself to evils men do, not the larger evil Satan does without man’s help. For example, he mentions nothing about the violence in nature, nor, for that matter, the global damage and suffering due to disease germs. Accordingly, in the series of phrases he employs to describe what God was dreaming about there is no mention of health or the absence of pain. And he glosses over the mammoth event in which Satan turned against God and perpetrated all this damage to God’s dream.

For the record I will list, with just a bit of comment on numbers 3 and 6, the highly creative metaphors McLaren suggests helpfully that more fully portray the purposes of God than the phrase Kingdom of God.

1. The dream of God
2. The revolution of God
3. The mission of God

Here a main point is that gaining relationship with God is more important than being on a mission for Him (but isn’t that one way we gain a deeper relationship with Him?). He does speak of a “virus” (as a metaphor, not a real virus) that causes “violence . . . sexual aggression . . . lying . . . paralysis, and so on.” (p. 144) And if a cure were found we would want the cure and want to share that cure with others. He adds, “A healing mission—where you are healed so you can join in healing others—would be an apt metaphor for the Kingdom of God.” (p. 144)

In this last statement he does not realize that destroying viruses is more strategic than curing those victimized by viruses. There is no Satan to fight against.

4. The party of God
5. The network of God
6. The dance of God

Here we find a beautiful example of McLaren’s eloquence and high flying imagination.

The Father, Son, and Spirit live in an eternal, joyful, vibrant dance of love, honor, rhythm and harmony, grace and beauty, giving and receiving. The universe was created to be an expression and extension of the dance of God—so all creatures share in the dynamic joy of movement, love, vitality, harmony, and celebration. Electrons, protons, and neutrons—light, gravity, and motion—galaxies, suns, and planets—water, snow, ice, and vapor—winter, spring, summer, and fall—plants and animals, male and female—nations, tribes, clans, families, and individuals—art, sport, business, government, science, agriculture—every facet of creation had a role in the dance.

But we humans [note: not Satan] broke with the dance. We stomped on the toes of other dancers, ignored the rhythm, rejected the grace, and generally made a mess of things [humans created smallpox, polio?]. But God sent Jesus into the world to model for us a way of living in the rhythm of God’s music of love, and ever since, people have been attracted to the beauty of his steps and have begun rejoining the dance. (p. 147)

How different this sounds from 1 John. 3:8, “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.”

After listing his six best metaphors illuminating the Kingdom of God, he adds a few more unnumbered phrases:

- The tribe of God
- The story of God
- The school of God
- The guild of God
- The choir of God
- The team of God
- The friendship of God
- The table of God
- The invasion of God
- The counter-insurgency of God

This last item has no accompanying comment but would certainly contrast sharply with premature dancing. Are we tempted to look ahead when “there will be war no more” and attempt to live as though this can already be the millennium? Are we not still in an all-out war when 6,000 Americans are being crushed to death every day due to two diseases alone (cardiovascular and cancer)? And when our U.S. health-care system is soaking up \$2 thousand billion annually? Cardiovascular disease alone is costing us in direct costs \$350 billion a year. Nine out of ten Americans is dying prematurely, etc.

McLaren does give some touching examples of good deeds. One is where some Evangelicals go out on the street and beat make-shift drums and instruments to attract a crowd of homeless people and then give food away. Another is where a prostitute is surprised with a birthday cake she had never before had.

These actions are heartwarming and all to the good but do not deal at all with root causes, as though those causes are unfathomable or incur-able or can simply await the return of Christ. Where is dangerous mission in all this? Where in this “dream” is there emergency, corrective, intelligent fighting against the intelligent dark forces still rampant in our world?

Editorial Comment on the Work Week

(2006) (*Mission Frontiers*, Sept.-Oct.)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment16>

Dear Reader,

Each issue of *Mission Frontiers* is in some key ways a “continued story.”

This time two mission leaders talk about a fundamental transformation that is essential for the U. S. church. Lay people are being offered a superficial religious way of life, they say, but are still restless and, in any truly meaningful way, unemployed. How does this relate to our continued story?

Patt says the DNA of the U.S. church is what ends up on the mission field. And that is all too true—the weaknesses of the church here are often the weaknesses of the church there. We are offering (or achieving) little more than a part-time religion, whether here or there, that barely addresses either major earthly problems or the Kingdom meaning of daily work.

Really, many major problems are mainly unaddressed by today’s Christian movement even at its best.

Why? Because we are still chewing on the toughest and most difficult question of all: “What does God want me to do?”

A traditional answer is not enough, as John Eldredge puts it in his neat little book, *The Epic*:

Not the Christianity of proper church attendance and good manners. Not the Christianity of holier-than-thou self-righteousness and dogmatism (p. 14).

What is needed is for millions of Christians to move beyond part-time Christianity. What churches call people to do for and through the church after hours is good but not good enough. Our whole lives, including our 40-hour workweek, need to make sense in the global battle for the glory of God in all nations.

Whoever you are, dear reader, if you have chosen to fully follow Jesus as Lord of your life, you no doubt hope and pray and seek for “your utmost to be His highest.” You should certainly hope that the main hours of your week would significantly lead to His glorification.

Your money or your life!

We all know that the money we earn, whatever our work, can be used to glorify God – if we do not use it all up on ourselves. If you do not feel called to be a missionary, would you be willing nevertheless to adopt the income level of a missionary and set aside the rest of your income for strategic investment in His Cause?

In that case you can call up your favorite mission society and discover the financial level of a missionary in your situation and region. You can then deliberately limit your personal expenses, and adjust your lifestyle, to that arbitrary level. You may have little left over, or you may have a great deal.

Almost immediately will arise the perplexing question of how you should use the extra money accumulated—how to use it in a way that will be of maximum value to the Kingdom. This will take homework and time to figure out.

But an even more significant question is “How do I maximize the impact of the very work I do in my 40-hour week?” Sermons don’t address this issue very often.

You could switch jobs to become a missionary yourself—and let others’ excess income support you. That is a well-understood option. Obviously not all believers can do that! From where would their support come?

Right now missionaries are about one out of every 800 Christians in this country. That means Christians give a theoretical average of 1/8 of one percent of their income to missions.

We do need missionaries, but...

But becoming a missionary (although we desperately need more!) nevertheless does not help answer the question of what might be the Kingdom significance of the daily work of lay believers, the 799 who are not missionaries. I am not speaking of the many nice things which believers can do “after hours.” I’m speaking of their 40-hour week.

Here is the dilemma: millions of believers are caught in a job that may seem humdrum, meaningless, or oppressive, or all three. They can’t easily get a different job, and in any case they are not at all clear about what other job would be a greater contribution to the Kingdom.

Young people, however, might be urged to seek out a strategic job – not one that would pay the best, or please the most—but one which will mean the most to the Kingdom. How about microbiology? I say this because in all the world the greatest threat to life, liberty and happiness is the colossal giant of disease. To care for the sick is important. To conquer the disease germs themselves is much more strategic.

TIME (May 29) says that the health-care industry in the USA soaks up two thousand billion dollars a year (\$2 trillion). Yet, within this mammoth healing operation, only a very small percentage is devoted to disease sources, either for sickness in this country or for diseases more common abroad.

Why so little? Because sick people provide the \$2 trillion. They are not paying for eradication of disease pathogens but simply for healing.

Now, this concern for eradication of pathogens must seem like a very indirect form of mission. However, one of the most stubborn obstacles to evangelism of educated people in our world today is the mis-impression that our faith credits God with creating disease.

Listen again to my often-quoted statement from a Harvard professor, “If the God of the Intelligent Design people exists, He must be a divine sadist who creates parasites that blind millions of people.”

Thus, if Christian institutions and Christian missions do not become involved in recognizing “evil design” and in fighting against disease pathogens in the Name of Christ, that lapse will continue to allow God to be misrepresented. It also allows millions of precious believers around the world – mothers, fathers, children, infants—to continue to be subjected to avoidable yet dreadful suffering due to conquerable diseases!

Is our \$2 trillion annual commitment to healing the sick blinding us to the need to eradicate causal pathogens? At a Christian college graduation I attended last week, out of 420 graduates there were only 24 in biology, chemistry or biochemistry, and none specifically in microbiology.

My point: it is not irrelevant how we earn a living. What we get paid is in exchange for what we do, but what we do is as important as what we get paid. Jobs are not all the same in this respect. Making a good living by manufacturing Beanie Babies is not as crucial as exterminating Hepatitis B and C. In a 1636 sermon entitled “The Christian’s Calling,” John Cotton said,

The Christian would no sooner have his sins forgiven than to have his life established in a warrantable calling. It seems certain that the “new shape of the church” must include, “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds ... not giving up meeting together” (Heb. 10:24-25).

Note: we must understand an expanded definition of “good deeds,” meaning the most strategic causes within our grasp affecting the glory of God. If we meet regularly with other believers to seek better ways of “love and good deeds,” could this take the advance of the Kingdom more seriously?

The Unfinished Epic

(2006) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 317-26)

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Preface

I was a missionary to a people who thought a rainbow was an animal to be feared. I was able to spray water in the air on a dark night and shine a flashlight producing a rainbow. I told them that every time in the misty highlands of Guatemala they saw a rainbow they could know that the sun like a giant flashlight was right behind them. They might also have never conceived of the Earth being a planet hanging in space. I somehow never asked them. *It did not really matter.* My main purpose was to introduce them to the person of Christ and to the tasks of an obedient believer.

Today we face a very large number of scientists who believe that the universe is billions of years old. Is that true? Does it matter? *In this case, yes—because if the Bible is said to contradict what they feel they know for sure, it can destroy their confidence in the Bible.* Thus, we do well to ask, “Is it really true that the Bible teaches that the universe is only 6,000 years old?” The idea that the Bible does teach that was actually stated in *Time Magazine*.

However, it so happens that the two most influential Bible expositors of the 20th Century both taught that the Bible teaches no such thing.

Nevertheless, not all Evangelicals today can easily imagine how a widely accepted interpretation of Genesis 1:1 by a Dallas Theological Seminary professor (Dr. Merrill Unger) could possibly lead to a momentous reinterpretation of our conventional concepts of Christian mission. In any case, this paper actually has three different purposes.

1. This paper attempts to defend the trustworthiness of the Bible in the eyes of the average well-educated secular person by showing how the Bible does not necessarily conflict with the idea that the universe started with a bang and is immensely old, and that the Earth itself is very old and displays a steady progression of increasingly complex life forms. Even if that all were true, what would it do to the Bible? While this paper tries to describe accurately what most paleontologists believe for the sake of discussion, its conclusions do not depend on the validity of the views of contemporary paleontologists. And, for the record, it does not give an inch to either the idea of Darwinian random evolution or to an untrustworthy Bible.

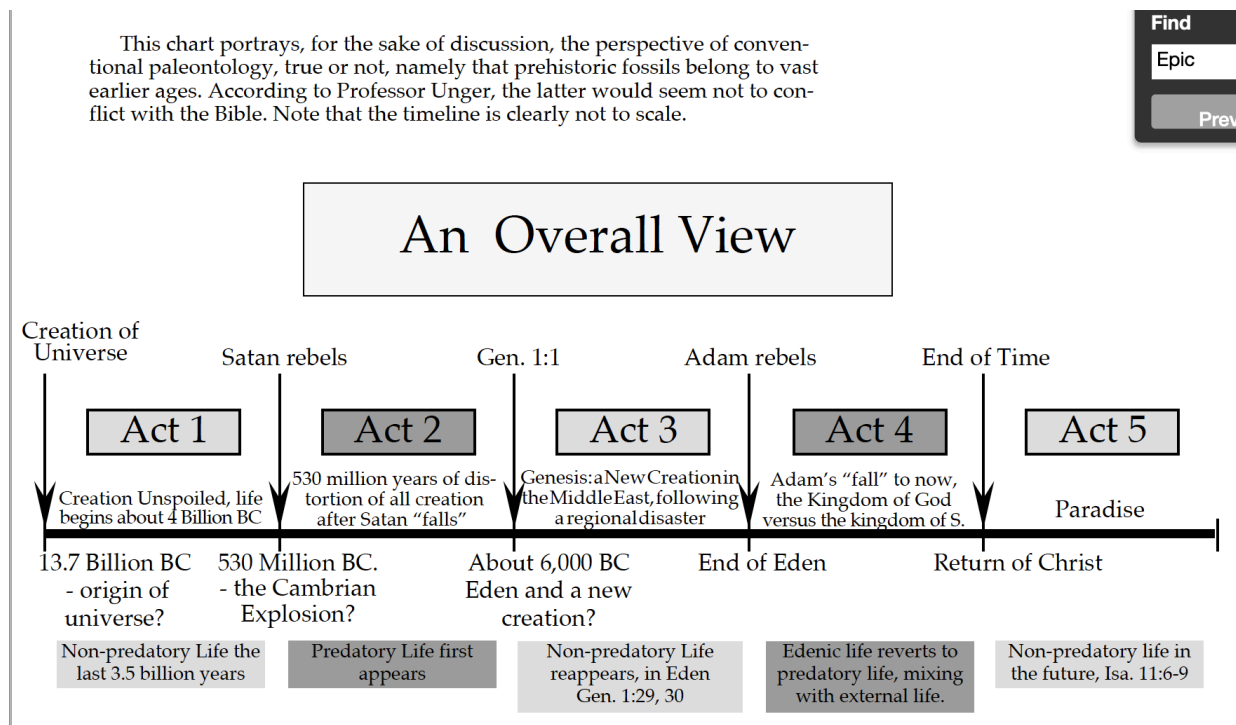
2. Secondly, it is a serious attempt to take the Bible literally and yet be able to believe in both “the young Earth” and “the old Earth” points of view. I feel sad when I hear that a famous Bible College *graduate* faculty believes in “the old Earth” while the *undergraduate* faculty believes in “the young Earth”—thinking they are contradictory. If they aren’t, let’s take this seriously.

3. Much more important, in a way, is the proposal that our current concepts of Christian mission work are good but incomplete, and, in fact, are much too narrow if we are really setting out to glorify God who is constantly blamed for evil. The novel element here is the idea that the full implications of the New Testament’s concept of Satan have been largely lost in Western Christianity to the extent that we have been influenced by

Augustine’s neo-platonic view of a God who, often with mysterious reasons, initiates both good and evil—with Satan only a “bystander.”

A larger interpretation of mission goes like this: we have been recruiting people all over the world into God’s eternal family, which is an activity as basic and as significant as you can get. But while our new “recruits” are now all dressed up in their new-life-in-Christ uniforms they do not realize these are military uniforms. Evangelicals may seem more often hoping to flee evil rather than fight it. Personal righteousness, both “attributed” and actual, would seem to be very thin if it does not turn around and fight evil.

Worse still—far worse—is the fact that if we just let the world fight disease, corruption and violence, God is generally blamed for “allowing” such evils. We are forced to puzzle over evil if we think God is “behind” all evil—instead of “in front”—working good out of evil. Such a theology requires books that help us to understand *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*.¹ However, suffering and violence *in a war* against an intelligent enemy *does make sense* and doesn’t need to be explained, and for the very same reason neither is an explanation necessary for the verse, “All that will live godly ... will suffer persecution.” We are in a war!



Summary

Opening the AD 1611 King James Bible we read "In the beginning God created" During the following 400 years this interpretation was cemented in the minds of millions of people. It conveys the idea that the Bible begins by describing the beginning of the entire universe, not merely the new beginning of the human story.

However, not even in 1611 was the universe well understood. It was likely far less clear to the "holy men of God"² writing in the days of Genesis.

In fact, the "known world" of Moses would not have even included the idea of a planet, of a sphere hanging in space. Similarly, "The ends of the Earth" in Isa. 49:6 never referred to our planet but to the ends of the Earthen plain ending abruptly where the "fertile crescent" of the Middle East is bounded by the mountains rising in Turkey and Iran.

In other words, the common interpretation of Genesis today -- that the universe began 6,000 years ago -- may simply be the result of reading later understanding into an earlier text. Such errors are called *anachronisms*. The error is understandable. However, the very serious result is to force the Bible (unfairly?) to say that the world is only 6,000 years old, *and thereby to create the greatest single stumbling block to modern man's trust in the Bible.*

Curiously, as long ago as 1958 the chair of the Old Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Merrill Unger, taught that "the geologic ages" preceded Genesis 1:1 and that the events of Genesis 1 portray not THE beginning but "a *relative* beginning (*Unger's Bible Handbook*)."³ His was not a new idea even then, but today it has become uncommon.

Our problem is that most of the world today assumes that both our

planet and the universe are much older than 6,000 years. The grim result, then, is that to everyone who believes that, the Bible appears dead wrong, when in fact the Bible may be giving us a very accurate description of things using terms that were understood in that day.

Thus, Unger's insight is what undergirds the tentative perspective of this paper, namely, that "the geologic ages" took place long before Genesis 1:1 I would add that perhaps Satan is the one who began distorting all of nature from the Cambrian Period on, continuing that type of genetic distortion after Adam's fall. Although he was decisively routed at the turning point of the Cross, he stalks the land to this day, *his works casting blame on "the God of Creation."*

This then sets the stage for a radically expanded concept of Christian mission.

This presentation is both hypothetical and conjectural. It lays, out accurately I believe, the predominant secular interpretation of the history of the universe and more specifically the history of the Earth and life on Earth. In so doing, whenever the phrase "many scientists believe" is employed, I am not affirming my beliefs but describing theirs. It does not give any credence to random, unguided Darwinian evolution at all. But it does note that there is no necessary conflict with Genesis caused by the secular concept and time spans, if, that is, Genesis 1:1 does not describe the origin of the universe but rather a new creation of the era of "image of God" humans, as Professor Unger suggests.

The story is cast in narrative form for efficiency and digestible order. Credit is due to John Eldredge for the concept of "acts" in a story. He has four acts in his superb little book, *The Epic*.⁴ I have split his third act into Act III, the Edenic period and Act IV, the period after the Fall of Adam. Thus, I have five "acts."

These pages are a condensation, in part, of the three Annual Mission Lectures I was invited to give in 2005 at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Act I: The Creation of The Universe

Thirteen and a half, or so, billion years ago, many scientists believe, a "Big Bang" occurred, *producing* the entire universe. (They don't like the word *creating*.)

- For various reasons mentioned below, such a creation event does not seem to be what Genesis 1:1 is describing.

Four and a half billion years ago, many scientists believe, planet Earth was formed. About four billion years ago, many scientists believe, very small forms of life appeared on Earth. For the next 3.5 billion years life forms were still very small.

- This astounding slowness of the formation of progressively more complex forms of life may in this case imply that God has for millions of years been doing that work through intelligent, but finite, intermediate beings who have been at work in an incredibly complex, and thus lengthy, learning curve. Perhaps some of them have been small enough to work directly with DNA.

It took a century with thousands of intelligent engineers at work to “evolve” the Model T Ford into a Lincoln Continental. That kind of “evolution” certainly did not happen without intelligent guidance at every point.

Prokaryotes were followed by Eukaryotes about two billion years ago, many scientists believe.⁵ It would appear that none of the angels were in rebellion at this time.

Then, about 530 million years ago, the Ediacaron period displayed small animals with “radial symmetry” similar to starfish, as well as “bi-polar symmetry”—with a front and a back and four legs.

- Significantly this Ediacaron type of animal life revealed no predatory life nor even defenses against predation!⁶ Still only good angels apparently.

Act II: The Fall of Satan

Next, relatively suddenly, the “Cambrian Explosion” took place, perhaps the most puzzling event in Earth history. A wide variety of different types of animals now appeared abruptly, and, for the next 500 million years, all of them can be characterized *as horrifyingly cruel predators or prey or both*.

Note that this lengthy record of violent animal life does not seem to fit well into the first chapter of Genesis, even if the “days” spoken of there might be considered very long, since the animals described in Genesis 1 are explicitly declared (v. 29) to be *non-carnivorous*.

- Here is a thought: this new and radically different 500-million-year period might have begun when an intermediate being, an archangel, in turning against his Creator, in the “Fall of Satan,” carried perhaps millions of equally rebellious angels with him, becoming what C. S. Lewis called “a hideous strength” or what Paul called the “god of this world.”

- If the long story of the earlier, progressive, creation of non-predatory life had reflected God’s infinite wisdom and goodness, now the pervasive *distortion* of that life, if not that of a Satanic foe, would seem clearly to *reflect negatively on God’s character*. This negative reputation may be seen today in the very common attribution of tragedies not to Satan, but to “God’s mysterious will.” This absence of Satan in people’s minds is what allows a book by the title of *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*,⁷ or a Harvard professor logically to remark that, “If the God of the Intelligent Design proponents exists, He must be a divine ‘sadist’ who creates parasites that blind millions of people.”⁸ How can we reply to such thinking if we do not recognize (point out and fight) “the works of the devil” (1 John 3 : 8)?

Also, during the next 500 million years, many scientists believe, numerous asteroidal collisions blotted out life in various parts of the globe, as if in judgment—my thinking—of the prevailing violence and destructive nature of gruesomely distorted life forms.

- Forty-five of the resulting craters that have been found are 15 miles across or larger. The largest, in the Antarctic, is 300 miles in diameter. It is believed to have occurred 275 million years ago, and is estimated to have extinguished 97 percent of all life on Earth. Another large crater, at the north end of Mexico’s Yucatan

peninsula, is believed to have occurred 65 million years ago, and is 100 miles across. It is the one understood to have ended the one-hundred-million-year period of the characteristically violent dinosaurs. Many of these forty-five larger asteroids are understood to have been solid rock, miles in diameter, moving at the speed of a rifle bullet at the moment of impact.⁹

Following the extinction of the dinosaurs, many scientists believe, mammals came into their own, growing in size to tons of weight, existing virtually unchallenged until intelligent humans appeared and began to drive them into extinction.

Finally, evidence of distinctive and unprecedented intelligence appeared, reasonably (in my opinion) the first true humans (but still Satanically distorted, carnivorous, violent, cannibals, not the Genesis 1 type). The evidence in this case is not *fossil bones* but indications of highly intelligent *genetic breeding of both plants and animals*, that is, 1) the selective breeding of virtually inedible plants, deriving corn, wheat, rice, and potatoes, etc., and 2) the selective breeding of animal life, for example, dangerous wolves into friendly dogs. Both types of genetic engineering, many paleohistorians and paleontologists believe, took place 11,000 years ago¹⁰ (about five thousand years before the Genesis new beginning).

Editorial Comment on Kingdom Mission

(2007) (*Mission Frontiers* Sept-Oct)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment10>

Dear Reader,

This time we have a very delicate issue. Dealing with it here are three very different articles.

The issue has dogged the tracks of earnest Christian workers for the last 100 years:

What is God's Mission?

- Is it to “declare” His glory in all the nations?
- Does that mean to “tell” or to “portray” or both?
- And, are we to command His will?

The issue has been expressed in countless different ways:

- Word versus deed?
- Preach versus do good works?
- Minister to the body or to the spirit?
- Do evangelism or social action?
- Get people to heaven or help them now in this life?
- Teach them truths or command them to obey all that Jesus taught?
- Is it to seek for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven?

You can easily think of other ways to describe the issue.

The three different articles are:

1. My own
2. One by Steve Saint
3. An excerpt from Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God*.

» Mine tries to explain where Evangelicals have been historically and where we are heading right now—a new thesis.

» Steve's is a gripping personal true story of the merger of the two—as only he can tell it!

» Wright's is biblical, disturbing, and truly cogent, as well as personal.

The 1st Article (R. Winter)

My thesis is (read carefully) that Evangelicals are quite different from what they were in Lincoln's day not because of a change of theology (which was the effect not the cause), but because of a loss of social power.

People can still talk about heaven even if they are powerless on earth. That has happened.

My lengthy article describes in some detail how the Evangelicals who founded and ran this country for a hundred years (1776 to 1876, roughly) had bold, society-wide ideas of how God's will ought to work out in this life, in our society and in our world. They enforced honesty in both public life and business (inventing Dunn and Bradstreet). They created coeducation, banned liquor and slavery, urged use of whole foods, and a hundred other things. They even sang of "alabaster cities gleaming ... undimmed by human tears."

But then an immigration avalanche occurred. Between 1876 and 1930 an inundation mainly from southern Europe tripled our population, and removed Evangelicals from leadership.

Meanwhile, literally millions of new, socially-powerless Moody converts became the vibrant, groping mainstream of the Evangelicals. Now they sang "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue."

Now, they backed away from major social problems and labeled those who did not do so as liberals (they often were). They banned the very word Kingdom. Prophecy conferences, "last days" talk became prominent.

They no longer expected our national "good to be crowned with brotherhood," which was written by a devout school teacher in 1900 reflecting the previous era.

For us latter-day Evangelicals, this world was hopeless and was getting worse by the second. "Let's wait for Jesus to return," we said. From 1900 to the 1970s we only gradually emerged from an underground movement dominated by 157 Bible Institutes.

Those schools eventually adopted standard practices and their graduates began showing up in the professions, as mayors, as congressmen and senators. Carter made it to the presidency in 1977, etc. Today this increased visibility of other-worldly Evangelicals sends shock waves of fear through many non-church people. They seem to have appeared out of nowhere.

But our rising social power has only gradually recreated extensive commitment to solving the problems of this world. Increased attacks on religion, and on fundamentalists (and Christians) in particular, point to the general lack of prominence of Evangelical organizations in the spheres of social and commercial leadership nor in fighting corruption, disease and poverty.

We say “That’s for Bill Gates.” Alternatively, many Evangelicals are gravitating into an increased religious firepower of healings, prosperity and the miraculous, all dominated still by a focus on the next world not “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

But this is only a thumbnail sketch of many more details in my long article (which is an excerpt from a still longer one).

The 2nd Article (Steve Saint)

Steve is the instigator and promoter of the movie *End of the Spear*, and the truly brilliant writer of the even more exciting book by the same title.

His much shorter article here, written for this issue, bristles with gut-wrenching reality. He too believes that we must not separate God’s love into word and deed, and that they complement each other.

He gives just a hint of the calamitous background of his own upbringing in the jungle and now the astonishing combination of word and deed among one of the most isolated and savage tribes on the face of the earth.

The 3rd Article (Chris Wright)

What we print here is a small excerpt from a ponderous “magisterial” work of many years. *The Mission of God, Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*, (Intervarsity Press, 2006). Who would be better able to attempt a nearly 600 page book on that subject? Missionary, professor, Principal of the superb All Nations Christian College in England (see the web site <http://www.langhampartnership.org/chris-wright/biography/>).

What we have excerpted is spell-bindingly crucial—and disturbing. He describes his own pilgrimage from earlier thinking. He describes thoughts from John Stott (with whom he now works closely as the new International Director of John Stott Ministries).

Okay, we have gotten over the idea that a faith in certain truths with no practical outworking in daily life is not the kind of biblical faith that saves. In the Bible there is no artificial distinction between true heart faith and heart obedience.

Faith in certain truths concerns reconciliation with God. Once saved, the question this book raises becomes urgent: What is the Mission of God? What is life supposed to be like for the saved individual? Is it to be a life filled with good works? “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:16),” and “We are God’s handiwork created ... to do good works (Eph 2:10).”

And doesn’t the Gospel of the Kingdom entail the declaration of the commands of God (Matt 28:20) not just the truths of salvation?

Massive structural changes have taken place around the world due to missions. Education, medicine, politics and industry are radically different because of thousands of creative missionaries. At this moment mission agencies are carrying an immense load of responsibility in all of these areas.

Missions to the Rescue, and Rescuing Missions

National Geographic highlights the work of the little Kaleen Mission Hospital in Zambia. Both Johns Hopkins and the Gates foundation assist a tiny mission hospital in Zimbabwe. Missions have led the way. But donors sometimes don't want to hear about such efforts.

Enormous Evangelical wealth of skill and funds are being frittered away on relative trivialities, lacking a clear theology of demonstrating God's glory in this world.

Others are losing their faith because it would appear that our God has no Enemy who is destroying God's creation—that lets God take the blame for our inactivity at the front line.

Editorial Comment on Slavery

(2007) (*Mission Frontiers* July-August).

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment11>

There seems to be a quickening pace of opposition to the Evangelical cause in America and the world today. The relatively sudden emergence of Evangelicals with not only college degrees but PhDs and membership in Congress and involvement at the White House, has brought a tremendous negative response from many people who are fearful that an “Evangelical Taliban” wants to take over the country.

This is a bright spot actually, because it means that the Evangelical movement is gaining momentum and influence and the negative responses can readily be read as a measure of that strength.

At the same time, beginning with *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, a whole rash of very negative books have come out. One of the principal ones is by Richard Dawkins: *The God Delusion*. Another is by Victor J Stenger, *God: The Failed Hypothesis. How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist*. Then, books by Sam Harris, first *The End of Faith*, and secondly a smaller book but with equally sharp teeth and totally destructive of the Christian faith, called *A Letter to a Christian Nation*.

These books cry out for response and one of the keenest and most delightful antidotes is a book, called *The New Atheism*, by David Marshall. It will be coming out from Harvest House Publishers very soon. There are also a lot of other articles that have, of course, helped to fight back against these outrageous types of attacks.

In any case, no matter what we do, no matter how clever we respond, we really have to face basic problems in the Christian mission. This issue of *Mission Frontiers* about Global Slavery points out one of the dimensions of our problem. Evangelicals are very well known at the Billy Graham level for talking and explaining and communicating and giving out information about Jesus Christ. Even commanding people to obey Jesus Christ. But we are not so visible when it comes to actual planning, to a presence in meetings that are now being held around the world on the really urgent suffering that is going on outrageously in many places in many different ways.

I have recently been looking back over the period of American slavery and the huge war that resulted when slavery was being more and more attacked by Evangelicals who were responding to the gospel. One of the key books, probably one of the most detailed and scholarly, by David Brion, is entitled *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. The difficulty of the eradication of slavery has been one of the most complex issues in American history and perhaps world history. The Civil War killed more people than all the wars in American History up through the Korean War. The number of human beings caught up in the war in the military in the North and the South, if a similar war were to take place today, would almost be the size of the population of California. We grossly misunderstand the tragedy of that war.

On the other hand, the rather rapid rejection of human slavery, first by the British and the French and then the Americans, has been one of the most significant “disruptions” in human history for which we have many reasons to be thankful.

The point is, we must not underestimate the cost of changing deeply ingrained Satanic cultural features that defy change and misrepresent God if they are attributed to Him, as do people like Dawkins.

There are, in fact, a whole rash of books that you can readily access through Amazon about human slavery, both past and present. The most upsetting feature of all of this, brilliantly displayed in one book I would recommend, entitled *Not for Sale* (see page 12 for one of its chapters), simply points out that there are more slaves in the world today than were bartered and bought during a 400 year period of North Atlantic slavery in the past. That is very hard to believe, but the statistics really back that up. The often quoted nearly 30 million slaves in the world today are a very unavoidable reality. They are not a philosophical concept, they are not a theoretical perspective, they are a grinding reality that is a terrible smudge and open sore on the global body politic.

The reason I bring this up here, however, is that this is not simply a world problem to be prayed about. It's something that Evangelicals have got to do something about and in fact are doing something about, but perhaps not as prominently as they could be or should be. Global slavery is again an incredibly complex problem, and it is bafflingly difficult to figure out what to do about it.

This brings me to my last point. I would point you to the "other editorial" (p. 34) in most of our issues written by the Director of the US Center for World Mission, Greg Parsons. His editorial in this issue is very insightful, speaking of "disruptive Missiology." He is not using the word "disruptive" in the negative sense. He is borrowing the term from American history in modern times quoting things like computers and email which have been "disruptive" technologies that have massively changed our society both for the good and for ill. There are some perspectives in mission today that, when they are fully understood or even before they are fully understood, will be very disruptive. Greg mentions one of them.

We have over the past years in both *Mission Frontiers* and in the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, been mentioning "disruptive" ideas swimming around in missions today, without using the term. Perhaps the term itself is a little confusing because it seems negative. But in many cases in society and missions some of the newer and "disruptive" ideas are actually a phenomenal blessing. And here simply I would refer you to his article because he refers to something we have mentioned again and again in *Mission Frontiers*, the so-called "Insider's approach." If properly pursued, there could be 100 million Muslims who are followers of Christ in the next 10 years. If not properly pursued, that is absolutely a pipedream at the rate we are going. If we insist upon all Greeks becoming Jews, or all Muslims becoming "Christians" we are simply smoking a pipe filled with marijuana. The fact of the matter is that Evangelicals are no more likely to convert millions of Roman Catholics or Orthodox or Muslims or Hindus or anybody else if we insist on them adopting the Evangelical western "Christian" cultural tradition with all of its different strengths and appalling weaknesses, such as high divorce rate, sexual licentiousness, pornography and other terrible things.

In one editorial we can't of course bring up a lot of "disruptive" missiologies, but this issue on the subject of what we might do about global slavery is clearly one "disruptive" issue. We have to stop and think and rearrange our schedules, our minds and our perspectives and do things differently if we are going to hit this global problem the way God would want us to do.

The Future of Evangelicals in Mission: Will We Regain the Kingdom Vision of Our Forefathers in the Faith?

(2008) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 327-43)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf

A flood of light on the future of the Evangelical movement and its mission vision can be deduced by looking closely at its roots. Evangelicals happen to have a rich heritage of faith and works, extensively forgotten, that can once again inspire and instruct us as we seek to bring a complete gospel to every tribe and tongue.

Evangelicals? Who Are They?

The word evangelical in the Catholic tradition refers to those people who take the four Evangelical gospels very seriously—specifically, members of Catholic orders. Later, in the Protestant tradition, the word evangelical came to refer to a political party where the *evangelici*, adhering to the authority of the Bible, were opposed to the *pontifici* who supported the authority of the Pope.

However, at the time of the Reformation other things were going on besides tension between two parties. There were the Anabaptists and later on Pietists and still later a still different kind of “Evangelical,” namely Quakers, and eventually, the Methodists, who became a global force.

As a broad generalization, all of these additional “third force” movements came to understand the word Evangelical to mean more than correct belief. The word began to refer to those individuals who had had a personal “evangelical experience,” by which was meant something real had happened in a person’s heart and life not just purely mental assent to a prescribed intellectual creed.

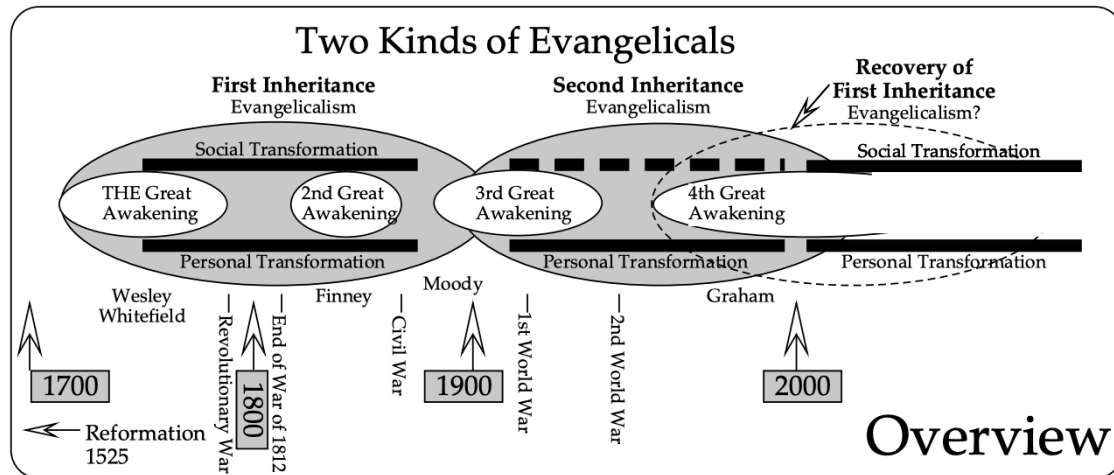
At the time of the Reformation the concept of a “born again” experience was almost entirely unknown. Much later it came into its own, in a sense, when a university trained Anglican, John Wesley, in 1738, in a little Moravian chapel on a street in London called Aldersgate, sensed the warming of his heart as he listened to a verse being read out loud from Paul’s letter to the Romans in a commentary by Luther. The verse spoke of people being “saved by faith.”

A little later the idea of a need for an initial, personal heart-warming “faith” experience was followed by a concept of an even deeper work of grace, “a second blessing,” “entire sanctification,” “an infilling of the Spirit,” or “a baptism of the Spirit.”

An Overview: Two Kinds of Evangelicals

What even later ensued is a complex picture. In examining that picture it would seem helpful to distinguish between First-Inheritance Evangelicalism and Second-Inheritance Evangelicalism (my terms). For this article we can define—as does the diagram on the next page—the First as that which was characterized by a broad dual social/personal spectrum of concern, typified in John Wesley’s ministry, ranging from

foreign missions to changing the legal structure of society and even the waging of war. The Second Inheritance reduced most of that to the level of personal salvation.



The Evangelical Awakening in England as related to Wesley certainly displays a heady, dual emphasis on earthly and heavenly, social and personal. This dual emphasis is seen in America where in the 1700s an awakening occurred called the Great Awakening of the Middle Colonies, which both exploded church membership and led to the Declaration of Independence. Then, later in the 1800s a Second Great Awakening brought thousands more into the churches, drastically overhauled society, believing the Millennium was near, and led to the Civil War which then seriously damaged that optimism. These major “awakenings” are far more significant in American history than secularized schoolbooks reveal. An exception is the remarkable book of a secular Nobel Prize winner, Robert Fogel, *The Fourth Great Awakening*, which recognizes the foundational importance of four spiritual awakenings in American history.

To generalize, what I am calling First Inheritance Evangelicalism ran from, say, the earliest glimmers of the Great Awakening with Theodore Frelinghuysen in 1721 in the Raritan Valley in New Jersey, to the onset of D. L. Moody’s enormous influence in, say, 1875. This period was significantly characterized by Evangelicals in a position of civil leadership. This role in national mood, I conclude, is the main reason they could readily believe not only in a profound transformation of individuals, but also in a wide range of different aspects of social transformation and God-glorification, indeed the coming of the millennium.

However, this First Inheritance, after, say, 1875, gradually branched into two “reductions,” each concentrating on one of the two elements in the former unified concept of a Biblical Christian service which was an emphasis on both personal holiness and social transformation—heaven and earth, spiritual and material.

One of these “reductions” after 1875 continued to be even larger than social concern, that is, God’s will on earth. It had a reduced emphasis on personal faith, and was, accordingly, less likely to call itself Evangelical. The other “reduction” continued the emphasis on sin and salvation, and, specifically, on the necessity (and assumed sufficiency) of a personal experience coupled with an otherworldly focus, on heaven. Jesus coming before the Millennium.

First Inheritance people had commanded the upper levels of society. They had found it quite possible to tackle widespread evils and change social structure as well as believe in the conversion of the heart. However, eventually many of these upscale college people (when only 2% of Americans went to college), followed a social gospel reduction, a relatively small stream outnumbered greatly by a surge of people—both immigrants and non-college converts. The latter, the followers of the personal reduction, became the main stream I am calling Second Inheritance Evangelicals. They were mainly non-college masses swept into faith by popular evangelists—D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and many others. This, to me, is a very key point: not being in a position of social influence they tended to turn away from the very idea of transforming society at a macro level, the Millennium being out of the question before Jesus returned.

This Second Inheritance Evangelicalism soon became the Evangelical main stream due to four forces. One was the lingering horror of the Civil War which for many demolished all hope of bettering this world (one out of 20 Americans died compared to one of 800 in the First World War). Another, was the impact of massive immigration from the Catholic parts of Europe. U. S. population jumped 240% from 44 million to 106 million between 1875 and 1920. As a result leading First Inheritance families lost influence and gradually slipped in both faith and political standing. Thirdly, the first and second World Wars seemed to shatter all optimism for a new world order prior to the coming of Christ. Fourthly, D. L. Moody and others impacted millions of non-college Americans who, even after conversion, were extensively isolated from both civic leadership and college education but became the majority in the Evangelical stream.

Thus, this new Evangelicalism-of-the-masses, characterized the Second Inheritance, significantly boosted church attendance in the United States, and also created Bible Institutes, new denominations and non-denominational churches. However, it had little stake in politics or social action and tended to suspect as being “liberal” (which by then was often the case) the smaller number of continuing, socially upscale college-educated Evangelicals from the First Inheritance (who then became the dwindling social reduction). Post-Moody Evangelicals in the non-college stratum tended to react against social schemes and even to banish the word “kingdom” from their vocabulary, thus tending to undergo the second type of reduction, this time, to a primarily “personal” Christianity emphasizing a theology reflected in the wording of a Gospel song, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.” This produced an opposite pole from the other reduction to primarily social action.

Thesis: A Recovery of First-Inheritance Evangelicalism

My prediction in this article is based on the fact that the non-college groundswell, has gradually gained social prominence throughout the 20th century as the mainstream of Evangelicalism in the USA (and of Evangelical missions in particular). I predict therefore that we will recover an electrifyingly broader perspective of mission, so significant that it can be called The Fourth Era of Protestant Mission, or The Kingdom Era. This new vision will mean moving beyond from what has long been dominantly a heaven-and-individually focused Second Inheritance to a rediscovery of the earlier full-spectrum of the “First Inheritance” tradition, which possessed a theology combining both personal “salvation” and vast social responsibility. This will increasingly mean a concern for the

glorification of God in both individual and social transformation. Note that the First Inheritance perspective did not even see evangelism and social action as two entirely different things. Words and deeds for them were as inseparable as faith and works. Wordless deeds and deedless words were both unthinkable.

We can actually see this kind of integrated strategy in the very character of all truly effective mission history. We can see that unity in the Bible itself where Jesus validated, illuminated and empowered His words by His deeds. This type of virile wide-spectrum faith, without very often being given much credit in either secular or religious circles, contributed enormously to the development of America. Hopefully it may become the new mainstream of global Evangelicalism with the same effect.

Undoubtedly not everyone will embrace the healed polarization. Two dangers can be anticipated. One danger will be that a “Second Inheritance” avoidance of social transformation may endure in some circles—because there are still quite a few disenfranchised, non-college masses in America to be won, not to mention the apparently vast readership of “Left behind” books, which perpetuate the assumption that we don’t need to bother with fixing up this world since we will soon be raptured out of it.

The opposite danger will be a renewed focus on social transformation stripped of an adequate emphasis on the individual transformation that is, ironically, so very essential to any significant social transformation. All the recent books on International Development acknowledge the truly major problem of corruption—books like *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* by William Easterly, and *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* by Paul Collier. Both Easterly and Collier are eminently qualified to assess corruption as perhaps the biggest roadblock to the success of practically project or program. The mission/Christian community abroad has almost a monopoly on people of honesty and integrity, and that morality comes mainly from a vertical awareness of the living God. Otherwise good deeds easily become good business. Indeed, the enormous sums floating around the world in the form of financial aid have created an equally enormous “aid-industry” which soaks up most of the money before it ever gets where it is supposed to go or to what it is supposed to do.

Hopefully, the full spectrum of recovered First Inheritance Evangelicalism I am talking about will go beyond a “holism” that often merely does many good things but leaves a “hole” where evangelism should be. Holism at times may risk the assumption that our “battle” is merely to benefit humans, a suspiciously humanistic angle of view.

By contrast, in Heaven’s war against Satan our priority is to recruit soldiers, freeing people from “the dominion of Satan,” (Acts 26:18), by winning their allegiance to a supreme deity whose attributes are portrayed definitively in Jesus Christ. But even that is then a priority which is merely “prior” if we are going to accumulate active, effective soldiers. Obviously, recruitment before battle is a priority, but merely a priority. As these new soldiers, with their transformed lives, then seek along with Christ and by the empowering grace of God to “destroy the works of the Devil” (1 Jn. 3:8), their good deeds will, as in Matt. 5:16 “glorify their Father in heaven.” These “communicating” deeds will then validate and empower further evangelism that will be able to gain still more recruits for the battle of the kingdom. But note: merely recruiting and not offensive action does not win wars.

Intriguingly, this perspective is no longer primarily a tension between God and Man, as our Reformation heritage tends to portray it, but is a much larger war of the Kingdom of God-plus-His-people against the Kingdom of darkness. However, seeking to destroy the “dominion” of Satan must not be confused with the idea of seeking the “dominion” of society by the saints through worldly power, an idea sometimes called “Dominion” theology.

Let’s go back and look more closely at the earlier synthesis.

PART I: First Inheritance Evangelicals

The Great Awakening

In the United States in the early 1700s, Jonathan Edwards in Boston, and Theodore Frelinghuysen in the Raritan Valley in northern New Jersey—the latter bringing over some Pietism from the old country—are given credit for being precursors to the widespread and powerful “Great Awakening of the Middle Colonies.” That profound movement was then stirred up further by George Whitefield, a friend of John Wesley who came from England to do powerful outdoor preaching. His major impact from Boston to Charleston built upon those earlier events. Whitefield had emerged alongside the Wesleyan movement in England as part of the larger “Evangelical Awakening” which transformed English society more than any other movement in English history.

This new form of personal-experience Christianity was so significantly different that, in the colonies, long before the North/South divisions during the Civil War, it split the majority group, the Presbyterians, right down the middle for many years. One side reflected the more intellectual Reformation requirements. The other side emphasized an experiential and identifiable “work of grace.”

As surprising as it may be to most Evangelicals of the Second Inheritance (since 1900), the key point of this article is that the earlier “First Inheritance” Evangelicalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was by no means oriented only to personal experience and the next world. In contrast to the almost exclusively personal-salvation oriented Evangelicalism of the Second Inheritance, the First Inheritance engaged in a mountain of social reforms parallel to Wesley’s profound social impact in England. The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was a powerful movement that actually forged a democratically governed church structure ranging from Boston to Charleston and, with this pattern of rule in the context, gave crucial impetus to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitutional Convention and the idea of a single government over all the colonies. Without this democratically governed inter-colonial model the birth of the new nation wouldn’t have occurred in the way it did. The crafting of the U. S. Constitution was done one block away from meetings redrafting the Presbyterian Constitution. Many of the same men were involved in both meetings. Many of the same phrases occur in both documents.

Just as Evangelicalism today is becoming more politically aware and active, so in addition to the spiritual fervor of the Great Awakening, the whole idea of breaking away from England was also associated, pulling into the scene many people, such as Tom Paine, who had no formal connection to the church at all.

Among America's leaders the initially Christian vision for wholesale social change became so widespread that it was easy for many (whether, as with Tom Paine, spiritually alive or not) to be enthused by a this-world cause. Thus, by the time of the American Revolution, the spiritual roots of the Great Awakening became paradoxically overshadowed in public life—virtually snuffed out—by the political and military events going on between the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the conclusion of the War of 1812 in 1815.

The Second Great Awakening

Many scholars refer to certain events of roughly 1815-1840 as the Second Great Awakening, which was at least a renewal of the earlier Great Awakening. In this second awakening we see the contribution of Charles Finney, an attorney who found Christ, and who very definitely believed in a “second work of grace.” Much of the USA saw the impact of his ministry as well as that of the “camp meeting” phenomenon, plus other itinerant preachers and many local revivals. It is significant that these spiritual events did not ignore social transformation but fueled it, providing, incidentally, the moral outrage which underlay many of the events leading to the Civil War.

In many respects the most prominent event of the early 1800s in America was the outcome of the War of 1812. Unexpectedly for the Americans, when the war was not lost but went to a draw in 1815, this amazing turn of events popped the balloon of a longstanding fear of inexorable British reprisal. This euphoria of freedom, this sense of ownership for the first time of a vast land of their own (never mind the Indians), gave life to all kinds of radical experiments—social, political and religious—and it very dynamically sparked the imagination, vision and even the rethinking of the Christian religion itself. One author calls the period of 1815 to 1848 “The Transformation of America.”

Oberlin College could be a case study. Established with the encouragement of Charles Finney and the financial resources of the wealthy Tappan brothers, it was both a fruit of the spiritual revival and also socially upscale. Oberlin was the first interracial school, the first co-educational school, the first vocational school, the first school to teach music, the first anti-slavery school, first temperance school, and so forth. No holy reform was outside its purview. For example, students believed that God would help them improve the efficiency of the Franklin Stove, and so was invented the Oberlin Stove. The entire period represented incredible ingenuity, innovation, and—most specifically—attention to what today we would call social transformation. In this mix Evangelicals were the main leaders—not the reluctant followers of secular initiatives.

It would be impossible to overstate the significant changes of direction of both the Christian movement and our nation between 1815 and 1850. By 1850, for example, virtually all of the states had banned alcoholic beverages. It was even true that vast numbers would not drink tea or coffee, so extensive was the counter-cultural application of Christian faith to everyday life. Dozens and dozens of reform movements sprang into life—ranging from the temperance movement, and the movement for the abolition of slavery, to a movement urging use of the whole grain in wheat flour (Graham flour—preached by a minister named Sylvester Graham), etc.

Both the Mormon and Adventist groups peeled off at this time. They differ greatly in theology but today equally represent museum pieces of the typical revival concerns about food and health, which had become part and parcel of the mood of that revival period. If the Mormons and Adventists could not change society in general they could at least invent new societies!

If applied to today it would suggest that for globally-minded people, good works must go beyond just personal good deeds to organized good deeds, beyond micro good deeds to macro good works, which will include, for example, the deliberate discovery and exposition of the glories of God's creation (Ps 19:1-4) as well as serious concern for global slavery, corruption, oppression, poverty and disease. Otherwise Evangelicals will misrepresent the character of God and its proclamation activity will lack both credibility and authenticity. That was the mood and temper of First Inheritance Evangelicalism. What went wrong?

PART II: Second Inheritance Evangelicalism

Remember that, as defined, the period of the First Inheritance can be seen as a period in which Evangelical leaders at levels of national influence (as well as common people who followed them) uniquely worked within a window of awareness which made the transformation of society feasible— something which was within their grasp.

Of all unlikely people, Moody—from the back woods of Massachusetts—won millions of non-college people (as well as key college students). Thus, due more to Moody than any other, Evangelicalism for the first time became, in America, predominantly a lower-class movement. The families of the leading citizens of the earlier Second Awakening were now a tiny minority. Yet, the Evangelical movement as a whole had burgeoned amazingly both within the ranks of the immigrants, and also the uneducated stratum of society. But, it was no longer true that people of faith ran the country.

It was somewhat a lingering anomaly that 100,000 up-scale college students could be caught up in the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions and provide leadership to the famous World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Very few of these college-level “student volunteers” came from the mainstream of Moody's converts even though Moody himself, somewhat accidentally, had significantly helped to spark both the upper-class “Cambridge Seven” in England and the Student Volunteer Movement in America.

The Evangelical Divide and the Emergence of the Second Inheritance

The last fling of the wide-spectrum First Inheritance Evangelicals was arguably the Prohibition era and the Student Volunteer Movement, but the cleavage between college people and Bible Institute people, already emerging by 1900, had by the 1920s, for better or worse, already become a major polarization, a veritable culture war within Evangelicalism. Upper-class people who were still thinking in terms of social reform were more and more often labeled liberal due to their social reform intuitions, whether or not they were liberal in their theology.

Meanwhile, the newer, less-educated Evangelicals had never had a chance to elect one of their own as a mayor. Their Bible Institute graduates did not nourish the professions or the universities. They were for the most part not college people at all. To

these non-college people (as with slaves and their “negro spirituals” that focused purely on heaven) the very idea of reforming society seemed utterly impossible, theologically unexpected, and therefore evangelistically objectionable. Out of date by the time it was written, just after 1900, a school teacher would write the words to “America the Beautiful” still speaking of the earlier vision of a Gospel reflected in the words “alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears” and “Crown thy good with brotherhood,” in short, an approaching millennium after which Christ would come (“Postmillennialism”).

From its gradual beginning after the Civil War this Second Inheritance Evangelicalism, facing the total breakdown of that ghastly war, lost faith in reforming society and began to believe in a world getting worse and worse leading to a coming tribulation preceded by a pre-tribulation rapture, that is, Christ coming before the millennium not after (“Premillennialism”). The goal of reforming individuals, while properly considered basic, was often improperly considered all that was needed. At the same time there was to be seen commendable but merely “intuitive” (and relatively modest) good works lacking theological rationale. The tradition highlighted by the Moody Bible Institute, developed 157 Bible Institutes all following in this new perspective, to a great extent typifying the Second Inheritance type of Christianity that was generally antagonistic to the earlier First Inheritance brand of Evangelicalism. The dwindling socially influential remnants of the First Inheritance soon became regarded simply and objectionably “liberal.”

Thus, the dominant force of Second Inheritance Evangelicalism essentially went socially “underground” for 60 or 70 years while those Bible Institutes, one by one, became Bible colleges, then Christian colleges and the majority eventually Christian universities. For example, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) took from 1908 to 1981 to become Biola University. The Training School for Christian Workers of 1900 became Azusa Pacific University in 1981. Then, as a result of this gradual reemergence of culturally standard educational patterns, people of Evangelical convictions once more populated Congress and the White House. However, this increased social influence was unaccompanied by a theology corresponding to such new opportunities.

The Bible School and Bible Institute stream constituted the backbone of the Evangelical movement for a lengthy period. Its eventual remarriage with the ethos of the college/university cultural stream would be a long time in coming. The simultaneous delay in recovering the wide-spectrum sense of mission of the First Inheritance was not so much because 20th century Evangelicals couldn't think, but because they were thinking different things. They may not have continued to think of major reforms in society, as did their socially upscale forebears. But, despite intuitive good works as mentioned, they did develop all kinds of new and creative ideas about the Bible.

Typical was their emphasis on eschatology, the Rapture, and the Second Coming of Christ, a heavenly optimism replacing earthly dreams. Such ideas for many years characterized this Second Inheritance brand of Evangelicalism, to some extent following J. N. Darby, Lewis Sperry Chafer and reflected in the Scofield Reference Bible (perhaps the most widely used study Bible of all time). The Moody Bible Institute may have led the way but virtually all Bible Institutes took part. Prophecy Conferences abounded. Social reform seemed illogical if only because the world was expected to get worse and worse until true believers were raptured out of it. Any kind of “social gospel” became anathema.

On the other hand, to its credit, within this non-college stream in the first half of the 1900s there was for a time a substantial science-and-the-Bible movement which understood science to be preeminently the friend of faith, issuing eventually in Irwin Moon's spectacular "Sermons from Science" films under the auspices of the Moody Institute of Science. (Moon was a Bible institute graduate who had gone on for a Ph.D. in Physics at UCLA.) At their peak missionaries were showing his films 2,000 times a day. By contrast today a reversion within a good deal of the Evangelical tradition has posed science not as the great friend of faith but as the great foe of faith.

PART III: The Recovery of First Inheritance Evangelicalism

As Evangelicals today work their way into social and even political influence, many other changes will take place in the context of mission. But mission theology will lead and follow the growth of the civil stature of the Evangelical movement, forcing into existence a recovery of older interpretations of the Bible in regard to the use of that vastly increased influence.

The future of Evangelicalism and Evangelical missions is thus likely to involve a difficult and painful shift away from decades of polarization between "social action" and a "spiritual gospel." This shift, which is already taking place, has brought new opportunity and responsibility, but shares the dangers to which the children of the First Inheritance Evangelicals eventually fell prey. As the 20th century wore on, many outstanding evangelicals ranging from John Stott and others in the Lausanne Movement tried very hard to point out that there can be no real dichotomy between faith and good works, despite a continuing Reformation-triggered bias in that realm.

One example of this, already mentioned, is the simple fact that the word kingdom was almost totally banned from Evangelical literature for at least 50 years. Only fairly recently has this word, so prominent in the NT, been recovered as some expositors have written whole books about the Kingdom of God and tried to bring it back into the fold (for instance, *Announcing the Kingdom*, by Arthur Glasser). But the phrase continues to be suspect in many Evangelical circles. In the sphere of missions the polarization is reflected by the fact that on the social action side there is one entire association of over 50 agencies, the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO), which includes a number of very strong Evangelical mission agencies, such as World Vision, World Concern, the World Relief Department of the National Association of Evangelicals, Food For The Hungry, and so on. Their social activities have gained quite a following, or it wouldn't be possible for World Vision to achieve an annual \$700 million-dollar budget.

Yet until recently (in Bryant Myers' books) World Vision has not vigorously advanced a theological basis for what it is doing. Fortunately, many Evangelical donors have obviously felt drawn intuitively to what World Vision is trying to do. This is in some ways a non-theological recovering of one aspect of First Inheritance Evangelicalism, focused primarily on helping individual human beings even though it is not, as yet, as concerned for social transformation in general (e.g. eradicating disease, fighting global slavery, rehabilitating science as a domain of God's glory, etc.).

Meanwhile, in the first five years after the Second World War, when 150 new mission agencies jumped into being, most of the new agencies were characterized as

“service agencies” adding technological muscle—like airplanes, radio, or literature—to existing missions in the already existing mission movement. This meant that all of this new vigor merely emphasized what was already going on, and its limitations, that is, the preaching of an intellectual and emotional individual gospel plus an emphasis on a restoration of individual fellowship with God. If, in the world of overseas missions, it had not been for the informal theological intuition of thousands of sensitive, loving missionaries we would not see in that sphere such extensive “good works” but merely the evangelism of still others mainly oriented toward the next world—“an emphasis on the eternal not the temporal.”

In other words, the reason Second Inheritance Evangelicalism is a complicated phenomenon is that, confusingly, the most extensive and the most influential social transformation-as-mission activity even in the 20th Century has been actually accomplished (much of it not adequately reported to donors) across the world by the older Evangelical mission agencies founded before 1900. This was true because of First Inheritance momentum in the mainline denominational missions and the great interdenominational mission agencies like Sudan Interior Mission or the Africa Inland Mission, as well as the work of the smaller Evangelical denominational missions. Most of this, however, employed an intuition not undergirded by formal theology.

These forces, nevertheless, have made tremendous contributions to the entire educational framework of whole countries like China and Nigeria. The western hemisphere’s largest technical university was founded by missionaries in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Asia’s largest agricultural university was founded by missionaries in North India. The university system itself was taken to the field explicitly by Evangelical missionaries in the first half of the 20th century, especially the well-heeled college students of the Student Volunteer Movement. We think of projects like “Yale in China.” However, this was in part the residual momentum of the First Inheritance, some of it carrying over into the 20th century, lasting longer in the realm of missions than in the home churches. However, outside the mainline denominational missions it existed mainly due to the keen intuition of sensitive missionaries.

It was understood back in the 19th Century and within these major missions that there was no rift whatsoever between learning and gospel, or good works and gospel, or schools, hospitals, vocational schools, universities, and the planting of churches. Nevertheless, today, as far as donors are concerned, the enormous impact of social transformation arising (intuitively) in the work of standard church planting mission agencies is widely little known, under estimated or even opposed. Indeed, the scope of this influence is virtually unknown in certain spheres, in part due to an intentional downplaying of this effort in reports to donors who want to hear only of spiritual conversions. This may for some be incorrectly rationalized as merely a tension between liberal and conservative perspectives. In fact, it is largely due to the increasing social influence of some Evangelicals and the continuing lack of influence among most Evangelicals in the earlier 20th century. Increasingly, numerous exceptions like Charles Colson, an influential civil leader, have no trouble envisioning sweeping changes in the whole world’s prison systems, nor any hesitation in helping to resurrect the powerful social/political example of the distinctly upper class William Wilberforce. Wilberforce’s Real Christianity has now been reprinted by four different Evangelical publishers. He is now again a followable hero.

Empowered Evangelism

Obviously there is a theological problem here. Without taking sides in the Postmillennial Premillennial issue, we, of course, need to take seriously the fact that Jesus was concerned with handicapped people, sick people, children, women, Samaritans, Greeks, etc. and that His ministry embraced and encompassed those things. When He responded to John the Baptist, who wondered if He was “the one to come,” He sent back descriptions of what He did, not the text of what He said—it was simply a report of the good works He was doing. This He did, not only as an authentication of His divinity, but also as a demonstration of God’s character and thus the nature of God’s Kingdom. His ministry was congruent with His own statement, “Let your light shine among men in this way—that they will glorify God when they see your good works (Matt 5:16).” In the Synagogue in Nazareth Jesus quoted Isa. 61:1,2:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

Do His words and deeds apply to 27 million men, women and children held as slaves in the world today? That number, right now, is more than twice the total bartered during the four centuries before slavery was (supposedly) “abolished” by Wilberforce. Does His perspective apply to the lifting of the burden of 45 million man-years of labor annually destroyed in Africa alone due just to the malarial parasite?

It has been said that precisely because the gospel is a message of hope, the poorest must see some concrete reason for hope before they can understand the gospel.

Speaking linguistically, words themselves have no power if they do not refer to reality. Jesus’ words were constantly accompanied and informed by the actions to which His words referred. Thus, just as faith without works is dead, so evangelism without works is dead. Unless words refer to works and to reality, they are worth nothing. Just as it is a Reformation myth that faith can be separated from works, so it is meaningless if words are separated from the reality to which they were meant to refer.

It would seem, then, that just as we believe that works ought to follow faith in the sequence of salvation in the life of believing individuals, it is equally true that in our outreach to unbelievers those very works displaying God’s glory better precede. We see this clearly when we recognize that the usual way in which individuals come to faith is primarily by viewing the good works of those who already have faith—that is, by seeing good works that reflect the power and character of God. It was immediately after speaking of His followers being salt and light in the world that Jesus spoke this very key verse we have already quoted, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16).” That is how people can see God’s glory and be drawn to Him. Those who may be drawn by mere desires to be blessed personally will have trouble with Jesus’ plain statement that “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35).” Evangelicals today often ignore this.

Thus, in order for people to hear and respond to an offer of personal salvation, personal fulfillment, or a ticket to heaven, it is paramount for them to witness the glory of God in believers’ lives—seeing the love and goodness in their lives and deeds, and their

changed motives and new intentions. That is the reality which gives them reason to turn away from all evil and against all evil as they seek to be closer to that kind of God and His will in this world.

It is of course perfectly true that personal salvation alone can still be a glorious transformation of people who may never arise from a sickbed or escape from poverty, simply knowing that God loves them and wants them to love Him—if they can understand what love is. At the same time, many believers are not poor, and have time and energy to do things other than simply talk to people about the next world or how they can be personally benefited. For them, a concept that is very hard to avoid (because it is happening throughout the whole Bible) is the concept that works are necessary to authenticate and demonstrate the true character of God. That is the true basis for an empowered evangelism.

This potent continuum of word and deed is, furthermore, the mainstream of mission history. It may not have been so large a factor among up-and-out people in, say, Japan, but in much of the world, the stunning achievements of medicine and healing have demonstrated to potential converts not only the love of God for them, but also the power of God that is on their side against the forces of darkness.

Paul the apostle spoke of delivering people from the dominion of Satan (Acts 26:18). Peter summed up Jesus' ministry by speaking of "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil because God was with him. (Acts 10:38)." This kind of demonstration of the person and the power of God certainly should not be considered alien or antagonistic to evangelism. In most cases it is, again, the very basis of an empowerment of evangelism.

However, by taking a quick glance at the current record of our global "missions of good works" it is perfectly obvious that thus far no great dents in world poverty have been achieved by missionaries of Jesus Christ, even though their intentions and even their record is highly respectable. Recently, more and more high-minded young people have shown themselves willing to go and live among people in extreme poverty. This, too, is praiseworthy. But most desperately poor people need more than another apparently poor and powerless person to come and live among them.

It is nevertheless true that once individuals find faith, they have often pulled themselves up by their bootstraps—through their honesty, abandonment of liquor and drugs, and their ability and integrity to build businesses of good will that succeed. This has gradually lifted them up out of the poverty category into the middle class category, not just in England in the 18th century, but also in America and in many parts of the world. This kind of individual "salvation" is the primary focus of Evangelical missions today even though it is not be the whole picture.

However, without even studying the past, it is apparent that there is a crescendo of concern for the serious problems of our world. The AIDS crisis has thrown us into a lot of confusion, but also into serious contemplation about what now can be done or should be done. It would seem embarrassing that Jimmy Carter, a Sunday School teacher, not a theologian, nor a mission executive, nor a missiologist, has actually done more than anyone else in arousing world opinion to the need to eradicate diseases, not just extend health care after people get sick.

But it is saddening that Carter has not been able to get substantial backing from Christian churches and missions for this activity. Apparently that kind of vision is not, at this stage of history, something that can be credited either to Christian theology or to missiology, but rather to the energy and intuitive theology of a past president of the USA who happened to be well known on a world level. Missions and churches have vitally helped but they cannot claim the initiative.

Thus, in all of our commendable haste to get to the ends of the earth and to the last group which has never heard the gospel, we may be overlooking the fact that the vast bulk of the Western world no longer believes in the Bible and no longer follows our faith—partly because people have not noticed believers at the forefront of efforts to defeat the evils of this present world. Does that mean our immense overseas achievements are going to be only temporary? Are we preaching a “relapsing” Christianity?

PART IV: The Future of Evangelicals in Mission

“Teaching them to OBEY everything that I commanded you”

So what is the future of the Evangelical movement? I believe that the mission movement—more than the church movement and considerably more than the secular world—holds the key to a great new burst of credibility which could win new millions, not just the poor and uneducated. An unexpected trend of current philanthropy clearly indicates the potential assistance of people in high places who have grown up in a highly Christianized society, even if they haven’t regularly gone to church. But what is crucially true is that these secular forces need to understand that their efforts will ultimately be dismayingly ineffective without a certain minimum of transformed individuals whose character and integrity is essential to their major efforts. They need to realize that missions and the Christian movement have a virtual monopoly on transformed individuals who can be trusted.

I yearn to see Evangelical missions be able to give more direct, credible credit to Jesus Christ for the impetus behind the social transformation that they have been doing, are doing and should be doing. Practically none of the major religions, by comparison, has a similar contribution to good works, small or large. Islam has the giving of alms as one of its five pillars, but there is very little in the entire mammoth global Islamic movement that compares even remotely to the hundreds of major Christian mission agencies, or the thousands of ways in which the Christian movement has reached out with love and tenderness to those who are suffering. Islam also has a near vacuum of “non-government agencies,” although both in Pakistan and Bangladesh are some outstanding exceptions. But in general the West has thousands of NGOs which are not explicitly Christian. Islam has only a few.

The work of Christ in the gospels, Christ’s references to the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and the present outworking in this world of the phrase “Thy will be done” in the Lord’s Prayer are actually echoed by the Great Commission itself. Looking closely at Matt. 28:20, it isn’t just the passing on of His teachings to which Jesus commissions His disciples. It is the actual enforcing, so to speak, of obedience to those teachings, “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” This implies the conquest of evil when the Lord’s Prayer is read in this light: “Thy will be done on earth.”

We hear later in the New Testament about people who do not “obey” the gospel. In contrast to the common Evangelical perspective in the Second Inheritance period, the Gospel is not just mere information in the way of good advice. We see both authority and commands from God in the real Biblical Gospel. This is the clear meaning of the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Since Jesus sent his disciples out to bring about obedience to the things He had taught, the last two thousand years has brought about a massive, global campaign against evil.

As I have suggested, the older missions with roots in the 19th Century have in actual fact been doing exactly what Jesus did, both demonstrate the love of God and invite into eternal life all who yield to that love and that authority. The trouble is that the fact of this breadth of mission has not been as clearly theologized to the point where we would be urged exegetically or theologically to tackle some of the macro problems such as the wiping out of Guinea worm or malaria, problems which have existed under the very nose of missionaries for over a century. Nevertheless, such extra breadth must not be seen to be a divergence from the preaching of eternal life, but rather an empowerment of the message of a gospel of a kingdom, a reality that is both here and hereafter.

That is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of the kingdom. It is the announcement of a “rule and reign of God” which must be extended to the whole world and all of creation. We must stand up and be counted as active Christian foes of the world’s worst evils. This is the biblical way, the way more than any other, in which missions, beyond what they have done in the past, can now in the future more powerfully and extensively than ever demonstrate who God is and what His purposes are. This is, for example, what the superb Transform World movement is envisioning.

This more extensive influence will come if agencies will simply take the practical conclusions of their missionaries’ magnificent local intuition up into national levels and into international campaigns to drive out those things that not only cut their own lives short but also causes hundreds of millions of people to go to bed at night in severe suffering and pain. Otherwise all such unaddressed evil is blamed on God and His “mysterious purposes.” This new, expanded influence of Evangelicals may thus measurably help us re-win the West to “a faith that works,” and to a God Who is not doing bad things for mysterious reasons, but a God Who concretely opposes the Evil One and all his works—and asks us to assist Him in that campaign.

Evangelicals are increasingly again in the position of social influence. Yet, are still mainly in the business of merely giving people a personal faith, a

faith that does not include much of a mission beyond the idea of converts fulfilling their own lives and converting still others to personal fulfillment. However, a return to a full-spectrum Gospel could mean an enormous change. Doors will open. Attitudes about missionaries will change. It will no longer be the case of missionaries thinking that they have to use adroit language to cover up the “real purpose” of their work. Their real purpose will include the identification and destruction of all forms of evil, both human and microbiological and will thus be explainable in plain English without religious jargon. This can provide very solid common ground in almost any community in any country.

Widely understood is the fact that Protestant mission efforts can be classified in three eras marked off in each case by a certain definition of a more extensive awareness

of mission. The first era began about 1800 and until 1910 focused on the coastlands of the Non-Western world. The second era began in 1865 (overlapping the first) and extended to 1980 focusing on going inland. The third era began in 1935, (overlapping the second) focusing on by-passed peoples (Unreached Peoples) and will continue until perhaps 2050. The urgent emphasis of this paper would predict the need for a fourth era of new and radically wider awareness, becoming widely known in 2010 at the Global conference of mission agencies in Tokyo, May 11-15, 2010. This new awareness might be called the Kingdom Era, when far more serious attention is paid to the transformation of both society and nature, recognizing that the demonstration of God's concerns is an achievement which will both vitally support, and as well as depend upon, the need for transformation on a personal level.

In that event there is no doubt in my mind that the future of the Evangelical movement and its mission will be very bright indeed. As Adoniram Judson said, "The future is as bright as the promises of God." We must not forget that God is the one who asked us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Kingdom Era is Now

(2007) (Foundations Reader, 253-56)

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The year Fuller Theological Seminary was founded, 1947, I was a student in the first class. One of the professors, Carl F. H. Henry, a former newspaper journalist, was very well acquainted with the secular world, more so than the average preacher. He had already written a book that came out in that same year called *The Uneasy Conscience of the Modern Fundamentalist*. He suggested that Evangelicals, whom he referred to as fundamentalists—and I still consider myself a fundamentalist in that sense—had focused on heaven and the future, eschatology/ prophesy/return of Christ (all good and true things)—and criticized anybody who would lift a finger to change this world which we expected (and hoped?) was going to the dogs. The great hope was that Christ would soon return. I still believe that. The numbing assumption, however, was that the world would get worse and worse until finally He came. Therefore, anything that would indicate that the world was getting worse and worse would be good news. And, logically, there was no good reason to improve this world.

Dr. Henry's book challenged that assumption and harked back to an earlier time in American history when Evangelicals were active in changing this world. A chapter I wrote two years ago for a Southern Baptist book, and then cut down 50% for *Mission Frontiers* (Sept–Oct 07) referred to that period as First Inheritance Evangelicalism. In that article I suggested that in the 20th century when a sense of changing the world was lost, or given up intentionally, and the very idea of changing this world was considered liberal, a new kind of Second Inheritance Evangelicalism ensued. Henry was saying that we should feel uneasy about this perspective.

Ten years after Henry's book came out in 1947 another book was published, in 1957, which resulted from a famous speech by a man named Timothy Smith, a graduate student at Johns Hopkins. His book was called *Revivalism and Social Reform*—widely acclaimed as one of the most significant books in the analysis of American religious history. He didn't really speak theologically, as Henry did. He spoke of the simple historical fact that Evangelicals one hundred years earlier had been very active in changing society. Whether their theological underpinnings were correct or not, that is what they were doing. Incidentally, George Marsden, one of the more famous historians of American Christianity, made the statement that by 1870, no one questioned that this was a Christian country.

But 1870 was before the really momentous immigration inundated the country. Our population was quadrupled in forty years and most of the people coming in had no idea of the revival period or the Evangelical tradition. Thus, that whole concept of this being a Christian country was lost due to the shuffles in the digestion of this massive population avalanche. And then the First World War occurred which seemed to contradict any hope of this world getting better. And if anyone survived with such hopes, the Second World War destroyed what remained.

Yet, it was just after the Second World War that Henry published his book. The Second World War ended in 1945 and Henry's book was published in 1947. He was a prophet crying out in the wilderness. But holding exactly the same beliefs was Fuller seminary, backed by Harold Ockenga, who was the founding President (and the most prominent person in the founding of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association). They all felt that we have to get away from what tended to be an almost exclusive heaven-orientation in the earlier Fundamentalist tradition epitomized by many of the 157 Bible Institutes formed after 1900. All of what Evangelicals were saying was true, but the Bible had a larger vision.

Ten years after Smith's 1957 book, in 1967, there was a third person, David O. Moberg, who came out with a book entitled *Evangelical Christians in Contemporary Society: How to Reverse the Great Reversal*. The "great reversal" phrase was borrowed from Smith. He later spoke of "Reversal" in his better-known 1972 book *The Great Reversal: Evangelism and Social Concern*. The Reversal was the idea of a retreat from "this world can and must be changed" into "this world is hopeless and does not have to be changed" (a reverse), the implication being that "the faster the world goes bad the better" and "let's get our eschatology straightened out so that we can get to heaven safely before the tribulation." Note that all of this is partially true and important. Before the reversal, as late as 1896 a New England schoolteacher could write a hymn that spoke of the USA with "amber waves of grain, purple mountain majesties" and "the dream of alabaster cities gleaming undimmed by human tears." After the reversal took place Evangelicals could truthfully sing, "This world is not my home. I'm just a passin' through. My treasures are laid out somewhere beyond the blue."

I must say that one of the most galvanizing, arresting and astringent impacts on American sensibilities was the concept of the imminent return of Christ, the very idea that Christ could come back at any moment and was soon due. If you really believe that Christ could come back tomorrow, that can straighten you out faster than anything else. For example, I recall the experience of a friend of mine, Bill Reed, who had been a missionary to Brazil. He authored one of the first church growth books, on Brazil. One of his sons had turned away from the Lord and had been alienated for years. While we were teaching together at Fuller, his son called his parents and said he wanted to come and see them. They made a date for 4 PM on certain day. But his parents had another obligation earlier and while Bill Reed and his wife were coming back they were stuck in traffic and didn't make it on time. When they arrived at their house, their son had somehow already gotten himself into the house and was sitting on the couch in the living room. As they came in the front door, he was absolutely in tears. On the table in the living room there was the book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey. Waiting around for them to come he was overcome by the implications. I've never read it but the very idea that Christ could return at any time just turned this young man around completely. That was a tremendous change for him. In other words, there were many great virtues in this so-called fundamentalist period. However, one of the problems was, as I put it in my article a few months ago, they had very little social influence, and thus focused on the next world.

Back in 1870 Evangelicals ran the country. In 1920, they didn't. Why? The majority of Evangelicals were noncollege people that Moody had won by the millions. They often looked askance at the upper class people who went to college. Only a few of the college trained Evangelicals were still left in government, and there ensued a great polarization between what came to be called liberals and conservatives. Many of the liberals still believed in the New Birth, but nevertheless there were many others in the wealthy class who said, "Forget about evangelicalism, and let's just change this world." As in the hymn, "America the Beautiful," they prayed for a future of "alabaster cities gleaming undimmed by human tears" and "our good crowned by brotherhood."

The very liberal First Congregational Church of Los Angeles had for a long time a sign in front saying "One World at a Time." That was a specific, liberal reaction against the idea of the next world being our main focus. Rather, they thought, "Let's tackle this world now and let the next world come when it will." Ironically, while Liberals talked many Evangelicals did what was within their power, sending missionaries and founding inner city missions. Evangelicals simply refused to believe politics or social welfare in general was their obligation. Someone on the internet read something I wrote many years ago and wrote of "Winter's railing against the government for not spending enough on cancer research, and against the evils of gambling, tobacco and cocaine, as if the Church could somehow alleviate these problems." This polarization is still with us and is not a healthy thing.

Henry, Smith, and Moberg are early prophets—of what seems to me to be worth labeling the “Kingdom Era.” They were trying to reverse the reversal. When we go back to the New Testament, we see Jesus preaching, “The Kingdom of heaven is at hand” and telling His disciples to “pray that it will come and that God’s will be done on earth.” Note that His suggested prayer doesn’t say anything about waiting until we go to heaven. Not to say that He did not elsewhere speak about heaven, but we realize today, if not before, that the Reformation was an era in which the Roman Catholic Church had produced what could be called the “commodification of the Gospel.” They had found out that the easiest way to extract money from people was to sell them a ticket to heaven. Neat, sell what you don’t have to deliver. This approach worked very nicely until Luther came along and told people that you can neither pay nor work your way to heaven.

At that point in history, of course, the general awareness of the extent of evil in society, and nature, and therefore the idea that our mission under God would logically be to attempt to conquer evil in society and nature—was accordingly very limited. In those days they thought that the highest good that they could achieve was to build great cathedrals, which is what they did. They were extracting money from the Germans. There was already animosity between the Germans and the Latins, and so fundraising in Germany didn’t go over very well. The Old German had it that when the coin “clinked,” your soul “sprinkled” out of purgatory. This is what finally did it for Luther. Remember, though, the answer to a works-righteousness is not a purely intellectual faith-righteousness. In a certain sense, both of the opposing sides in the Reformation were wrong: you can’t work your way into heaven, and you can’t “faith” your way into heaven, because, as James puts it, “faith without works is dead.”

Luther didn’t like that verse in James and wanted to remove the entire Epistle of James from the New Testament. But after a few years, he was persuaded to put it back. He simply didn’t comprehend that true heart faith would inevitably result in works (Eph 2:8-10) and that was why “faith without works is dead” (James 2:20 and 26). Both sides were wrong and to recover from that artificial polarization has taken a long time. We’re all children of the Reformation to a certain extent, we still have a “sales worthy” gospel, and we still have a commodity that sells. We’ve gone around the world and won millions of people selling them a heaven-oriented “salvation.” People are very grateful and excited about that. But the Christianity that emphasizes mainly a belief about heaven and individual fulfillment isn’t full-orbed enough to be stable or to last. Thus, we can see already a widespread phenomenon, especially in the Western world, of “relapsing” Christianity.

What shall we say about earlier missionaries compared to contemporary missionaries? In both cases love and holy intuition rather than formal theology have more often led the way. Two hundred years ago William Carey worked for extensive social reform in India, but eventually his supporters took away most of his land because they thought he had gotten off track. One hundred years ago Hudson Taylor focused so exclusively on evangelism that he directed his missionaries not even to stay with converts long enough to establish congregations. Shortly after Taylor upper-class Student Volunteers would follow Carey’s example planting a university in every province of China. But in the last seventy years missions have rarely seen the value in establishing universities. They have been diligent in fostering good works on the small, local level. Bigger problems like global malaria have not been in the sights of even the two-billion-per-year World Vision, much less Campus Crusade. YWAM has been assiduous in tackling problems in this world on a local level. However, YWAM’s Landa Cope has articulated a far larger vision for years. YWAM’s new anthology of their top leaders, *His Kingdom Come*, begins with her chapter and poses a major new thrust for them.

Thus, it seems relevant to revise my article in the *Perspectives* book, which is called “Four Men, Three Eras: Carey, Taylor, Townsend and McGavran.” When I wrote it originally, I described “Three Men, Three Eras.” I was thinking about history—Carey, Taylor and Townsend. I didn’t realize that McGavran, right next door to my office, still alive, was an early prophet of the idea that culture barriers as well as linguistic barriers can disguise people groups. So, I

rewrote the article to be “Four Men, Three Eras, Two Transitions.” By this time John Kyle guided InterVarsity’s Urbana program. He is a Wycliffe man, and preferred the original idea of Townsend without reference to McGavran, so InterVarsity reprinted the original “Three Men, Three Eras” brochure and passed it out to everyone attending Urbana.

It seems now that we need add another era and three men, to make “Seven Men, Four Eras and Three Transitions.” In all of the first three eras, there was an awareness of the demands of the new era long before the era gained momentum and the men I chose were prophets crying out in the wilderness for many years. In each case they did not kick off bursts of mission agencies right away. Only Carey did. The others didn’t. The eras, as defined, described things that were both difficult to define and accept and had a certain inherent fuzziness of definition. They also all had precursors. So it is with the Fourth Era. People have been talking in terms of the Kingdom for a long time, especially in the 19th century, as described by the three books (1947, 1957, 1967) to which I alluded above. So it isn’t as if these eras in any case announced something totally new, but sought to enhance appreciation of an existing insight.

Today, everywhere you look, people are not merely talking about doing little good deeds but are talking about dealing with huge things like world poverty and world health to an extent that has not ever been seen. Now is the time to emphasize that while this could become a second occurrence of a liberal reduction, it needs to be an emergence from a conservative reduction. It needs desperately to be a more faithful understanding of the Bible than ever before. We need to support this development. Is it not time, then, to name this Era the Kingdom Era, the Fourth Era? As in the earlier eras, everything preceding is still included. When we went inland we didn’t stop going to the coastlands. When we went to the unreached peoples we didn’t stop going to the major peoples. When we talk about the Kingdom Era, although the geographical eras are behind us, we are talking about a new dimension of mission obligation that has been to some extent ignored and which is still contested. We are not abandoning talk of unreached peoples but recognized a more effective, Biblical approach to them. We are not giving up earlier insights. We are simply seeking to enhance an existing awareness.

In my thinking, the meaning of the Kingdom Era is vastly more complex and huge than it was for those living in the 1800’s. It is a vastly greater challenge than Henry, Smith or Moberg conceived. In the 40 plus years since Moberg’s book we have become aware of much more about evil in this world—for example in terms of medicine and sickness—than ever before. Unfortunately many leading Bible scholars are focusing only on human evil—N. T. Wright, Os Guinness, Brian McLaren, Udo Middelman and then have no Satan.

The whole history of mission changed with the advent of medical doctors. It wasn’t until 1870 that medical doctors were sent out as missionaries and when they were sent out they weren’t sent to help the people, but to preserve the lives of the missionaries themselves. However, intuitively (not theologically) they also started serving the people. In many mission fields, Christianity really began at that point to take hold. Now God’s loving invitation was demonstrated and not just talked about.

What would it have been like if Jesus hadn’t demonstrated His compassion for a man with a withered arm, sick people, children, women or Greeks? Most of His words would have been unintelligible. What He did enabled what He talked about to be taken with great authority and to have greater impact. Are we going to be followers of the real Jesus?

**To the New Asian Society of Missiology:
Greetings from the West
(Twelve Mistakes of the West)**

(2007) (*Foundations Reader*, 247-51)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

In 1973, a third of a century ago, David Cho, Ph.D., invited several of us from the West to a meeting in Seoul, Korea which preceded the formation of the Asia Missions Association. On that occasion I presented a paper urging Asian mission leaders not to make the same mistake as Western leaders had made when the Foreign Mission Conference of North America shortly after 1900 had insisted that in God's Kingdom only denominational mission boards were legitimate. My paper was entitled, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission," which spoke favorably of both "modalities" and "sodalities." By now, of course, there are many American as well as Asian structures that are interdenominational.

Later, I often pointed out in my classroom teaching the shocking failure of the Western missions to understand the possibility and importance of Non-Western believers to form their own mission agencies. By now, of course, Non-Western agencies are very numerous and enthusiastic.

It would seem clear that Asian mission leaders have potentially a great advantage in being able to learn from the mistakes of Western agencies. If not, Asian mission leaders face the danger of making some of the same mistakes. One problem is that Western leaders may not know what their mistakes are, and thus cannot warn Asian leaders of what Western leaders did wrong. It is also true that not all Westerners agree about the various issues in missiology. Thus, the twelve "mistakes" of Western churches and agencies, as described below, must be understood to be merely my own best understanding. Note that they are not problems of the distant past. They are all contemporary problems. In any case, Asians will have to judge their validity.

1. The Mistake of Starting Bible Schools, Not Universities

The Student Volunteer Movement, in which John Mott was a leader, is noted for the number of universities that it established around the world. The missionaries who went to China made sure there was a university in every province of China. However, in later years Evangelicals, who had never been to college, went out across the world and established Bible Schools, Bible Institutes or theological schools that either replaced or ignored the university tradition. In the last 50 years the majority of American mission agencies have not founded a single university.

The curious thing is that, even though western missionaries cannot be given credit (except in the earlier period) for establishing universities, the hundreds of thousands of national leaders who have been a product of western mission agencies have been able to see what the missionaries could not see. They have recognized the great influence of the university pattern. As a result they have taken the initiative to found over forty universities in the last forty years. I myself was, somewhat accidentally, part of the

founding of an evangelical university in Guatemala which now after forty years has 37,000 students. No missionary can be given any credit for the founding of this university. In my case I merely stood up for a photograph of the founding board of directors two weeks before leaving the country to be a professor at Fuller Seminary.

Why is it that missionaries have not realized that Bible Schools, no matter how high the quality of instruction and curricula, simply do not represent the global mainstream of the university pattern? In the last 100 years in the United States 157 Bible Institutes eventually, after sixty or seventy years, have converted over to colleges and universities. Why haven't missionaries applied the same practical wisdom in their work overseas? This has been a serious strategic mistake. We can at least be glad that national leaders have taken the initiative to found universities without the help of western missionaries.

2. The Mistake of Only “Salvation in Heaven,” not “Kingdom on Earth”

Earlier missionaries again were wiser than those in recent times. They realized that (as we see in the Lord's Prayer), Jesus told us to pray for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth. Yet we have mainly helped people escape this world. Unlike the 19th century, many missionaries in the 20th century, who have not been influential in the upper levels of society, have been content to talk about getting people into heaven but have no longer been concerned for transformation in this life. They have done many good things on the micro level of society—hospitals, clinics, schools, vocational training, agricultural developments—they even pioneered insights into leprosy and essentially conquered that malady. But there were many things on the macro level of society they couldn't do without greater social influence, such as stamping out Guinea Worm or malaria. Today, however, when Evangelicals have far greater influence than ever before, they are often asleep to the opportunities for transformation on the macro levels of society.

3. The Mistake of Congregations Sending Missionaries, Not Using Mission Agencies

Today many congregations are large enough and strong enough to feel that they don't need a mission agency through which to send their missionaries. This is a new and widespread phenomenon which ignores the great value of the veteran mission agencies which can draw upon the insights of missiology and the vast field experience which are lacking in the average congregation. It may be true that some mission agencies are more experienced and wiser than others, but to my knowledge there is no example of a local congregation bypassing mission agencies with any great success.

4. The Mistake of Whole Congregations in Direct Involvement, Not Professional Missions

A more recent phenomenon (which is characteristic of whole congregations which are highly excited about missions) is the idea of every family in a congregation briefly becoming a missionary family. In this plan, during, say, a four-year period, the intention is for every family in the church to go overseas to work on some sort of two-week project. This is a marvelous idea for the education of people in the church about foreign lands. Yet, it is incredibly expensive and it is a very questionable contribution to the cause of missions.

5. The Mistake of Insisting that Devout Followers of Jesus Call Themselves “Christians” and Identify with the Western Church

Congregations may find it easy to believe that their people can win converts to Christianity in a ten-day short-term mission. But what very few congregations in America are prepared to understand is that dragging people out of their culture and converting them to what they think a “Christian” should look like, is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible talks of our conveying a treasure in earthen vessels. The earthen vessels are not the important thing, but the treasure is. The new vessel will be another very different earthen vessel. This is what happened when the faith of the Bible was first conveyed to Greeks. In that case the treasure of Biblical faith in an earthen Jewish vessel became contained in a Greek earthen vessel. Later it went to Latin vessels and to Germanic vessels and to English vessels, and is now contained in Muslim vessels, Hindu vessels and Buddhist vessels.

It is just as unreasonable for a Hindu to be dragged completely out of his culture in the process of becoming a follower of Christ as it would have been if Paul the Apostle had insisted that a Greek become a Jew in the process of following Christ. Amazingly, there may be more Muslims who are true, Bible-believing followers of Christ, than there are Muslims who have abandoned their cultural tradition in the process of becoming Christian. There are already more Hindus who are predominantly Hindu in their culture but who are Bible-reading believers in Jesus Christ, than there are Hindus who have abandoned their culture and become “Christian.” In the New Testament there was no law against a Greek becoming a Jew. However, Paul was very insistent that that kind of a cultural conversion was not necessary in becoming a follower of Christ.

6. The Mistake of Sending Only Money, Not Missionaries

This has been a problem for many years. It can rarely be a good thing to send money to a mission field with little accountability for its use. There are many examples where foreign funds are used to “buy” national leaders away from their churches or away from their denominations rather than strengthening the existing churches. Money can be very helpful but there is no example of harm to the cause of missions that is more extensive than the careless use of money. Money is more easily corrupted than missionaries. This is the reason that wise national leaders talk about trade, not aid. What poor people need is the ability to earn money. With earnings they can buy food and medicines and not have to rely upon uncertain gifts from a foreign country. Missionaries are often ill-trained to establish businesses.

7. The Mistake of Sending Short-Termers, Not Long-Termers

This is not a case where one of these things is good and the other is bad. Neither should take the place of the other. However, there are now almost two million short-termers leaving the United States each year compared to 35,000 long-term missionaries. Note that the overall cost of short-termers is at least five times as much as the overall cost of long-term missionaries. This means that instead of doubling or tripling the number of long-term missionaries we’re investing at least five times as much money in short-termers. Short-term trips are wonderful education, but a very small accomplishment in

missions. Worse still, a short term is often scary enough or useless enough to turn a young person away from being a missionary at all.

8. The Mistake of Not Understanding Business in Mission and Mission in Business

One of the latest explosions of interest in missions is the result of Christian businessmen in the United States recognizing the value of thoroughly Christian businesses in a foreign land. There is no question that one of the greatest needs of churches across the world is for their members to earn a living. It is pathetic when we think of sending food around the world instead of sending businesses that would enable believers to earn the money necessary to buy their own food. Businesses can often do things that are very essential. They can enable local people to sell their products in foreign lands. They can produce goods of great value to the people. Unfortunately, it is true that few missionaries have business experience and often ignore opportunities to establish businesses that would employ large numbers of needy people.

One thing is true, however, that businesses cannot be relied on as a source of profit for missionary work. In the long run, businesses that divert profits to other things will lose out to competitors who don't divert profits to other things. There is no great future in a plan to "milk" profits from a business to support ministry. It is equally true that micro loans may have a temporary value, but will also fall prey to competitors with larger capital resources employing inherently more efficient processes. In the early history of missions, Moravian missionaries started businesses and so did some Swiss and German missionaries. Sadly, American missionaries have not been as creative. However, the business process will never take the place of the mission process in situations where the people in need cannot pay for what is needed. Businesses have to recover their own expenses. The mission process is still essential in all situations where there is no realistic possibility of remuneration.

9. The Mistake of Healing the Sick, Not Eradicating Disease Germs

The activity of healing the sick is one of the most genuine means of portraying God's love and His concern for hurting people. It is a perfect example of the importance of the essential relationship of word and deed. On the other hand with our increased scientific knowledge of microbiology God can expect us to go beyond healing the sick to the eradication of the germs that make millions sick. Missionaries have done well in establishing a thousand hospitals but very few of them are big enough or are properly structured to be able to drive out of existence the evil pathogens that cause millions of people to be sick.

Malaria is an example of a tiny parasite that drags 45 million Africans out of the workplace every day of the year. It is imperative that the malarial parasite be eradicated. Malaria is virtually as large a threat in Africa as the AIDS epidemic. We don't yet know how to eradicate the AIDS virus, but we do know how to rid this planet of malaria. That would be a significant transformation. Why then is there no Christian mission agency that is involved in the eradication of malaria rather than merely the healing of those who are attacked by malaria? It is very embarrassing to have to admit that the church of Jesus Christ is expecting billionaires like Bill Gates to do that job for them. Worse still, Christians are misrepresenting the love of God in Christ if they do not become noted for their relentless efforts in such a cause.

10. The Mistake of Thinking “Peace” Not “War”

Missionaries have for centuries moved out across the world with the idea that the Gospel is merely a message to be communicated rather than a “call to arms.” I grew up with the idea that the main problem the Bible talked about was how human beings can become reconciled to God. That is certainly a glorious part of the story! But the main problem the Bible is really talking about goes beyond man’s reconciliation to God and is more precisely a war in which God-plus-man is fighting against Satan and his evil works. As a result our God is being blamed widely for rampant disease, poverty, injustice and corruption—since we as Christians are not fighting these works of Satan. People are asking what kind of a God would sponsor a world like this? They say this because they are unaware of the existence of Satan and his intelligent opposition to God. Thus, instead of God being glorified, He is being blamed for the work of Satan.

When things go wrong Evangelicals commonly say, “Why would God do that?” instead of blaming Satan. They do not realize that we are in a war and that casualties are to be expected because of the hideous strength of our opponent. We are lulled into inaction by the widespread belief that Satan was “defeated” at the Cross. In fact, the Cross was the turning point beyond which there have been centuries of ongoing conflict with a Satan yet to be completely defeated. Long after the Cross Paul told Agrippa his mission was delivering people from “the dominion of Satan.” Satan was still around. Peter talked about Satan seeking to destroy. Christians today, with modern understanding of microbiology, for example, as well as the endemic corruption in business and government, now possess far greater responsibility than we have ever had before. Are mission agencies part of that war against Satan? Is it necessary for Christ’s followers to be counted at the front lines of that war whether it be eradication of disease or the conquest of corruption in business and government? Do we misrepresent God if we are missing in action? I feel sure we do.

11. The Mistake of Assuming Science Is a Foe Not a Friend

When I was a young person missionaries were showing science films 2,000 times per day in the non-Western world. The Moody Institute of Science films were shown even more widely in America. Many times in history Christian scholars have recognized that God has revealed Himself in “Two Books,” the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture. As Psalm 19 indicates, the Book of Nature does not even need to be translated into the world’s languages. Every missionary must take with him to the mission field both a microscope and a telescope if we are to properly glorify God. Even more important is the need to take to the field a true reverence for the glory of God in Creation. This requires a substantial knowledge of nature. Science is the study of God’s creativity. Art is the study of man’s creativity. We cannot truly expect educated people to accept Christ if our hymns in church reflect no awareness of anything discovered in nature in the last 400 years, or if our young people are being led astray by recent and superficial theories that the world is only 6,000 years old. That is an improper reading of Genesis 1:1, as well as a reckless ignoring of thousands of honest Evangelicals who are outstanding scientists.

12. The Mistake of an Evangelism That Is Not Validated and Empowered by Social Transformation

Several times in the points I have already made above have I contrasted the 19th Century Western missionaries and 20th Century Western missionaries. This is because a radical change in the perspective of American Evangelicals took place between the 1800s and the 1900s. In the 19th Century we were singing about the glorification of God as His will is fulfilled “on earth.” Here is the final stanza and chorus of “America the Beautiful”:

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears.
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

In the 20th Century we have been singing mainly about heaven:

This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through.
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

In the 1800s great revivals swept the country and Evangelicals in high places conceived and promoted equally sweeping reforms. Ten, immigration of non-Evangelical people quadrupled the population and Evangelicals lost influence. Millions of non-college people were converted by D. L. Moody and others, but their 157 Bible Institutes did not feed the professions nor congress. Only recently, as Evangelicals have more and more been going to universities, are there sufficient numbers of American Evangelicals to begin to think seriously about social transformation either in the USA or elsewhere in the world.

Conclusion

I hope it is clear that I have not wanted to do more than point out what in my estimation are failings and shortcomings in the history of Western mission thinkers. My perspectives may be faulty. At least I have raised certain issues that Asian missiologists may also confront in their work. Furthermore, this must not be a one-way street. I hope that we in the West can learn from members of the Asian Society of Missiology as they share with us their own perspectives. In 1972 I helped to start the ASM (American Society of Missiology, www.asmweb.org) and its journal, *Missiology: An International Review*. A few years later I helped start the ISFM (International Society of Frontier Missiology, www.ijfm.org) and the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*. I have edited the latter for the last six years. It will be strategically helpful as Asian counterparts such as the Asian Society of Missiology arise and global sharing increases.

We of the West have already learned a great deal from you. We expect to learn a great deal more in the future. Thank you for this invitation to greet you in Christ's name!

The Biggest Trend in Global Mission

(2008). (*Evangelical and Frontier Mission Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel*, 267-73)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5cf98f55777b800001acd934/1559859043835/E2010+Evangelical+and+Frontier+Text-1.pdf>

Editors' Note: Ralph Winter presented this paper at the Korea World Mission Conference in Wheaton, Illinois, in July, 2008. Towards the end of his life Winter reframed his missional thinking in light of renewal in his understanding of the Kingdom of God. In this chapter he explains his approach to mission in light of those developments.

Introduction

The most important trend in missions today is a recovery from a gospel of merely personal salvation to a restoration of kingdom thinking. Everyone, both Christians and non-Christians, are talking about major world problems. Nowadays, for the first time in 150 years, we see a restoration of emphasis on the gospel of the kingdom, which in the Bible not only means personal salvation but transformation in this world—as in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth."

To see the roots of this problem we need to go back to the Reformation. In the 16th century contention arose between the Latin speaking Christians and the German speaking Christians.

Confusion in the Reformation

Works alone don't get people to heaven. In Martin Luther's day a man named John Tetzel came through Germany with a big box on a wagon urging people to put money in the box in order to absolve them from divine punishment. He represented a fund raising campaign to help build a cathedral in Rome. His project was not something the Germans were very enthusiastic about. However, for Luther there was an additional problem. Luther's scholarly reaction made clear that giving money—or doing any purely religious good works—will not forgive sin.

On the other hand, faith alone (that is, merely believing in the truth of creedal statements) also doesn't get people to heaven. Luther's alternative was to propose that a heart of faith is what pleases God as can be seen in scripture. However, in English, the use of the word 'believe' can be interpreted to mean merely believing the right doctrines rather than having a heart of faith. Merely mental assent to the correct doctrinal truths never saved anyone. Confusion on this point is still very common. People often think someone's sins are forgiven automatically if that person says he believes merely that it is true that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the blood of Jesus atones for our sins. However, mere intellectual assent to correct doctrines does not save you.

Rather, the Bible plainly says, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2: 20). For several years Luther condemned the New Testament Book of James. He assumed the second chapter of James denounces heart faith, when it actually denounces mere intellectual assent. Paul agrees with James when he refers to "the obedience of faith" in

Romans 1:5. There Paul brings the heart into the picture when he describes his calling as bringing about the “obedience of faith” among all peoples. Evangelicals sometimes mistakenly think that the gospel is mere information. However, Peter speaks of people disobeying the gospel which indicates that the gospel of God’s kingdom is not merely an invitation to be received but an announcement of an authority to which we must yield and obey.

Apart from this theological confusion, the Reformation as a movement was more a cultural breakaway movement than a case of theological differences. This much stronger force creating the Reformation was the inherent divergence of the Germanic culture from the Latin (Mediterranean) culture. A similar breakaway movement occurred when Paul encouraged Greek believers to develop their own synagogues. A similar breakaway movement occurred when the Latin-speaking Roman Catholic church broke away from the Greek-speaking Orthodox church. In this sense the breakaway of the German-speaking church from the Mediterranean Roman Catholic culture was like the dozens of mission field breakaway movements today, which are attempting to resist a foreign missionary culture. In such cases national believers decide to start a church of their own, which is often very different from the missionary implanted form of Christianity. It is usually true that when a missionary tries to plant his own kind of church the people will eventually breakaway and develop their own kind. This is what happened in the Reformation. In such cases people may take sides and claim that one form is perfect and the other is imperfect. Usually both sides are imperfect.

Confusion in Missions Today

Some mission agencies only plant personal-salvation churches. Their interest is in assuring people about going to heaven, and gathering people together to sing about heaven and God’s personal blessings. This can be very successful, because it is relatively simple to persuade people around the world to raise their hands in order to get to heaven and to be blessed personally. However, it is more biblical to introduce people to Jesus Christ and urge them to obey Him as their Lord.

Some mission agencies focus on relief and development work. They may help people physically and not lead people to a personal commitment to Christ. What they do is very helpful. But in many cases they have made agreements with governments not to mention Jesus Christ, and without the transforming power of Christ, development work is not very likely to succeed. We need to seek personal transformation, and build on that foundation.

Some mission agencies do both. The biblical record shows that Jesus accompanied His words with works of mercy. Many mission agencies seek both the transformation of individual lives as well as the transformation of society. The older missions rooted in the 19th Century, such as the early Presbyterian missionaries, the early Sudan Interior Mission and the Africa Inland Mission, have made major contributions to the countries where they have worked—universities, medical schools, businesses, technical and agricultural training schools. Mission agencies more recently founded are less likely to sense a responsibility for nation building. They may think that nation building is hopeless or that it is not their responsibility. A great trend today, returning to the 19th Century, is to pursue kingdom mission, which seeks to glorify God by including both personal as well as national transformation.

Confusion in Recent (20th Century) History

Evangelicals in the 19th Century were very influential. In civil government, and in a series of revivals, they not only focused on personal salvation but on the transformation of society. In the USA they founded 100 colleges, and banished slavery. In Korea, missionaries from that era founded universities. In America, the period between the end of the War of 1812 to the beginning of the Civil War was a period of huge transformation. The idea that this world was worth changing was a central emphasis. In China missionaries planted a university in every province of China.

Evangelicals in the 20th century tended to focus on prophecy and eschatology. In the 20th Century, however, most evangelicals did not go to college and felt that there was no use in trying to save the world. For them it was better to focus on personal salvation. For them, getting as many people as possible “saved” was the most important thing, and was about all they could do. True, personal salvation is, in fact, the most important thing. However, some evangelicals tended to become experts in guessing about the future and the end of history. Eschatology became a very special interest. Since these evangelicals were mainly non-college people, they lacked influence in the public sphere. But, they did what they were able to do. They were active in inner-city missions. Instead of colleges they established 157 Bible Institutes. In their missionary work these evangelicals no longer founded universities but rather Bible schools and seminaries.

Some college-level evangelicals, however, continued to include the idea of changing society. These people even in the 20th Century retained the earlier concern for society but sometimes lost concern for repentance and faith on the part of individuals. The Student Volunteer Movement represented this college level society. The Student Volunteers established “Yale In China” and thought in terms of university education. Their influence on state and federal governments in the 20th Century gradually diminished.

Thus, *the USA today has inherited from the 20th century a huge and serious polarization*. There are still many arguments about the primacy of evangelism over social action, not realizing that neither deeds without words nor words without deeds are meant to stand alone any more than you can separate faith and works.

Resulting Loss of Glory for God, and Disrespect for Evangelicals

As a result some people wonder, “Why is there so much evil in the world?” Then ask, “Is there really a God at all?” Many honest and thinking people today are aware of two things, first, the huge amount of evil in this world—corruption, dishonesty, violence, wars, disease—and, second, they do not see very many Christians fighting against those evils. They also don’t believe in Satan. As a result they are led to think that there must not be a God if there is all this hideous evil, or they believe that if there is a God He could not be both powerful and loving.

Thus, *some people wonder why evangelicals are not effective in fighting this world’s problems and they even wonder about the validity of the Christian faith*. The absence of any large, strong evangelical mission agencies working against global disease and corruption leads many to feel that the Christian faith does not make any difference in society or that Christians and their God do not care.

Are We on the Eve of a New Era in Christianity and Missions?

But things are changing. As the 20th Century unfolded, one by one within 50 to 90 years every one of the 157 Bible Institutes became colleges or universities. Most evangelicals, not gambling or drinking, thus eventually saved enough money to send their children to college, and that way gradually gained greater influence in society. More and more evangelicals by now see reasons to work against evil in this world and in human society, even though others may still feel that such concerns are a diversion from the gospel. Such concerns are, in fact, a change from the simple evangelical personal gospel but they are faithful to the biblical gospel of the kingdom. One sad fact of history is the near total absence of evangelicals in the university world for 50 to 90 years. This is a major reason why the thinking in the university world has become highly secularized and even anti-Christian. Now even Christian colleges and universities around the world are forced to use secular textbooks and secular interpretations of history coming from a secularized university tradition in which they were not involved for most of a century.

But the number of evangelicals worldwide is very large today. There has never been a time when evangelicals had greater ability, influence and responsibility! In the USA the number of evangelicals in public office and in Congress and the Senate is much larger than ever before. Mission agencies have greater resources, potentially, than ever before. God expects more from those who have more to offer and who have received more from Him.

Businessmen are getting involved in mission. Many urgent needs around the world can be filled by honest and good-willed businesses. However, businesses cannot operate when those in need cannot pay. Therefore, many needs can only be filled by mission agencies whose support comes not from those benefited but from good-hearted donors who want to help others.

Local congregations are now often actively sending their own laymen overseas. If a congregation carefully thinks through a long-term plan for a specific place it may accomplish a great deal. However, it is not often that a single congregation, with its limited experience and expertise, can figure things out correctly. A congregation may do good things but not the most strategic things. If they want to eradicate diseases that cause terrible suffering to people for example, they also need to help found and support specialized mission agencies. Waiting until people get sick and then treating their illness is not good enough, and is not the same as eradicating a disease pathogen so that people don't get sick in the first place. This is not something lay people going on short trips overseas can accomplish.

New features in existing mission agencies and new features in new mission agencies are necessary. Existing mission agencies that focus exclusively on evangelization and church planting must realize that such efforts alone fail to provide an example of the good works that faith is supposed to produce (Eph. 2:10). Their churches may become merely places of refuge, places where people can concentrate on heaven and personal fulfillment without having to worry about transforming society at all. Newer missions must be concerned about the same wide spectrum of God's concern. God wants His will to be done on earth not just in heaven.

If we do not recover the wide spectrum of God's concern, do we continue in the 20th-century polarization? It does seem true that if we cannot reunite words with deeds

we will be merely prolonging the tragic polarization which characterized the 20th Century.

How Can God Be Glorified and Evangelicals Respected?

Our mandate is to storm the kingdom of darkness. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says that He will build his church and the forces of darkness will be unable to resist it. These words of Jesus make clear that for His will to be done on earth, definite action must be taken against evil. And what is needed is not just action against human evil but against deadly germs, and against all the rest of the works of darkness. This is clearly both a spiritual and physical war. Spiritual warfare is commonly thought of as purely a spiritual matter of prayer. However, although Jesus healed by prayer (demonstrating His love), He was also showing us we must be concerned about physical threats like disease. Today we can fight, in God's name, against destructive microbes with all of the knowledge we have gained about microbiology in the last 2,000 years.

Both micro good deeds and macro good deeds are necessary. In the 20th Century to the extent that evangelicals had limited education and wealth they still did all they were able to do. Now we can accept larger challenges and demonstrate God's concern for all problems big or small. Only this way can we properly glorify God and regain respect for evangelicals.

We are saved as individuals. We must serve as teams. A final point here is that big problems usually require not just the work of concerned individuals but groups of organized individuals. Very few young people will become full time ministers, missionaries or mobilizers. Most will be working in some other work, usually in the marketplace. That "lay" work must also be a calling. Some work contributes more vitally to the extension of God's will in this world than other work. We must not assume that the highest paying job is automatically God's will. We are all called to do what we can do that will be the most effective in extending God's will in this world. Almost always this will require a business team or a mission team in order to be effective.

How Can We Keep Our Priorities Straight?

If our mandate is to storm the kingdom of darkness, are there priorities? It seems obvious that the highest priority should be to go where that darkness is deepest. That then means clearly to go to those places where Jesus is not yet known. That then means that we are talking now about the thousands of remaining "Unreached Peoples."

However, priorities cannot necessarily be dealt with one at a time. Often more than one priority must be acted on simultaneously not in sequence. We need both to save people from sin and from malaria. Every day in Africa alone 45 million people are withdrawn from the workplace due to malaria. We can't just save people from sin and ignore malaria which kills four children every sixty seconds. If millions of dollars of aid money is being diverted we can't give first and fight corruption second. In many countries medical schools and nurses training schools have been set up with foreign aid, but the average person cannot pay for such medical services so most of the doctors and nurses so trained leave their own country for jobs in Europe or America. Rural development and rural health must be achieved simultaneously.

Communicable disease is at the top of the priority list of world problems. Nevertheless 90 to 98% of all medical and pharmaceutical activities are focused on

treating the sick not on conquering the diseases that make them sick. In America it is still true that 90% of all deaths are premature and are due to disease. Where is the Christian mission agency which is focused on the eradication of disease? The Gates foundation is. Within the PCUSA there is now the Presbyterian Institute for the Eradication of Disease. But it is just starting.

Evangelism is the highest priority. But it becomes weak and lacks credibility if it does not generate committed believers who will tackle the world's problems. A massive shift in that direction is already becoming The Biggest Trend in World Mission.

Book Notes re Kingdom Mission

(2008) (*IJFM* 25:3)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/25_3_PDFs/BookReviews.pdf

Book Notes

—Reviewed by Ralph D. Winter

Kingdom Come: How Jesus Wants to Change the World, by Allen Mitsuo Wakabayashi (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2003)



This book has one of the most spectacularly illuminating as well as concise definitions of what could be called

“Kingdom Mission.” Here’s a quote from page 82:

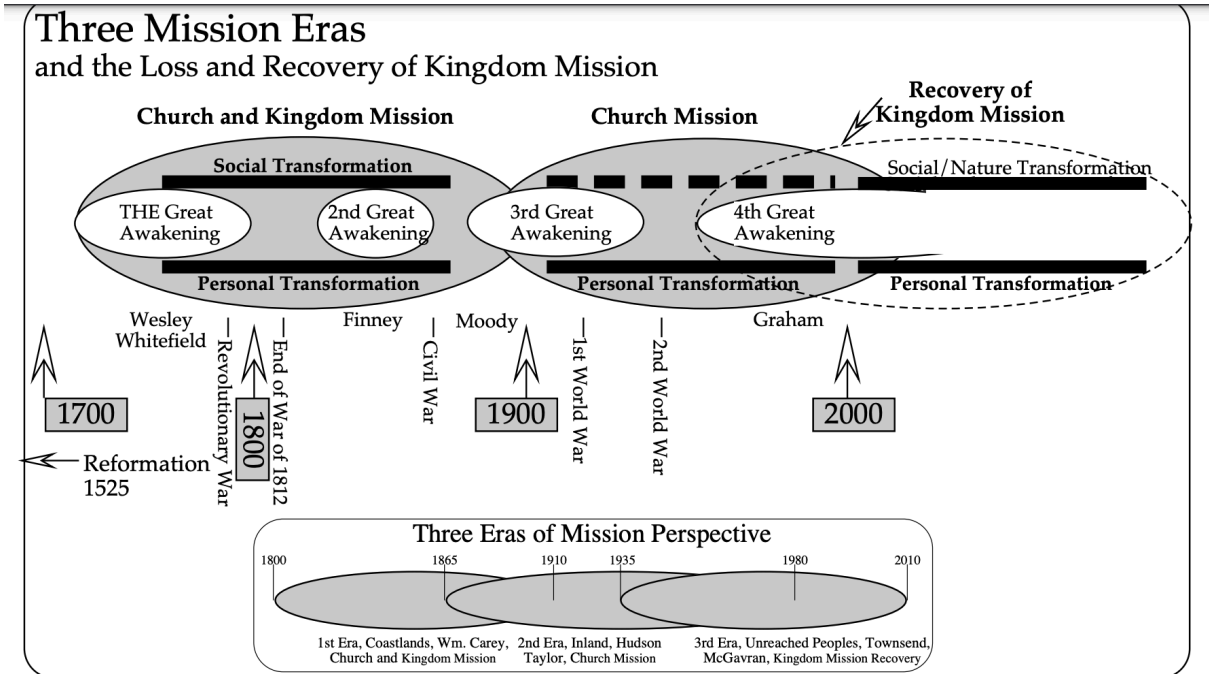
We’ve already discovered that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is about the presence and coming of the Kingdom of God. We’ve seen that the gospel is about God coming to us in Jesus Christ to establish his reign over all creation, every nook and cranny. Yet our traditional conceptions of the gospel are much more individualistic, focusing on individuals finding reconciliation with God through the death of Jesus rather than on God’s restoration of his entire creation. It’s more about people getting “saved” and less about bringing God’s will into every aspect of life and society. It’s more about helping people escape this earth to get to heaven rather than working to see more of heaven invade this earth. But the gospel is more than the good news that we can be saved; the good news of the kingdom is about creation being restored.

The author is an InterVarsity regional director, and is apparently a very well-educated person who has

thought a lot about this. The remarkable thing is that this is not one of the recent bandwagon books on the Kingdom of God and transformation that have been coming out all over the place, but is a 2003 book.

Three Mission Eras: The Loss and Recovery of Kingdom Mission (Chart) (2008)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5be35076aa4a996fc/aa48f6c/1541623927037/W1660C.11+Three+Eras+Chart.pdf>



At the top of the page the three-century diagram begins with the 1700s, during which time the transformative Evangelical Awakening in both England and America began to demonstrate both a spiritual and secular impact.

A direct result of that profound Spiritual Awakening was, first, the English Industrial Revolution, and a little later the symbolic beginning of Protestant mission awareness just before the year 1800.

From that point on the three

"Eras" of Protestant mission strategy then correspond roughly to three phases of Evangelical insight into *Kingdom Mission*.

Church Mission is the mission to extend the Church of Jesus Christ by an urgent, strategic, relentless campaign of personal conversion and church planting. *Kingdom Mission* goes beyond *Church Mission* to press for God's will and His glory beyond the Church, in this world.

Thus, when a whole series of bad things happened between the Civil

War and the Second World War, as described in this chapter, the expansive, optimistic, full-blown Biblical Kingdom Mission was extensively gave way to mere Church Mission, even on the mission fields of the world. Universities were no longer established, vast nationwide educational and medical schemes were less frequent. Mission still retained the all-important basic stress on personal transformation. Social transformation was not only

not as fervently pursued by missionaries, but those still seeking to change society often were labeled "liberals" or "modernists" whether or not that was true.

However, this was not only a theological polarization it was a rarely mentioned social-level divergence. Just as soon as Evangelicals became college and university graduates, professors, members of Congress, etc., new, bigger and more optimistic forms of Kingdom Mission have reemerged.

Ralph D. Winter, W1660C.11, 10/19/08

Editorial Reflections: Are We in a Kingdom Era?

(2008) (*IJFM* 25:1)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/25_1_PDFs/25_1Editorial%20Reflections%20.pdf

Are We in a “Kingdom Era”?

I think so. Not that the old personal salvation days are gone, fortunately. The new days are here. A large and growing proportion of mission donors are relentlessly concerned about suffering people in the here and now. More and more people in our churches see the task now as seriously more than getting people saved in the purely personal eternal sense or even in the personal this-world prosperity sense. In the Bible the word saved has always referred rarely to eternity but rather mainly to an earthly deliverance from all kinds of evil. In the September–October 2007 issue of *Mission Frontiers* magazine (available at missionfrontiers.org), you will find a serious article I wrote entitled “The Future of Evangelicals in Mission.” Here I propose that 19th Century “First Inheritance” Evangelicals, led by civil leaders, sought to transform both individuals and to beat down the evils of this world. In the next century millions of “Second Inheritance” Evangelicals, lacking civil influence and generating Bible Institutes instead of colleges, had little or no stake in society, and consequently generated a focus on the next world, just as the so-called Negro Spirituals talked only about heaven.

But now all 157 of those early Bible Institutes have changed into colleges and universities, and Evangelicals have loomed large in the professions, civic affairs, Congress, etc. The old awareness of God’s concern to conquer (not just flee) evils in this world is coming back as the result of new and sweeping Evangelical influence echoing the qualities of “First Inheritance” Evangelicals. This is a two-paragraph summary of that ten page paper.

Undoubtedly not everyone will embrace the partially healed polarization. Two dangers can be anticipated. One danger will be that the “Second Inheritance” avoidance of extensive social transformation may endure in some circles—because there are still quite a few disenfranchised, non-college masses in America to be won, not to mention the apparently vast readership of “Left Behind” books, which perpetuate the assumption that we don’t need to bother with fixing up this world since we will soon be raptured out of it.

The opposite danger will be a renewed focus on social transformation stripped of an adequate emphasis on the crucial individual transformation that is, ironically, so very essential to any significant social transformation. All the recent books on international development acknowledge the truly major problem of corruption—books like *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* by William Easterly, and *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* by Paul Collier. Both Easterly and Collier are eminently qualified to assess corruption as perhaps the biggest roadblock to the success of practically any project or program. Meanwhile, the mission/Christian community abroad has almost a monopoly on people of honesty and integrity, and that morality comes mainly from a vertical awareness of the living God. Otherwise good deeds easily become merely good business. Indeed, the enormous sums floating around the world in

the form of financial aid have created an equally enormous “aid-industry” which soaks up most of the money before it ever gets where it is supposed to go, or gets to what it is supposed to do.

All of this to say that it would be very important for anyone with a nose for the future to reread the astounding impact of the Gospel, individual and societal, in the period between the close of the War of 1812 and the Civil war. A recent Oxford book of 900 pages is actually entitled, *What Hath God Wrought? The Transformation of America 1815–1848* (by Daniel Walker Howe, 2007). It would appear that in no similar period in the history of the world has any nation ever changed so profoundly morally and materially—in that order—and the unique force for morality and transformation was clearly the Evangelical movement. This British author does not apparently have the inhibitions of many modern Americans against giving any credit to Evangelicalism for changes in society.

But to me the fascinating thing is not just where we are. It’s where we are apparently moving. The First Inheritance Evangelicalism was when Evangelicals were the most influential leaders in the country and catalyzed huge this-worldly transformations. Such efforts were then downplayed for the next hundred years. But they are now resurfacing as the Second Inheritance Evangelicals (common people won by Moody to Graham) are regaining power, but without a theology of this-world transformation (e.g., a “Public Theology”). It is no longer whether you believe in a Pre- or Post-Tribulation. Whichever you believe does not change the fact that Jesus heralded a Kingdom of God that was to involve His will being done on earth. We can agree on that. Missionaries, working intuitively (not theologically) have sensed that God is glorified by defeating evil not just by “communicating” spell-binding words about the next life or even promises of prosperity in this life.

Okay, we’re moving. One possible evidence is the boldness of the title of Howe’s book, which, as I say, would not so likely be suggested by an American. Why I think this is important is that Oxford published another book on the very same period as recently as 1994. Its title would not as forthrightly tell you that its interior gives a splendid account of the revivals and transformation that occurred in that period, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*. That is not all. Oxford published a third hefty book on the very same hinge-of-history period only three years earlier, in 1991, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846*. That far back the title and even the subtitle would never in the world tip you off to the unique, astounding transformations of that period. However, facts are hard to avoid. The text acknowledges a great deal of transforming religious activity.

So I see a trend even at Oxford in their discernment of American markets. But not only Oxford. Take one more example—the recent publishing history of books by and about William Wilberforce. Wealthy or influential Evangelical leaders in the 1815–1848 period identified with this wealthy British politician who was so active in social transformation. Millions of non-college Evangelicals in this country in the next 100 years didn’t, couldn’t identify. Now recently we are wealthy enough, educated enough, and influential enough to identify with him. Proof? Today you hear about him all the time. And, his major book, that shook England and all of Europe in many other languages, was out in 14 editions by 1820, each time extensively condensed and paraphrased, as was the custom in those days—especially with a 450-page fine-print original.

I have right on my desk five different recently republished editions. The closest to the original is also the most expensive (Amazon \$23). It employs the full 23-word original title, *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity*. This is an exact reproduction of the 14th (1820) edition and carries no contemporary date being part of a series of old books republished by Kessinger Publishing, Montana, USA. The second is a Hendrickson Christian Classic, hard-bound, in 1996, *A Practical View of Christianity*.

The third is by Bridge-Logos, in 2005, *William Wilberforce: Greatest Work, Excerpts from A Practical View of Christianity*. This one has an audio CD in the back.

The fourth is by Regal, in 2007, *Real Christianity: A Paraphrase in Modern English*.

The fifth is a Victor Classic, also in 2007, *Real Christianity: Discerning True Faith from False Beliefs*.

Seems to me this highlights a definite trend. All of these editions are reset in type with modern language except for the first. Their page counts, respectively are 406, 330, 222, 200, 208. It is obvious that they have extracted differently. The paraphrasing is startlingly different as well.

Now, this excursion into publishing histories in order to detect a trend may seem strange, but it is a form of “Cliometrics,” which is the academic field of quantitative history, similar to Sociometrics and Biometrics. It just means that you take advantage of countable facts in discerning history. (“Clio” is the Greek god of history). Robert Fogel at the University of Chicago is the founder of this new academic field. We will hear from him in a later issue. He is a Nobel Prize winner who wrote an entire book, *The Fourth Great Awakening*, because he was so convinced that four “Great Awakenings” have had a key role in the formation of our country.

If you are interested in a much more detailed view of the rationale for thinking we are heading into the midst of a Kingdom Era, be sure to read my *Mission Frontiers* article mentioned at the beginning.

Note, finally, the connection between the surge of Evangelical influence described here and the need for such in the discussions in this issue about the usefulness of using certain words (Hoefer, Love, and Winter). The meanings of those words may change for the better if Evangelicals will rediscover the meaning Jesus attached to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Editorial on “Thy Kingdom Come”

(2008) (*IJFM* 25:4)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/25_4_PDFs/25_4_Editorial.pdf

It would be hard to think of any phrase in the Bible that is more significant or mysterious than “Thy Kingdom come.” On the one hand, so many are talking about the Kingdom these days that it would seem futile to add any further words. On the other hand, precisely because there is so much confusion, it seems important to look more closely at what the Kingdom is from the point of view of the Bible.

In Denver, the theme of the International Society for Frontier Missiology meeting was “Thy Kingdom Come.” Some of those presentations appear in this issue.

Many think that the Kingdom is something that is coming later and that we are to pray for its soon coming, in effect, that history will end and we will be with the Lord. In that case, when we pray “Thy Kingdom come,” we are simply hastening the day that the Kingdom will come. On the other hand, many feel that more correctly the prayer asks simply that God’s will be done on this earth, and that the earlier phrase, “Thy kingdom come,” is spelled out by the following phrase, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This latter view is actually widespread these days, and evangelicals over the last century have very gradually accepted the fact that we are not simply waiting for Jesus to return, but we are to “occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13). Richard Wurmbrand, who is known as the Voice of the Martyrs, puts it succinctly, “We must strive to convert not only a prostitute or a drunkard, but prostitution, alcoholism, the prisons, man’s exploitation of other people, war—all these things must be abolished, and this can only be done if the Christian fights his battle in the social as well as personal sphere.”

In any case, in this issue, this formidable theme is explored in interesting ways. In fact, some of what you will read is the most exciting thing you can imagine.

NOTE: The articles in IJFM issue 25:4, reporting on the ISFM conference, “Thy Kingdom Come,” Can be found at this url: http://www.ijfm.org/25_4.htm.

Eradicating the Causes of Disease as an Aspect of Kingdom Mission

(2008 and various dates; compiled by Beth Snodderly from Winter writings on this topic.

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The principal concern in all of this is the distortion we can see in many people's ideas of God. In coping with this, they may frequently attribute to God what is actually the work of an evil intelligence, and thus fatalistically give not the slightest thought to fighting back.

In scripture we see the prominence of the emphasis on the coming of God's Kingdom, and note that "the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil" (1 John 3:8). What if all disease pathogens as well as all violent forms of life are the work of Satan? How would that amplify and refocus our global mission?

When Satan Turned against God

When Satan turned against God precisely what kind of destruction and perversion did he set out to achieve? Where would we see evidence of his works? Would he set out to pervert the DNA of originally tame animals and micro-organisms? Would he employ powers of deception so that we would get accustomed to pervasive violence in nature and no longer connect an intelligent evil power with evil and suffering? Is this what Satan set out to do from the time he fell out with the Creator—that is, did he set about to pervert and distort all forms of life so as to transform all nature into an arena "red in tooth and claw" that reigns today?

Distorted Ideas of God

There are very many people who are profoundly puzzled, perplexed, and certainly confused by the extensive presence of outrageous evil in the created world of an all-powerful, benevolent God. The principal concern in all of this is the distortion we can see in many people's ideas of God. In coping with this, they may frequently attribute to God what is actually the work of an evil intelligence, and thus fatalistically give not the slightest thought to fighting back.

Fighting Back against Disease

We need to recognize the very radical and significant decision of God to create beings, angelic and human, with true free will and to work through those intermediaries. God, we know, invites us to bind up the wounds we can see with our eyes and to ward off evil which is large enough to see without a microscope. But He also has seemed to await human collaboration in fighting the microbiological roots of evil.

Theology of Disease

Our theologies, that is, our formalized ways of attempting to think biblically, were hammered out during centuries that were totally blind to the microscopic world. Our current theological literature, to my knowledge, does not seriously consider disease

pathogens from a theological point of view—that is, are they the work of God or Satan? Much less does this literature ask the question, “Does God mandate us to eliminate pathogens?” We have an un-updated theology, thinking that we aren’t responsible to do something about something we can’t see (microbes). But now that we CAN see these microbes and now that we have new knowledge about the outside sources of several massive diseases, we cannot in good conscience fail to do what we can to mount new offensive warfare with those attacking sources.

Discovering Origins Rather than Treatment and Prevention

Surprising recent insights show that many diseases are basically caused by outside invaders which we need to fight in the same sense as we fight the crime of visible terrorists. Does nutrition, exercise, banishing anxiety, etc. protect you or cure you of malaria? Are our immune systems normally capable of defeating malaria, tuberculosis, smallpox, anthrax, etc.? No, not normally. And, if the latest thinking is correct, slow-acting microbes underlie heart disease as well as cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s, and schizophrenia. So, do we just go on praying in addition to doing what we can to prevent diseases (good nutrition, exercise, etc.)? It is understandable, of course, that we would not automatically think about going beyond prayer and taking concrete measures to quell the source of these destructive diseases if we did not know that they are caused by attacking pathogens which our immune systems, no matter how healthy, cannot always overcome.

Bringing Glory to God

To destroy the works of the devil in the realm of disease is one major way in which our testimony of word and deed can glorify the true nature of our living God, our heavenly father. It is to rectify our God’s damaged reputation. It is to avoid extending the implicit and embarrassing policy of almost constantly misrepresenting Him around the world.

In regard to horrifying disease and violence in nature, people have become so used to it, so accustomed to it, so hardened to it, that they have drifted into suppositions that this must be the way God created things. And then people get to thinking that a God who does not mind violence, cruelty, and suffering is not the most appealing kind of a God to serve. Attacking the roots of disease is part and parcel of our basic mandate to glorify God in all the earth.

Both believers and non-believers are stumbling about wondering over the amount, the harshness, and the unpredictability of evil in our world. Indeed, the credibility of an all-powerful and loving God is constantly being called into question by people who are no longer content to suppose “that God has His reasons.” We may indeed not know all His reasons. But do we have reasons for our inaction?

Frontier #1: Restoring God's Glory

(2008) (Foundations Lecture #19)

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The Lord's Prayer and Social Action

Most of the people in the world are powerless to a great extent. Very few people could change their vocation if they wanted to. They're just scratching out a living, barely, or maybe not even succeeding. Understandably, their religion would have nothing to do with this world; it is all heaven.

In church history, those religious groups that ran governments, like the Lutherans, or the Anglicans, or the Catholics, had theologies which are today called public theologies, or theologies of this world. The minorities that never ran any government—groups like the Anabaptists, the Moravians, the Quakers—tended to think about the next world, because they had nothing they could do in this world. We've inherited more of that theology by far. The person who's a devout fervent believer in Jesus Christ owes more to the Anabaptists than to the reformers or to the Catholics. The Evangelical Awakening is closer to us than it is to the Reformation itself, and it's the Evangelical Awakening from which we derive our theology and our church life, which mostly has to do with the next world. The only exception to this is a man in the Anglican tradition named John Wesley. He took the Pietism from Germany, which was mainly otherworldly, and he grafted into it all kinds of secular concerns. They reformed the courts, the prisons, the insane asylums, the schools—it was an immense transformation of society in England in the eighteenth century. The Evangelicals, though most of them don't remember it today, have this history that did involve drastic and extensive social action.

Today we tend to look down our nose at social action, and if that's a means of getting into heaven, rightly so. But if it's an outgrowth of our faith in the Lord's Prayer, then this is the way we glorify God, to align ourselves with the light instead of with the darkness. When a Harvard professor could make a statement quoted in *Time* magazine that if the Intelligent Design people's God exists, then he's the author of all the evil we see, this does not demonstrate a very good basis for evangelism. This isn't the Bible talking, this is not the New Testament with its awareness of Satan; this is a kind of paganism, what we could call evangelical fatalism.

People like John Piper say that everything that moves is God's energy: when a gnat bats its wings, that's the power of God. So he has no room for Satan at all. When you tell your child of 4 that you want them to decide whether they're going to buy this dress or that dress, are you in control of that child, or are you just conceding free will? When God chooses to create beings with free will, he's conceding his will, but he's still in control. If the child chooses the wrong dress you could say "No, you can't do that," or you could make your child into a robot where it would never say anything or do anything that wasn't you initiating it, but you may not want a robot for a child.

Maybe God doesn't want angels and human beings as robots. He wants them with free will. Now that doesn't mean he condones whatever they do, he deplores what they

do in many cases. Apparently, that's part of God's purpose. He chose not to control them. And it's not that he can't, not that he doesn't have the power to defeat evil in all forms, but for some reason he wants us to work intelligently and voluntarily for him, to love him voluntarily, to give our lives for him voluntarily.

But if you subtract the free will and say that God controls everything, then you get into the question why he does all these evil things. Why does he create parasites that blind millions of people? In my book he didn't do that. And to say that he did is a major obstacle in promoting the glory of God. But ever since Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin we have tried to insist on a brittle intellectual formula that is logical but erroneous. If you say, "Why pray the Lord's Prayer—Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven—if that's already true?" But it isn't true. If it were already true, we wouldn't be told to pray that prayer. If everything that happened on earth was God's will already, why pray the Lord's Prayer?

Historically the reason the evangelicals rejected the social gospel was because the masses of them were lower class people that D. L. Moody won to Christ. The people who were talking about governmental level decisions were wealthy college people—the old style evangelicals. So there was a social polarization there, the rejection wasn't purely theological.

Jesus taught in terms of changing society to the will of God. We say that's hopeless, the world's getting worse and worse anyway so forget it. It puts more blame on the evangelicals than on the liberals. But the people who are passionate social reformers were not necessary liberal. In fact, the thing that broke the myth about that was a book by Timothy Smith called *Revivalism and Social Reform*, where he shows how revivalism directly led to social reform. It wasn't that revivalism was spiritual and social reform was liberal. Revivalism and social reform were the same thing in the 1850s, and there were incredible numbers of societies for the improvement of morals and societies for literacy, society for women's education, societies for abolition of slavery. All this social activity was very evangelical.

But that was before Moody came along. Moody brought millions of lower class people into the church, and they had no stake in running the governments or social change, and so they talked about the next world.

The evangelicals at the Moody Bible Institute began to think about eschatology. For about 35 years, practically everything they taught and wrote about was what was going to happen at the end of time, any moment it's going to happen. In other words, no use building a bridge because Christ may come before you finish the bridge—that type of thinking.

Well, Wesley didn't think that way, he wanted to reform England anyway. And I think we need to align ourselves with the Lord's Prayer whether we're going to do all of that before Christ returns or not. We need to be lined up with God against darkness and evil. However, Evangelicals are not distinguished yet in the fields of medical research on the front lines of doing away with diseases for instance, they're not involved in world level banking decisions, there's no developed theology even about disease.

Evangelicals didn't form any colleges, they formed Bible institutes. And for 60, 70 years they went off into a tunnel, a detour, and kept out of public life—no congressmen, no lawyers, no mayors, no professionals practically. But now all those Bible institutes have become Christian colleges and universities. Evangelicals are going

into mainstream public life, and all of a sudden facing questions they never had to decide before. They are gaining a social conscience. They are now members of Congress. They are having to make decisions, which way to vote and how to run the government. They never used to do that, and now they're developing what is called a public theology. This is the simple reason why I think the face of Evangelicalism is changing today.

The Gospels and Christ: A Global Perspective

(2008) (Foundations Lecture #7)

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“If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11:20).

There is a perfectly huge amount of literature on the subject of the Kingdom of God. You can find endless discussions about when such a Kingdom is going to come and if it is already here. The New Testament talks about it in both ways. You can even read about the supposed or possible difference between the Kingdom of God, which is a phrase most frequent in Mark and Luke, and the Kingdom of Heaven, which occurs in parallel passages in Matthew. John has very few occurrences of the Kingdom of God.

This particular statement, “If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you,” is not found in Mark or John, but in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew it is one of the only four instances where “Kingdom of God,” not “Kingdom of Heaven” occurs. The phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” occurs 32 times in Matthew and no other place in the entire Bible.

Many scholars believe that Matthew and Luke build on Mark to begin with, which is the shortest of the Gospels, but that Matthew and Luke were able to employ an additional document, called “Q,” which is merely the first letter of the German word for “source.” Thus, possibly some of the four references in Matthew to the Kingdom of God rather than Kingdom of Heaven may have come in from the Q document.

The best explanation for Matthew’s use of the Kingdom of Heaven in place of the Kingdom of God, as I see it, is the fact that Matthew was beamed to Jews and they did not believe in pronouncing the word “God” but tended to use the word “heaven” instead. Jesus Himself may have done that in the Lord’s Prayer, where the word “God” does not occur but rather it says, “on earth as it is in heaven”—that is, as it is in the domain of God’s rule.

In any event, if someone on the mission field who has never heard of the Bible were to read the Gospels for the first time they would clearly get the idea that the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Heaven), is the main subject—not in the sense of “how to get to heaven” but how the power, the rule, the authority of God—of Heaven—can get to earth, how His Will can come on earth as it is in heaven.

By contrast, the religious mutation of Christianity that emerged from the Reformation focuses on the opposite, turning the New Testament upside down, allowing us to misread dozens of passages.

Apparently in the long, slow history of Western civilization, before the Bible was really widespread, Christianity did not present a challenge for change in this life so much as it helped people otherwise lacking in any conceivable earthly hope to submit to the “as is” situation and fix their hopes on the afterlife.

The Bible much more focuses on God’s will, His Kingdom, becoming a reality in this life. I am still enough of a fundamentalist not to think that the world is going to get better and better until Jesus comes to congratulate us on our accomplishments, but I do

think He expects us to work toward that end whether it is attainable or not as a means of glorifying His Name, and empowering our evangelism. What rings in my ears is the phrase in the parable, “Occupy ‘till I come.”

If Jesus had just gone around and urged people to wait out the next world, the Gospels would have been very different from what they are. Jesus challenged every kind of evil. Your readings this time make reference to the series of very unusual concerns He had, which contrasted sharply and unexpectedly with the perspectives of the devout and religious disciples.

Indeed, to this day we extensively misunderstand the NT. We don’t often hear people interpreting the Parable of the Prodigal Son as primarily presenting the older son as the Jewish people who did everything right but could not understand the Father’s love for the other nations, who, in their perspective, were unredeemable.

You see the same modern confusion about the parable granting equal wages to workers who were not there all day. This procedure would logically have astonished the earlier workers, who, in this case, typify the Jews who are consternated over God’s goodwill to the gentiles as seen in the behavior of Jesus.

This missiological issue became a very drastic situation as recounted in Luke 4, when Jesus deliberately pointed out two Old Testament instances where God was good to non-Jews. In that case the synagogue crowd exploded in fury and surged forward to kill him.

In other words, standing back, removing our religious glasses that seem to see everything in terms of how we can have our sins forgiven and get to heaven, we can begin to glimpse an almost entirely new scene in which the issue is not so much salvation as mainly service, that is, what we do after we get forgiven. In fact, Jesus actually said, “he who seeks to save his life will lose it and he who will lose his life for me will save it.” Very slight variations of this statement occur in all three synoptic gospels, actually twice in Matthew and Luke—verses rarely quoted by Evangelicals.

This repeated emphasis of Jesus has a very different meaning from a common approach in evangelism where you begin by asking a person if they were to die right now would they go to heaven, thus focusing attention in the very beginning on how they might seek to be saved.

Jesus’ “message” is summed up in the Gospels as two words: “repent and believe,” which probably meant something like, “give up your own pursuits and follow and obey Jesus Christ.” Yet we interpret it to mean, “ask forgiveness and assent to a short list of theological statements and you’ve got it made.”

Look at John 17:1:

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”

Or, John 17:2:

For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Or John 4:33:

Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

This verse makes clear that God has work on earth to do. Connect that statement with the following (John 17:4):

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

In these verses you can see clearly the New Testament balance—the New Testament indissoluble connection—between the recruiting of human beings and new life in Christ and the work of the Father.

For Jesus to glorify the Father it was necessary for the Father to glorify Him. In some sense it’s the same with us. But for God to glorify Himself in us is not an end but a means to the end that we might glorify Him.

However, we normally take all this to mean that God’s main purpose is to rescue men and to glorify them, when the fact is that He is equally recruiting men to serve Him as Jesus did in glorifying His Name. Jesus recruited people into the Kingdom of God which was an important achievement, but He also was recruiting them to do as He did—as He said, “As my Father has sent Me even so send I you.” He didn’t say, “As my Father saved Me so save I you.” That’s the Evangelical interpretation which essentially ignores the entire larger cause of redemption. Seeker churches and Evangelicals in general are usually seeking people who seek to be saved rather than people who are willing to repent and believe and be God’s servants in following Jesus and serving as He served—both saving men and seeing them glorify God.

One of the very key verses in this respect is 1 John 3:8,

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

In the New Testament “the works of the devil” to which Jesus could refer were drastically limited by His hearers’ limited understanding of creation and of the fallen condition of creation. For example, they knew no more about germs than John Calvin did. The challenge for us today is to discover what Jesus would have said to them had they known what we know about germs, in other words, would He have said that germs are one of the works of the devil which He and His followers are to set out to destroy?

It is common today among many Evangelicals to be content with the first century understanding of nature and to believe that if we can just build up our immune systems enough through eating the right things, in other words whole foods, organic foods, instead of degraded foods, that we will then be able to throw off any disease whatsoever. It is admittedly amazing to the extent that this is true. But there are still a large array of diseases from smallpox to SARS to Guinea worm to river blindness to tuberculosis to dengue fever which we have to go out and slay. The healthiest immune system will not guard you against malaria.

Challenge 1

In other words, a major challenge faces anyone who lives in the age where we can actually see tiny parasites like malaria in microscopes and we can trace the four very clever stages of their attack on the human body. We have even noticed their insidious

change in their human hosts to make the bodies of those infected attract more mosquitoes so their infected blood can be transmitted to still more victims. I point this out simply to illustrate the extensive difficulties in understanding for our day what Jesus wants to say to us if we merely focus on what He said in the first century. With increased insight into the works of the devil we have an increased span of responsibility. Our Christian mission becomes different and larger.

Challenge 2

The second major challenge to which we need to refer in this lesson is the very perplexing question of how the New Testament is different from the Old Testament. In the early centuries, Jews did not want to be persecuted along with the Christians and understandably sought to make clear to the government that the Christians were not Jews. Thus, lamentably, many Christians were tortured and executed because Jews made that point to the government. The Jews had certain rights of religious expression, on which the Christians, they felt, ought not to depend.

Meanwhile, there was an enormous cultural difference between the increasing numbers of followers of Christ who were Greeks, and the proportionately decreasing numbers of Jewish followers of Christ. The distance became isolation. The isolation bred prejudice, antagonism, and criticism which grew across the centuries.

For these reasons exaggerated contrasts were often drawn between the Old and New Testaments giving the general impression of the inferiority of the earlier testament. Walter Kaiser, Jr., an eminent Old Testament scholar, does not even think the phrase "Old Testament" is a helpful label. But his perspective is not the understanding of the mainstream of our Christian cultural tradition.

As a result, when we study the contrasts and continuities between the Old Testament and the New Testament we find ourselves walking on eggshells. Very few people are as willing to recognize the continuities as the contrasts. But the continuities are obviously the most basic doctrines of the entire Bible.

Just last Sunday I heard a sermon that stressed the fact of grace in the New Testament versus the fact of law in the Old Testament, when in fact Abraham was as much saved by grace as anyone in the New Testament. There's no significant distinction between the grace of God and the power of the blood of Christ to forgive, whether you lived before or after His birth. It's also true that faith is not something that was invented in the New Testament or that came to light only in the ministry of Christ or the apostles.

When Paul, in Romans 1:5, stated his commission under God "to bring about the obedience of faith in all nations" he wasn't saying something that was brand new to the New Testament. When in the next chapter he insists that the meaning of circumcision is "circumcision of the heart" he's not saying anything different from what we read in Jeremiah, or even back in Deuteronomy.

It is patently false that the Old Testament is where people got saved by obeying the law and in the New Testament people get saved by giving intellectual assent to a list of basic doctrines. This perspective is simply heretical, far removed from the thrust of the Bible. In both testaments obedience from the heart is described as faith, and this is the kind of faith that saves you. It's not a case of believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for people's sins. Faith and obedience in the Bible absolutely cannot be

separated in either the Old Testament or the New Testament, no matter what the Reformers thought, whether Protestant or Catholic.

There are other reasons for people making distinctions between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The so called dispensational school detects cultural differences that are significant enough to them to imply theological differences. For them the dispensation of the Old Testament is radically different from the dispensation of the New Testament. I grew up in that stream of thinking, but the longer I live the more it seems that the continuities between the two testaments are much more significant than the differences.

In the New Testament one of the major shifts is the departure from the symbolism depicting the slaying of animals for the forgiveness of sin. But it was never true that faith was not essential in the process of animal sacrifices. The Old Testament itself often makes that point—that obedience is even better than sacrifice. So this is not the basic distinction between the two testaments but simply a deeper awareness of symbolism which would be significant for both Jew and Gentile.

It is thus true that Christ's sacrifice has been interpreted as a replacement for Jewish sacrifices. But, notice, this is a replacement of symbol rather than a replacement of meaning.

Also, there is the shift in the New Testament from the misunderstanding of some, that only Jewish people could be saved, to an awareness of the access to God of all peoples. But even this is simply a heightened awareness rather than a distinction. Many Gentiles came to God in the Old Testament.

In any case, we must resist the thought that the Gospel is like a baton passed from the Jews to the Gentiles and was never really possessed by the Jews. That idea goes along with the thought that somehow true faith was first discovered in the New Testament and is now possessed solely by the Gentiles.

Take a look at Paul's generalization in Romans 9 about the failure of the Jews to attain righteousness (Rom. 9:30-32):

What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.

If we don't understand this we will have a hard time evaluating the eternal prospects of people like Zechariah and Elizabeth or even Mary, the mother of Jesus. Contrary to what some people think, God did not just choose anybody to be the mother of Jesus. When Gabriel said to her, "You have found favor in the sight of God," he wasn't telling her she had won the lottery, but was speaking to someone whose character was appropriate to the assignment that God had for her. She had already, it would appear, the kind of faith that Abraham had who also did not know the details of the substitutionary atonement of the shed blood of Christ.

Challenge 3

In conclusion we can refer back to a previous lesson where we noticed the interrelations between the Jews in captivity in Zoroastrian territory.

This makes for a truly major difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is very important to realize that most of the Old Testament things are

described in the terms of God's ultimate control over all events—His sovereignty. We do not need to go over that again. We do need to understand that the New Testament recognition of an intelligent adversary who is in some sense “the God of this world” even after the Cross is both a major new perspective but also one that is rarely recognized.

In Summary

We can see at least three “challenges” as we seek to understand the New Testament:

- 1) the continuity of belief that works against evil
- 2) the general question of the continuities and differences between the testaments
- 3) the important and specific difference in the way bad things are described.

Thus, we see the indissoluble unity of the Bible in regard to the relentless purpose of God to reconquer a planet under the control of an evil one, and to recruit men and women to be involved in that task.

Indicators of the Future (2008) (Foundations Course, Lecture 18).

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Our lesson today speaks of the future and of various “indicators” which can help us anticipate the future—the future of “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In our last lesson we actually talked about one of the major new features of the future, namely the spectacular and unexpected growth of those new types of Christianity which don’t readily classify as Christianity, if in fact we understand Christianity, by now, to be simply one of several cultural traditions imbued with Biblical values.

In this lesson, we will touch on some additional “indicators” of the future, such as science and faith, global agency networks, leadership development, university education, the unfinished task, new church planting movements, and the increasingly important concept of international development.

Science and Faith

In my perspective, the most serious of all features of the new future is the seemingly unresolvable polarization between science and faith.

Our global situation is this: it is as if millions of sincere and intelligent and believing scientists are genuinely awed into some sort of spirituality by the sheer wonder and infinite complexity of the nature they behold. Meanwhile, millions of sincere, intelligent believing people are similarly awed by the never ending riches and unexpected spiritual challenges they find in the Bible.

Modern man has gained such breathtaking new in- sights into nature that you might think there is nothing major left to be understood. However, the more we have learned about nature, the more we yet seem to need to find out. It is as though when the diameter of our knowledge increases, the circumference of our ignorance increases more than three times as fast.

Even the simplest things are still unfathomable. Take the attraction of a magnet to a screwdriver. What could possibly be going on between those two objects - each pulling toward each other? There is absolutely no human being alive, or who has ever lived, who has even the faintest idea of what’s going on. All we can do is predict the power of magnetism mathematically and describe its behavior minutely. We have not the faintest idea what it is.

It is equally confounding that there is a top and bottom to our world. Discovering that we live on a huge ball hanging in space held into a gravitational orbit by a sun 80 million miles away is common knowledge, and once again, we can calculate very accurately how gravitational attraction functions. But its very nature, while quite different from magnetic attraction in obvious ways, is just as totally inscrutable. No one has the faintest idea how it actually works.

Whether it is in the realm of enormously large things like our own galaxy, which to fly across would require a spaceship going at the speed of light for a hundred thousand years, or the billions of other galaxies both larger and smaller, or whether it is the tiniest

things which we can only see with an electron microscope rather than a telescope, once again, our knowledge is in many ways quite superficial.

Consider bacteria, of which there are 30 million different types. Upon invading the human body, they are intelligent enough to bide their time until their number can be multiplied sufficiently to do significant damage. At that key point scientists say, they have achieved a “quorum” and they attack simultaneously. If they attacked before a quorum was reached, the human body would be more easily able to defend itself. Now, that is a lot of intelligence for so small a creature as a bacterium. Until recently, no microbiologist ever dreamed that bacteria could communicate with each other, count noses and attack in force.

Thus, it is easy to see how awestruck many scientists can be. It is equally easy to understand the earnestness and the awe of those who pursue the pages of Holy Writ, where we find inklings of understanding of things that science can't say anything about, where we can find challenges to our morality and our very purposes for existence, where we can find sensitivities of love and compassion and the willingness to sacrifice, where we can understand how profoundly different humans are from animals, and where we can seek illumination in regard to our own personal existence and role in life.

The Polarization

How could these two sources of awe—science and religion—be polarized, be in opposition? I believe the fault is on both sides. Religious people have rightly been disturbed when science has been employed as a military weapon, when wild science fiction portrays totally horrifying futures, or when scientists have boasted, so often, of certain knowledge, only to be confounded by later insights which question their earlier audacities.

No wonder some Bible believing Christians insist that science is the enemy of the Christian faith. However, in my youth, science was considered a friend of faith and the Moody Bible Institute put out an incredible series of avant-garde color motion pictures probing the wonders of science and demonstrating thereby the glory of God.

If I type “Hugh Ross” into Google practically everything on the screen beyond his home page denounces his work. On the other hand, many who write from a religious background denounce Hugh Ross for seeking to glorify God through the wonders of science. One of these religious web addresses actually insists that science is both dangerous and even useless because it says that while the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth demonstrates His handiwork, “there is no speech or language where their voice is heard.” Of course the Bible says, “there is no speech or language where their voice is NOT heard.” Do we need to twist the Bible to defend it? Misquote scripture to prove our points?

On the other hand, some scientists collect stories from history when scientists were actually opposed by religious leaders even though the Church, for example, has much more often promoted science than it has opposed it, even providing a theological basis for it! But, some scientists only remember the opposition and develop a sort of righteous indignation towards religion.

Furthermore, many scientists are simply unwilling to allow any divine authority to tamper with their lives.

However, other scientists are genuinely concerned over the fact that religious leaders like John Calvin and Martin Luther stated emphatically that the Bible teaches that the sun goes around the earth and that the Copernican theory of a heliocentric solar system is refuted by the Bible. These scientists don't stop to think that Calvin and Luther misunderstood the Bible. They assume Calvin and Luther were intelligently explaining what the Bible teaches, and that therefore the Bible cannot be trusted.

A similar situation exists today for all of those people who believe the earth is very old. Often, they oppose religion, because of course all religious people insist the earth is just 6,000 years old based upon the teaching of scripture. As I see it, the issue really isn't whether the earth is old or young, but whether the Bible is not to be trusted.

Many evangelicals today have somehow lost track of the background of the Evangelical movement in which it was widely taught that the geological ages preceded Genesis 1:1 and that the creation account in Genesis is a new creation, explaining the origin of human beings and non-carnivorous animal life of the kind that would be achieved at the end of time, when (in Isaiah 11) a lion will lie down with a lamb and the 24/7 violence we see in nature will have ceased. This "pre-Genesis" view was clearly explained in *Unger's Bible Handbook* published by Moody Press in 24 editions over decades amounting to over 500,000 copies. A revision of it is still in print. Unger was the chair of the Old Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Note that if this view were correct—and I am not saying it is—there would be no conflict whatsoever between modern paleontology and the Biblical text. However, everybody, from Time magazine to the kindergarten teacher has been persuaded by earnest Christians that the Bible certainly teaches that the universe is no older than 6,000 years.

Obviously, huge obstacles exist for anyone who would seriously attempt to evangelize in a scientifically-oriented society. Christianity has clearly succeeded among rural populations and among uneducated people all over the world, but in its own backyard it is facing increasing opposition because of religious teachings which may have no foundation in the Bible whatsoever.

We probably need to go back to the days when the Moody Bible Institute promoted its now-closed Moody Institute of Science, and try to understand science anew so that it does not oppose but actually upholds the Christian faith.

Nothing we have said thus far prevents the continued expansion of the Christian faith for the present. It can expand in areas where science is not well understood, or is not considered an obstacle to faith. There are new church planting movements described by David Garrison all over the world, especially among rural people. The Unfinished Task is very nearly finished, if in fact we measure that task by geographical or even sociological penetration of the Christian faith in one form or another.

Where we are gaining... and where we are losing...

But all such gains are temporary where a population will soon become educated by the dominant form of education today which is highly secularized both in science and history, and where poverty is not taken seriously by all mission agencies. We already see The William Carey International University adopting International Development as its 90 theme, as of 1977, and the Fuller Theological Seminary adding a course in International Development in 2005.

But, as long as scientists, who are genuinely awed, denounce Christian leaders who are genuinely awed, the Christian leaders will tend to reject the source of awe of the scientists. It is equally, and even more importantly true, that when Christian leaders (who are awed by the Bible) denounce scientists (who are awed by the works of God), the scientists will tend to deny the legitimacy of the source of awe of the Christian leaders.

Neither side will win unless both sources of awe are understood, both the Book of Nature as a revelation of God and the Book of Scripture as a revelation of God.

We, as Christian leaders, must take the initiative of knowing both books. The Christian leadership development pattern around the world and in the USA normally omits science from its curriculum altogether. Our curriculum does not lean at all, as the Bible itself would urge it to, upon this important additional source of awe and revelation—the works of God in nature.

This leads us to another future indicator.

Christian Leadership Education

Indeed, our leadership education is flawed in several different ways. I have often spoken of three levels of failure: *wrong students, wrong curriculum, and wrong packaging*.

We have already spoken of the *wrong curriculum* when it leaves out the earliest book of revelation, namely the Book of Nature, whose voice is heard in all languages. An almost more serious problem of global leadership development within the Christian tradition is our overwhelming emphasis on book learning and other training programs instead of on selection. By and large, the students at Bible schools and seminaries around the world are not gifted as pastors or missionaries no matter how many A's they earn in school. They were well trained but not well chosen. Selection is the problem.

It is a simple fact, grim as it may seem, that every church movement that depends on residentially trained pastoral leaders ends up foisting off on the church all kinds of highly trained, but ungifted people. This produces non-growth, or actual decline in membership, as can eminently be seen in the United States where every denomination depending on residential training for pastoral ordination is declining.

Meanwhile, around the world, every rapidly growing church movement depends on an entirely different system of selection—not who goes to seminary, but who is gifted. Training people who are gifted is remarkably different from trying to develop gifts in those who are already trained.

The third flaw in leadership development is rather simple. Wrong students, wrong curriculum. How about *wrong packaging*? While missionaries are expected to speak the language of the native, our ecclesiastical structures mindlessly continue to ignore the accepted university pattern of education and continue to call their schools “Bible Schools” or “Seminaries” and continue to wound the future of their graduates with nondescript degrees, such as M.Div.s or D.Min.s, degrees that mean nothing in the everyday world and thus impede graduate studies.

Another indicator to note is the extensive birth of new evangelical universities around the world. Joel Carpenter, Dean of Calvin College, did a quick internet survey and found at least 41 new evangelical universities in the mission lands. These universities, 91 curiously, have not been the result of missionary initiative. Their existence proves the importance, in the eyes of the national believers, of the university pattern over the

seminary pattern. But since these schools are not the result of missionary initiative and are not linked to mission agencies, they are, in many cases, wandering in the world of secularized curricula and are not directly contributing to leadership development in the Christian sphere. We must come to terms with the University pattern of education.

Networks of Mission Agencies

Speaking as we are, of globally-true phenomena, another important indicator of the future is the emergence of a new and unprecedented network of mission agencies on the global level.

This was founded in April of 2005 and is called the Global Network of Mission Structures. There are already associations of mission agencies at the national level and, in some cases, at the regional level, but until the establishment of the GNMS, there has never been, on the global level, an association of Evangelical mission agencies. The closest thing to it is the Third World Mission Association, but you can tell by its name that it is not a global association.

The GNMS now faces the challenge of networking on the global level in an age of absolutely unprecedented population interchange. A recent study indicates that the number of migrant workers in the world today is so large that the financial remittances that they send back to their families amount to something like 380 billion dollars a year, which is greater than all foreign aid and foreign investment put together.

Very specifically, the GNMS will be able to track the migration of individual people groups. It may find 10,000 in London or Los Angeles from a group which in the new situation is open to assistance and friendship, compared to the relatively closed attitude of its own people in the foreign situations from which they come.

This is not to say that migration is necessarily a good thing. Probably there is no single phenomenon in world history that has torn apart more families. The evangelization of migrant workers is not an entire solution, but leading people to Christ is certainly an essential foundation for whatever further solutions may appear on the horizon. But that horizon is not simple. An even more important factor in the future will come up in the next lesson.

Winter's Response to Christopher Little's "What Makes Mission Christian?"

(2008) (*IJFM* 25:2)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/25_2_PDFs/Responses%20to%20Little.pdf

Ralph D. Winter Responds

Ralph D. Winter (Ph.D., Cornell) is a senior mission thinker who has been actively involved from the beginning of the massive mission transition from simply thinking in terms of countries or individuals to thinking in terms of peoples. He founded the U.S. Center for World Mission and William Carey International University. He is editor of Mission Frontiers magazine and the International Journal of Frontier Missiology.

I have four observations.

1. Little begins his excellent paper well by acknowledging an earlier (19th Century) Evangelical missionary focus on the glory of God, citing Bosch. He then goes on to show how in the 20th century that focus became corrupted by thinkers in the sphere of the World Council of Churches, and confused in various Evangelical streams, such as the Lausanne Committee. He fears we are going to repeat the World Council errors, citing the inadequately defined "holism" of the then World Evangelical Fellowship's Iguassu Affirmation as well as the sheer statistics indicating a massive slide in the mission world to concerns for this world—justice, environment, the use of business, in general "horizontalization."

2. In evaluating holism he quotes Jesus, proving "that He did not require behavioral change [for people] to receive the benefits of the kingdom." However, holism has more to do with the deeds of the missionary than the deeds of the hearer. Little allows that "mission may include word and deed [but that] deed requires word to explain it." What he does not say is that words also require deeds to explain them.

An example of the latter would be that if a man's withered arm is restored, the act can then easily be explained simply by saying, in words, "This tells you about God." But if the man's withered arm were not restored you could not say, "This tells you about God." Words are simply handles on reality. Take the reality away and the words mean nothing. It is equally true that deeds unexplained may not be meaningful. Can't we agree that neither "wordless deeds" nor "deedless words" can suffice?

3. Little very effectively counters the idea that we are to bring about the kingdom of God on earth or that we are even able to do so. I certainly agree. It surely has never occurred to me that we could assume to do so. But does that mean we should not fight crime, injustice and dis-ease? Little says that "Before there can be a Wilberforce there must first be a Wesley." That is very true, because Wesley spent more time fighting crime, injustice and disease than Wilberforce ever did. What amazed and stirred Wilberforce out of his playboy youth was the potent and constant attention given by Wesley and the entire Evangelical Awakening to social problems. Their extensive social work, although downplayed by many contemporary Evangelicals, greatly empowered their message. Their confrontation of the entire social spectrum was going on for 50 years before Wilberforce took serious notice.

Thus Little's long quotation from Roland Allen in Endnote 19 is quite amiss. Allen suggests that Paul talked and it was his hearers who acted. Wesley talked AND acted, and his converts talked AND acted.

4. Little's greatest contribution is his concluding emphasis on what he terms "Doxological Mission." Note these powerful phrases: "bringing glory to the Father," "a passion to see God glorified," "the pursuit of God's glory," "the ultimate purpose for . . . mission is to bring glory to God, so that a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language might declare the praise and honor and glory and power of God for all eternity."

That is the Bible! Jesus told His disciples, "You are the light of the world . . . Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Thus, if good deeds are what glorify God, then by all means let not our words be without deeds! Let us make sure our words are empowered with deeds!

So what does this mean practically? It would seem that if it is a good deed to care for people dying of malaria, it is also a good deed to organize believers to stamp out malaria altogether. This is not to produce an earthly paradise or bring in the millennium. This is to fight Satan and all his works as a means of glorifying God, knowing that this will also draw people to that kind of God. In practice this would seem to include befriending science in so far as it expositis a major arena of God's creativity. It means missionaries taking with them to the field both a micro-scope and a telescope (why not?). Our business is to glorify God. Whatever that takes has a new name, "doxological mission." And that is evangelism and proclamation at its best.

Seizing the Future

(2008) (Foundations Course, Lecture 20)

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In the perspective of this course we are dealing with the unfolding of a single story. It is not the story of the universe all the way from the big bang until today. Although presented speculatively, it is more especially the story of a good Creator and a good creation which after a lengthy period is suddenly attacked by a breakaway leader who, with his intelligent followers, wound terribly both the creation and the reputation of the Creator, thus presenting the challenge of redemption and restoration. It can be seen as an epic in five acts.

Act 1 is the longest of all the Acts, by far. During this first act the universe is created and the very lengthy period of the development of life takes place, possibly the work of angels guided by God, pleasing Him as they gradually learn what today we are beginning to understand as the true complexities of life itself.

The emergency arises at the end of Act 1. By this time atoms and molecules and, most surprisingly of all, the incredible intricacies of life have been developed, not just tiny bacteria based on DNA molecules, but small animals. Some of the animals are radially symmetrical, like star fish. Others are “bipolar” which means they have a front and a back, a right and a left. The key point is that none of these animals at this stage is aggressive. None needs to defend itself.

But the emergency, introducing Act 2, arises when, let’s guess, the archangel whom Paul calls “the god of this world,” with all his host, turns against God. This is the Fall of Satan. As a result of the genetic distortions of a rebel Satan, during this much shorter but still lengthy Act 2, predatory forms of life appear at all levels, from bacteria to dinosaurs, and all of nature becomes a battle ground.

Meanwhile during this tumultuous Act 2 the good angels continue to develop increasingly intelligent forms of life. By 11,000 years ago truly modern humans finally appear, but like the rest of nature, are gruesomely distorted and dangerously predatory.

Finally, a major counter move introduces Act 3. A massive asteroid wipes out all life in the middle East, possibly gouging the below-sea-level depression now known as the Dead Sea. And now in this region, the original, non-carnivorous kind of plants and animals are recreated in the Garden of Eden and a new Adamic race is brought into existence in the image of God, with the apparent intent of re-introducing harmonious, not carnivorous forms of life, life that is a reflection of the end of time when the lion will lie down with the lamb (Isa. 11).

However, Act 4 begins when Adam falls, and Eden breaks down. Now, the new forms of non-predatory life of Genesis 1 interbreed with the earlier depraved forms of life outside of the region of the Garden of Eden. The Sons of God marry the daughters of men, and the length of human life gradually sags to a fraction of what it was intended.

Obviously, as the result of Adam’s fall the image of God was damaged or erased, whatever it was, and all human beings are now equally depraved and in need of redemption.

We, today, stand at the later stages of this Act 4, in which God’s redemptive work is making men new and enlisting them in the war effort to “destroy the works of the Devil” (1 John 3:8).

Meanwhile, in this present Act 4 situation, widespread delusion and blindness prevails even concerning the existence of a war against Satan. This is especially true and tragic in those parts of the world where redemption would seem to have succeeded more completely, that is, in the “Christian” West, and where war efforts could best be launched.

Much of the world is still so beaten down by the ravages of evil—poverty, disease, human conflict—that it is ironic that unlike the West the poor and the powerless of this world are more likely to understand the wartime footing we actually are experiencing. It is further ironic because they may be the least likely to be able to do anything about it. For them “escapist theology” is the best solace. They are the ones who now can best sing “This world is not my home, I’m just a-passing through.”

Since the poor and the disadvantaged can’t be effectively involved in a global war to defeat the works of Satan we must return to those whom we might describe as “disinclined,” but theoretically capable.

The famous philosopher of yesteryear, Mortimer Adler, made the observation that what the world needed was the “moral equivalent of war”—that is, an attitude of all-out war effort, not fighting against flesh and blood, but against a similarly massive, urgent, intense, sacrificial concentration of human beings against not humans but human problems and other evils which distort God’s creation and tear down His reputation. I would add, against an enemy that is not human and whose very existence is denied apathetically by even most Christians today.

Wars in the past have typically gotten started because of some massive and aggressive challenge. The closest thing to that might be a global plague of the sort that killed from 50 to 100 million people in 1918—far more people right after World War I than were killed in the war itself. But even that might not lead to the kind of total war which the United States and other nations experienced in what we call the Second World War. Not many people alive today lived through that war; those of us who did, can recall vividly the utter transformation of a nation involved in all-out, total war.

If our analysis in these lessons is correct, this war has been going on ever since Satan fell, and was renewed with humans involved when Adam fell. Adam’s role in the garden was to take care of it, but after Eden broke down, his own survival was at stake. Indeed, his own son lost his life no doubt in part due to the sin permeated atmosphere outside of Eden. There is no likelihood that the equivalent of a Pearl Harbor is going to happen that would rally the social resources of the world, or even Christian resources, or more particularly, the Evangelicals. But it is easily possible to imagine that the force of the Lord’s Prayer “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” would require us to do everything we possibly can, not just to exhibit fantastic personal sacrifice, but to mobilize as much of the Christian world and the non-Christian world as possible. 97

To quote 1 John 3:8 again, “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” This verse points out how very central war against evil, war against Satan, actually is. If this is the central purpose, or one of the central purposes of the Son of God (who made it plain that, “as my Father has sent me, even so

send I you”), then His commission is our commission and our commission is today widely underestimated and misunderstood. First century believers could not know how great were the inroads the enemy had made, for example, in the realm of disease.

We do have, vaguely, the structure of war in our hands. Christians, notably in the western world, and now noticeably in the rest of the world, have launched mission agencies which are teams of people explicitly determined to carry out purposeful actions in accord with God’s will. These could be considered the “armed forces” of the Kingdom, containing the “servicemen” of that Kingdom. In that Kingdom there are also “civilians,” the donors, the supporters, and even those who do not support them, who are “behind the lines.” The problem is, that the civilians are not remotely as mobilized at this time as they would be during a real total war, and it is true that even the servicemen are only striking a glancing blow against the Enemy of the Kingdom.

I don’t believe the problem is that we have outrageously selfish, evil, or even acquisitive people. We simply have people who don’t sense any war effort and are living it up in an apparently peacetime situation.

It might be observed in passing that if all mission donors were to adopt the consumption level of the missionary families they support this would free up, in a large percentage of the donors cases, a good percentage of their income. But right now they would say, “What’s the use?” Such a question derives understandably from the thought that the needs around the world are dimly existent, hopelessly too large to resolve, or the efforts being made seem to be ineffective or futile.

If we are going to seize the future in terms of the wartime situation in which we find ourselves, several radically new perspectives must urgently become more widespread.

The Scope of the Problem

First of all, we must realize the true scope of the problem. If Satan is able to dull people’s senses and to divert their gaze, that would certainly explain the extent to which, as John Eldredge puts it in his book *The Epic*, “I am staggered by the level of naivete that most people live with regarding evil.” How is it possible for us to get a good deal of our country into a war effort in Iraq, where perhaps ten Americans die a day, and not be far more alarmed over the fact that back home due to two diseases alone, we lose as many people as if we are fighting 600 Iraq wars? Cardiovascular disease and cancer claw down to horrible death 6,000 people per day—600 times as many as in Iraq—who go down in as great a degree of suffering as those who are dying in Iraq. Yet the actual mobilization in this country to understand the origins of either of these two major diseases is terrifyingly minor. More than ninety percent of the money that goes for the ravages of these two diseases (almost two billion dollars a day) is focused on treatments of people who are already diseased, not on pursuing the sources of the diseases.

If this imbalance were more widely known, could this function as a “Pearl Harbor,” to help us rally the troops for a new world war against disease? Our gargantuan outlay in this country for medical and pharmaceutical services is almost totally concentrated on healing activity, not on the eradication of the sources of disease.

The Obscurity of the Problem

Secondly, we need to realize that this problem is not only huge and vicious, it is cloaked in the obscurity of confusion and ignorance. What has just been said about the lack of awareness of the problem is itself clearly a separate aspect of it. The hugeness of the problem wouldn't be as serious if it were in plain sight.

However, thus far I have only spoken of the evil of the massive onslaught of disease on animals and humans. Evil also includes the widespread corruption of the human element that might be involved in the solution of the problem!

Then, what about the rarely noticed distortions we see in the very existence of predatory forms of life? How about the genetic transformation that could restore predatory life to non-carnivorous condition? Is that part of the mission to glorify God? If man-eating tigers are vicious due to genetic distortion by Satan and his angels, isn't that a work of the devil? How about one day restoring them through genetic re-engineering? Is the only answer to kill or cage? Would it not be glorifying to God not to be blamed for their current predatory state? Again, is that part of our mission? If so, it involves a knowledge of microbiology which has only recently dawned on us.

But there are still other easily overlooked evils. After many years working for the World Bank, one of the senior officials wrote a book entitled, *The White Man's Burden*. The book points out the gruesome reality that well over half the funds intended to relieve the poverty and economic distress in underdeveloped nations of the world gets diverted by the dishonesty of government officials and intermediaries in the needy nations, as well as within the ranks of the 10,000 employees of the World Bank itself. Again and again, the World Bank has attempted to clean up its act, but the diversion of funds even within its walls is so extensive that there is little will to do it.

Indeed, for the Kingdom of God to come on earth and His will to be elaborated in opposition to our great enemy, radically new awareness is necessary.

Who Will Fight for Us?

Furthermore, it would be simplest to believe that it would be sufficient if the Christians of the world are aroused to this effort. Embarrassingly, except in the area of personal salvation and hopes of eternity, most of the efforts and initiatives in our world today that focus on the defeat of the works of the Devil are led by non-Christians, or by entities that are not clearly Christian.

If money would do it, then the magnificent efforts of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation could be the answer, since their example has already pressured many other foundations to deal with some of the world's most urgent problems. It so happens that at the cutting edge of microbiological research on sources of disease, Orthodox Jewish doctors are to be found all out of proportion to their percentage of the population. However, even in the case of Jimmy Carter and his outstanding Carter Center, which has a focus on the extermination of disease pathogens, neither the money nor the activity is noticeably derived from the formal Christian movement.

In other words, it does not seem likely that it would be wise to suppose that Christians alone can slay the giants of evil in our world today. In a sense, however, our main purpose, which is more likely achievable, is to clarify the fact that God's purposes, as reflected by Christian initiatives, make Him out to be the opponent of evil, not the initiator of evil.

A Particular Problem

Several types of theology would seem to frustrate any substantial efforts against evil. One theological tradition might emphasize that the world is getting worse and worse anyway, so why bother? Focus on the next world. Another, more virulent form of theology, would actually attribute all tragedies to the initiative of God Himself, rather than to the initiative of fallen angels, or fallen humanity. This latter type of theology is so pervasive that even Christian leaders can write books like *When God Doesn't Make Sense*, or *Where Is God When It Hurts?* In both cases, God's mysterious will, to which we are told we must resign ourselves, is the main emphasis, not an intelligent evil power which we have a mandate to defeat, or at least die in the attempt.

Even more pervasive is the assumption that Christianity is primarily the rescue of human beings rather than the restoration of all creation. It is thought that to escape this world is more important than to restore God's glory on earth through the conquest of the destructive and distorting elements of Satanic fury against God.

Discipline

The one obvious truth about effective human action is that the vast majority of the work of the world is accomplished through social discipline. In a war, the armed forces are characterized by disciplined troop activities. Commercial enterprises typically squeeze the life out of people to get their work done. Once people retire, their good intentions quickly evaporate for a lack of social discipline. Their lives are cluttered with many good things, but strikingly different is their useful output by comparison to their own earlier days when they were in the harness of the work force. Even wealthy athletes and movie stars have to pay "trainers." If the world were to depend on personal will power alone, practically everything significant would grind to a halt.

It is well known that the contemporary church in America requires very little of its people. This gives rise to the fact that we have an Opus Dei in the Catholic tradition which harnesses lay believers in a very accountable lifestyle. In the Protestant tradition we have the Disciplined Order of Christ which tends in the same direction, though far less seriously. When everyone does that which is right in their own eyes, the resulting efforts for the Kingdom are token at best, and essentially meaningless at worst. In the case of the Opus Dei, the "sanctification of daily life" is a marvelous emphasis, but considerably directionless without any clear war effort in mind. In the case of the Disciplined Order of Christ (DOC), there is even less emphasis upon "holy worldliness," to use Richard Mouw's famous phrase. However, something vaguely equivalent, in addition to, but not in opposition to existing congregations, would seem to be necessary if we are going to mobilize Christian believers in any real depth.

At the present time, I am unaware of any substantial, explicitly Christian organization in the world that is focused on the defeat of disease pathogens as is the case with the Carter Center. We have organizations devoted to justice and which defend the 100 rights of Christian believers in public schools and in public life, but these are, to some extent, defensive, or superficial.

There is not space or time here, to go further in elaboration of what it would take to disassociate God from evil events, or the disciplined group efforts necessary for that purpose. But at least we can sense, with what has been said, the larger dimensions of the Christian mission, and the contrast with what is now being accomplished.

Total war will require thousands of Evangelicals to move to the cutting edge of microbiology and of political life, to work for the transformation of ethical standards throughout the commercial world and a new sense of the need of group discipline to do those things. All this and more is necessary if we are to “seize the future.”

Seven Men, Four Eras in Protestant Mission History

7/13/08

Frontiers in Mission, 308-16

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It is clear that the Biblical mission mandate has quite often been overlooked during most of the centuries since the apostles. Even our Protestant tradition with all its focus on the Bible plugged along for over 250 years minding its own business and its own blessings (like Israel of old)—until a young man of great faith and incredible patience appeared on the scene—William Carey.

In this chapter we are going to focus in on the period following A.D. 1800, which his life and witness greatly affected. No other one person can be given as much credit for the vibrant new impetus of the last two hundred years. He was one of seven specific men whom God used, all of them working against conventional thinking. Four great “eras” of plunging forward into newly perceived frontiers, into new awareness resulted from their faith, vision and obedience. It took two of them to launch the third, and three more to push for the fourth era. Between the first three of these eras, we see two transitions of four “stages” of mission strategy. A third perplexing “transition” of strategy appeared as the fourth era unfolded. It is easier to see this in a diagram. Better still, the story.

The First Era

An “under thirty” young man, William Carey, got into trouble when he began to take the Great Commission seriously. When he had the opportunity as a young minister to address a group of older ministers, he challenged them to give a reason why the Great Commission did not apply to them. They rebuked him, saying, “When God chooses to win the heathen, He will do it without your help or ours.” He was unable to speak again on the subject, but a businessman asked him to write out his analysis, *An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.

The resulting small book convinced a few of his friends to create a tiny mission agency, the “means” of which his *Enquiry* had spoken. This agency was flimsy and weak, providing only the minimal and sporadic backing he needed to go to India. However, the impact of his example reverberated throughout the English-speaking world, and his little book became the Magna Carta of the Protestant mission movement.

William Carey was not the first Protestant missionary. For years the Moravians had sent people to Greenland, America and Africa. But his little book, in combination with the Evangelical Awakening, quickened vision and changed lives on both sides of the Atlantic. Response was almost instantaneous: a second missionary society was founded in London; two in Scotland; one in Holland; and then still another in England. By then it was apparent to all that Carey was right when he had insisted that *organized* efforts in the form of mission societies were essential to the success of the missionary endeavor.

In America, five college students, aroused by Carey’s book and his letters, met to pray for God’s direction for their lives. This unobtrusive prayer meeting, later known as the

“Haystack Prayer Meeting,” resulted in an American “means”—the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. Even more important, those students started a student mission movement, the Student Missionary Inquiry, which became the example and forerunner of other student movements, even underlying the much later Student Volunteer Movement.

In fact, during the first 25 years after Carey sailed to India, a dozen mission agencies were formed on both sides of the Atlantic, and the First Era in Protestant missions was off to a good start, building much faster than later eras. Realistically speaking, however, missions in this First Era was a pitifully small shoe-string operation, in relation to the major preoccupations of most Europeans and Americans in that day. The idea that we should organize in order to send missionaries did not come easily, but it eventually became an accepted pattern.

Carey’s influence led some women in Boston to form women’s missionary prayer groups, a trend which led to women becoming the main custodians of mission knowledge and motivation. After some years women began to go to the field as single missionaries. Finally, by 1865, when more than half of all men in a large age-range were killed in the Civil War, unmarried American women established women’s mission boards which, like Roman Catholic women’s orders, only sent out single women as missionaries and were run entirely by single women at home.

There are two very bright notes about the First Era. One is the astonishing demonstration of love and sacrifice on the part of those who went out. Africa, especially, was a forbidding continent. All mission outreach to Africa prior to 1775 had totally failed. Of all Catholic efforts, all Moravian efforts, nothing remained. Not one missionary of any kind existed on the continent on the eve of the First Era. The gruesome statistics of almost inevitable sickness and death that haunted, yet did not daunt, the decades of truly valiant missionaries who went out after 1790 in virtually a suicidal stream cannot be matched by any other era or by any other cause. Very few missionaries to Africa in the first 60 years of the First Era survived more than two years. As I have reflected on this measure of devotion I have been humbled to tears, for I wonder—if either my people or myself today could or would match that record? Can you imagine our Urbana students today going out into missionary work if they knew that for decade after decade 19 out of 20 of those going before them had not lived more than 24 months? No wonder they began going to the field with their belongings packed in caskets.

A second bright spot in this First Era is the development of high quality insight into mission strategy. The movement had several great missiologists. In regard to the role of home structure, they clearly understood the value of the mission structure being allowed a life of its own. For example, we read that the London Missionary Society experienced unprecedented and unequalled success, “due partly to its freedom from ecclesiastical supervision and partly to its formation from an almost equal number of ministers and laymen.” In regard to field structure, we can take a note from Henry Venn who was related to the famous Clapham Evangelicals and the son of a founder of the Church Missionary Society. Except for a few outdated terms, one of his most famous paragraphs sounds strangely modern:

Regarding the ultimate object of a Mission, viewed under its ecclesiastical result, to be the settlement of a Native Church under Native Pastors upon a self-supporting system, it should be borne in mind that the progress of a Mission mainly depends

upon the training up and the location of Native Pastors; and that, as it has been happily expressed, the “euthanasia of a Mission” takes place when a missionary, surrounded by well-trained Native congregations under Native Pastors, is able to resign all pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the pastors themselves, ’til it insensibly ceases; and so the Mission passes into a settled Christian community. Then the missionary and all missionary agencies should be transferred to the “regions beyond.”

Note well that while there was no thought here of the national church launching its own mission outreach to new pioneer fields! Nevertheless, we do see here something like *stages of mission activity*, described by Harold Fuller of SIM in the alliterative sequence:

Stage 1: A **Pioneer** stage—first contact with a people group.

Stage 2: A **Paternal** stage—expatriates train national leadership.

Stage 3: A **Partnership** stage—national leaders work as equals with expatriates.

Stage 4: A **Participation** stage—expatriates are no longer equal partners, but only participate by invitation.

Slow and painstaking though the labors of the First Era were, they did bear fruit, and the familiar series of stages can be observed which goes from no church in the pioneer stage to infant church in the paternal stage and to the more complicated mature church in the partnership and participation stages.

Samuel Hoffman of the Reformed Church in America Board puts it well: “The Christian missionary who was loved as an evangelist and liked as a teacher, may find himself resented as an administrator.”

Rare is the missionary in whose own career this whole sequence of stages takes place. More likely the series represents the work in a specific field with a succession of missionaries, or it may be the experience of an agency which in its early period bursts out in work in a number of places and then after some years finds that most of its fields are mature at about the same time. But rightly or wrongly, this kind of succession is visible in the mission movement globally, as the fever for change and nationalization sweeps the thinking of almost all executives at once and leaps from continent to continent, wrongly affecting both new fields still in earlier stages, as well as old fields in the latter stages.

At any rate, by 1865 there was a strong consensus on both sides of the Atlantic that the missionary should go home when he had worked himself out of a job. Since the First Era focused primarily upon the coastlands of Asia and Africa, we are not surprised that literal withdrawal would come about first in a case where there were no inland territories. Thus, symbolizing the last two stages of the First Era was the withdrawal of all missionaries from the Hawaiian Islands, then a separate country. This was done with legitimate pride and fanfare and fulfilled the highest expectations, then and now, of successful progress through the stages of missionary planting, watering and harvest. But it interfered with the initial stages of the Second Era, as we shall see.

The Second Era

A second symbolic event of 1865 is even more significant, at least for the inauguration of the Second Era. A young man, after a few years in China and like Carey still under thirty, in the teeth of counter advice, established the first of a whole new breed of mission agencies emphasizing the inland territories. This second young upstart was at first given little but negative notice, but like William Carey, he brooded over statistics, charts and

maps. When he suggested that the inland peoples of China needed to be reached, he was told you could not get there, and he was asked if he wished to carry on his shoulders the blood of the young people he would thus send to their deaths. This accusing question stunned and staggered him. Groping for light, wandering on the beach, it seemed as if God finally spoke to resolve the ghastly thought: “You are not sending young people into the interior of China. I am.” The load lifted.

As part of England’s lower class, with only trade school medicine, without any university experience much less missiological training, and a checkered past in regard to his own individualistic behavior while he was on the field, he was merely one more of the weak things that God uses to confound the wise. Even his early anti-church-planting missionary strategy was breathtakingly erroneous by today’s church-planting insights. Yet God strangely honored him because his gaze was fixed upon the world’s peoples who had never heard. Hudson Taylor had a divine wind behind him. The Holy Spirit spared him from many pitfalls, and it was his organization, the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship)—the most cooperative, servant organization yet to appear—that eventually served in one way or another over 6,000 missionaries, predominantly in the interior of China. It took 20 years for other missions to begin to join Taylor in his special emphasis—the *inland* frontiers.

One reason the Second Era began slowly is that many people were confused. There were already many missions in existence. Why more? Yet as Taylor pointed out, all existing agencies were focused on the coastlands of Africa and Asia, or islands in the Pacific. People questioned, “Why go to the interior if you haven’t finished the job on the coast?”

I am not sure the parallel is true today, but the Second Era apparently needed not only a new vision but a lot of new organizations. Taylor not only started an English *frontier* mission, he went to Scandinavia and the Continent to challenge people to start new agencies. As a result, directly or indirectly, over 40 new agencies took shape to compose “the faith mission movement” that rightly should be called *frontier* missions as the names of many of them still indicate: China Inland Mission, Sudan Interior Mission, Africa Inland Mission, Heart of Africa Mission, Unevangelized Fields Mission, Regions Beyond Missionary Union. *Taylor was more concerned for the cause than for a career.* At the end of his life he had spent only half of his years of ministry in China. In countless trips back and forth from China he spent half of his time as a mobilizer on the home front. For Taylor, the cause of Christ, not his mission, and not even China, was the ultimate focus of his concern.

As in the early stage of the First Era, when things began to move, God brought forth a student movement. This one was more massive than before—the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, history’s single most potent mission organization. In the 1880s and 90s there were only 1/37th as many college students as there are today, but the Student Volunteer Movement netted 100,000 volunteers who gave their lives to missions. Twenty-thousand actually went overseas. As we see it now, the other 80,000 had to stay home to deepen the foundations of the mission endeavor and support system. They strengthened existing women’s missionary societies and began the Laymen’s Missionary Movement which in ten years quadrupled the giving to missions of the churches involved.

However, as the fresh new college students of the Second Era burst on the scene overseas, they did not always fathom how the older missionaries of the First Era could have turned responsibility over to national leadership who lived at the least educated levels of society. First Era missionaries were in the minority now, and the wisdom they had gained from their experience was bypassed by the large number of new college-educated recruits. Thus, for decades in the early stages of the Second Era, the new college-trained missionaries, instead of going to new frontiers, sometimes assumed leadership over existing churches, not heeding the experience of previous mission workers. As a result they often forced into the background First Era missionaries and national leadership (which had been painstakingly developed). In some cases this caused a huge step backward in mission strategy.

By 1925, however, the largest mission movement in history was in full swing. By then Second Era missionaries were finally learning the basic lessons they had first ignored, and produced an incredible record. They had planted churches in a thousand new places, mainly “inland,” and by 1940 the reality of the “younger churches” around the world was widely acclaimed as the “great new fact of our time.” The strength of these churches led both national leaders and missionaries to assume that all additional frontiers could simply be mopped up by the ordinary evangelism of the churches scattered throughout the world. More and more people wondered if, in fact, missionaries were no longer needed so badly! Once more, as in 1865, it seemed logical to send missionaries home from many areas of the world.

For us today it is highly important to note the overlap of these first two eras. The 45 year period between 1865 and 1910 (compare 1934 to 1980) was a transition between the strategy appropriate to the mature stages of Era 1, the Coastlands era, and the strategy appropriate to the pioneering stages of Era 2, the Inland era.

Not long after the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, there ensued the shattering World Wars and the worldwide collapse of the colonial apparatus. By 1945 many overseas churches were anticipating not only the withdrawal of the colonial powers, but the absence of the missionary as well. While there was no very widespread outcry of, “Missionary Go Home,” as some might suppose, nevertheless things were different now, as even the people in the pews at home ultimately sensed. *Pioneer* and *paternal* were no longer the relevant stages, but *partnership* and *participation*.

In 1967, the total number of career missionaries from America began to decline. Why? Christians had been led to believe that all necessary beachheads had been established. By 1967, over 90 percent of all missionaries from North America were working with strong national churches that had been in existence for some time.

The facts, however, were not that simple. Unnoticed by most everyone, another era in missions had begun.

The Third Era

This era was begun by a pair of young men of the Student Volunteer Movement—Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran. Cameron Townsend was in so much of a hurry to get to the mission field that he didn’t bother to finish college. He went to Guatemala as a “Second Era” missionary, building on work which had been done in the past. In that country, as in all other mission fields, there was plenty to do by missionaries working with established national churches.

But Townsend was alert enough to notice (and it was pointed out by older missionaries) that the majority of Guatemala's population did not speak Spanish. As he moved from village to village, trying to distribute scriptures written in the Spanish language, he realized that Spanish evangelism would never reach all of Guatemala's people. He was further convinced of this when, legend has it, an Indian asked him, "If your God is so smart, why can't He speak our language?" He was befriended by a group of older missionaries who had already concluded the indigenous "Indian" populations needed to be reached in their own languages. He was just 23 when he began to move on the basis of this new perspective.

Surely Cameron Townsend is one person comparable to William Carey and Hudson Taylor. Like Carey and Taylor, Townsend saw that there were still unreached frontiers, and for almost a half century he waved the flag for the overlooked tribal peoples of the world. He started out hoping to encourage older boards to reach out to tribal people. Like Carey and Taylor, he ended up in 1934 starting his own mission agency, later called Wycliffe Bible Translators, which is dedicated to reaching these new frontiers. At first he thought there must be about 500 unreached tribal groups in the world. (He was judging by the large number of tribal languages in Mexico alone). Later, he revised his figure to 1,000, then 2,000, and now it is over 5,000. As his conception of the enormity of the task has increased, the size of his organization has increased, numbering over 6,000 adult workers.

At the very same time Townsend was ruminating in Guatemala, Donald McGavran was beginning to yield to the seriousness, not of linguistic barriers, but of India's amazing social and cultural barriers. Townsend acted on, and promoted, the reality of linguistically diverse (and overlooked) tribes; McGavran highlighted and promoted the social and cultural diversity of a more nearly universal category he labeled "homogeneous units," which today are more often called "people groups." Paul Hiebert, a missionary anthropologist, has employed the terminology of "horizontal segmentation" for the tribes, where each occupies its own turf, and "vertical segmentation" for groups distinguished not by geography but by rigid social or cultural differences. McGavran's terminology described both kinds even though he was mainly thinking about the more subtle vertical segmentation.

Once such a social group is penetrated, by diligently taking advantage of a missiological breakthrough along social lines, McGavran's strategic concept of a "bridge of God" to that people group comes into the picture. The corollary of this truth is the fact that *until* such a breakthrough is made, normal evangelism and church planting cannot take place.

McGavran did not found a new mission (Townsend did so only when the existing missions did not adequately respond to the tribal challenge). But, McGavran built the largest school of mission in the world and his active efforts and writings spawned both the Church Growth Movement and indirectly the frontier mission movement, the one devoted to expanding within already penetrated groups, and the other (which he did not contemplate until his last few years) devoted to deliberately approaching the remaining unpenetrated groups.

As with Taylor before them, for twenty years Townsend and McGavran attracted little attention. But by the 1950s both had wide audiences. In 1980, 46 years from Townsend's 1934 organizational move, a 1910-like conference was held, focusing precisely on the

forgotten groups these two men had emphasized. The Edinburgh-1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions was the largest mission meeting in history, measured by the number of mission agencies sending delegates. And wonder of wonders, 57 Third World agencies sent delegates. This meeting is the sleeper of the Third Era! Also, a simultaneous youth meeting, the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions, pointed the way for all future mission meetings to include significant youth participation. It later started the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* (its hundreds of keen articles are all available on the web, www.ijfm.org).

As happened in the early stages of the first two eras, the Third Era has spawned a number of new mission agencies. Some, like the New Tribes Mission, carry in their names reference to this new emphasis. The names of others, such as Gospel Recordings and Mission Aviation Fellowship, refer to the new technologies necessary for the reaching of tribal and other isolated peoples of the world. Some Second Era agencies, like the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, have never ceased to stress frontiers, and have merely increased their staff so they can penetrate further—to people groups previously overlooked.

More recently many have begun to realize that tribal peoples are not the only forgotten peoples. Many other groups, some in the middle of partially Christianized areas, have been completely overlooked. These peoples, including overlooked tribals, are being called the “Unreached Peoples” and are defined by ethnic or sociological traits to be peoples so different from the cultural traditions of any existing church that specifically cross-cultural mission strategies (rather than ordinary evangelistic techniques) are necessary to achieve the missiological breakthrough essential to the planting of truly indigenous churches within their particular cultural traditions.

If the First Era was a new awareness of mission responsibility, characterized by reaching coastland peoples and the Second Era was an additional awareness, emphasizing inland territories, the Third Era began a new awareness of the more difficult-to-define, non-geographical category which we have called “Unreached Peoples”—people groups which are either socially or culturally isolated. Because this concept has been so hard to define, the Third Era has been even slower getting started than the Second Era. Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran began calling attention to bypassed peoples for 40 years but not until 1980 had any major attention been given to them. More tragic still, many mission agencies have essentially forgotten the pioneering techniques of the First and Second Eras. Thus, they have needed to reinvent the wheel as they learned once more how to approach groups of people completely untouched by the gospel.

We know that there are thousands of people groups in the “Unreached Peoples” category, which can be gathered in clusters of similar peoples, these clusters being far fewer in number. Yet, each single people will require a separate, new missionary beachhead. Is this too much? Can this be done? Yes it can!

The Fourth Era

We need to be alert to the appearance in the last few years of other frontiers of mission, other new awarenesses of mission responsibility. The First Era of Coastland church planting is well established. So is the Second, Inland Era. Even the Third, Unreached People Era is widely embraced. People are now talking about a Fourth Era. Candidates for that label include the often-mentioned challenge of looming **urban populations**,

which both preserve existing people groups as well as break down differences and create new groups. Another new awareness is the welcome surge of so-called **Third World Mission Agencies**. Related is the frontier which has been called **Diaspora Missiology**, which attempts to understand the massive movement of thousand of peoples from their traditional homelands. Then there is the colossal development of a movement to **two-week “short terms,”** which gives millions a cross-cultural experience yet eats up many times the total cost of all long-term missionaries—a “new awareness” of mixed value. Similarly there is the new challenge of many churches deciding to bypass seasoned agencies to send out their own missionaries with little pre-field or on-field guidance, teamwork or encouragement—a word for this development is “The Phenomenon of **Disintermediation.**” Some would hail this as a challenging new awareness, but as such it is dubious. A similar mixed blessing, though not new, but growing, is the shift to sending just money overseas not missionaries, paying local believers to reach out to nearby peoples. I hope this does not get promoted as a fourth era.

However, one new awareness would seem to be more significant than any of the other contenders for the Fourth Era label. It is the challenge, which has always been in the pages of this course, to understand and implement *a clearly broader-than-common interpretation of the Great Commission.*

Curiously, in the 19th Century, prior to the American Civil War, Evangelical initiatives made unprecedented, truly momentous changes in society. This was possible because Evangelicals held influential positions in the civil order, and, as a result, both social and personal salvation were feasible—and vigorously pursued. But the ten million people who lived in the USA in 1820 were flooded with an additional thirty million by 1870. In another thirty years the vast majority of Evangelicals were non-college people, and did not run the country, and understandably focused on more modest good works. As the 20th century wore on their 157 Bible Institutes gradually became colleges and universities and their influence mounted once again as thousands of Evangelicals entered the professions, became university professors. Most Evangelical young people now went to college. Accordingly, Evangelicals regained the awareness that the Gospel would be greatly empowered as they sought to bring about God’s will on earth, since it is *deeds* that both reveal God’s character and give meaning that is essential to the *words* of the Gospel.

This recovered perspective may require a second thought for Evangelicals, who earlier in the 20th century tended to view the salvation of man as God’s primary concern. A passage in Ezekiel sheds important light on this common idea. After 35 chapters of woes, Israel is now to be blessed, and then, unexpectedly in Ezek. 36:22, God says, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name.” Here we see that God has bigger purposes than human redemption.

The Bible is thus not only about how man can be reconciled to God but, perhaps, how reconciled man working with God can together destroy the Kingdom of Darkness, putting away both human evil and natural evil (such as disease germs). Note well: I John 3:8, “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.” Was that what Jesus meant when He said, (Matt 16:14) “I will build my church and fortress of Hell will be unable to resist its onslaught.”

We come away from these verses with the impression that drawing people into the church is not the end product but, significantly, the beginning of the involvement of redeemed people in the work of the Son of God. But we must not forget that good works

today, even if greatly strengthened by expanding technology and wealth, are nevertheless futile apart from transformed individuals. Yet, it is still true, as Jesus explained, that He would build His church not just to assure His people a place in heaven but to break down the gates of hell and, in effect, destroy the Kingdom of Darkness.

Thus, toward the year 2000 Evangelicals gradually moved to recover Jesus' primary emphasis on the extension of the Kingdom, that is, God's will on earth, rather than focusing primarily on getting personal salvation to individuals. More and more, apparently, no longer pray the Lord's prayer thinking that they are waiting until they die or Jesus comes to see the Kingdom come.

Missionaries in particular have used their intuition, knowledge of the Bible and personal love to demonstrate through their deeds—in this world—the character of God and His glory thus empowering their evangelism. But now that longstanding missionary intuition is often being reinforced by a theology that no longer sees evangelism and social action as two different things but as part and parcel of a single Biblical “Gospel of the Kingdom” in which both words and deeds are recognized as essential in communicating God's love, power and authority. That is, it is more and more often realized that *words* need *deeds* to make them meaningful—technically, both wordless deeds and deedless words are ineffective. Even a purely spoken sermon depends on references to deeds. This is why the Bible is so full of graphic examples of good deeds. This why the usual conversion of Muslims to Christ turns on the integrity of the witness rather on the words they speak.

This increasing interest in the New Testament emphasis on the Gospel of the Kingdom then challenges both missionaries and lay believers with a nuanced understanding of God's mission as encompassing every believer, albeit with different types of roles and expectations. It means that every Perspectives student can and must be able to sense a personal mission that in some way helps fulfill this broader-than-conventional interpretation of the Great Commission—even if they are not going to become a pastor or go to work in the classical and still crucial “cross-cultural pioneering” that is normally called *missionary*. Why? Because our evangelism is degraded if those sending the evangelist do not display the character of God. In this sense we are all called to a mission as soldiers in the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Darkness.

Thus, if a believer's 40-hour work week does not contribute directly or indirectly to that Cause, and if for that reason our daily work has not become a *holy calling*, then basic changes are in order, since we are all called to do “Our Utmost for His Highest” (*His highest*, not highest pay). This concept of a Kingdom Era, a Fourth Era, is a huge expansion of conventional mission perspective since it demands that every believer find his or her place in the Kingdom effort.

Each of the four Eras is based on a certain kind of new, deeper awareness without subtracting anything from any earlier era. It does not just mean getting to the door of every Unreached People, but how to enter, what to do. The Fourth, Kingdom Era, means, for example, that fighting all corruption, injustice, poverty or human trafficking must be seen as mainstream portrayals of God's love and righteousness in the unfolding of His will on earth. Good deeds on the part of existing believers thus undergird and make understandable our evangelistic efforts. Equally so is the testimony of the good deeds resulting in the lives of our converts who follow Christ. And today we are able to tackle far larger problems than ever before.

To understand why this transition to Kingdom thinking has taken so long, it is helpful to remember that millions of Evangelicals in the early part of the 20th century were non-college people whose dozens of Bible institutes did not lead them into the professions much less to public office, Congress or the White House. Their range of thinking was reasonably narrowed significantly, as in the case of the beautiful music of the so-called “Negro Spirituals.” Those hymns were produced by slaves who understandably did not contemplate transformation of this world but focused on the glories of Heaven later on. *Thus, millions of non-college Evangelicals took almost a century to become the influential college-level movement of today.*

By the middle of the last century three key Evangelicals, all of them professors in higher education, came out with books that heralded what was to come.

Carl F. H. Henry in 1947 wrote his stirring landmark *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*.

Timothy Smith wrote his truly surprising *Revivalism and Social Reform* in 1957, describing the long forgotten all out Evangelical assault of the evils of this world which occurred in the earlier century.

David O. Moberg came out in 1967, and 1972, with his arresting writings on *The Great Reversal*, which further described the new responsibilities resulting from increased wealth and influence in society.

The increasing momentum of this renewed perspective can be seen in the fact that while conventional evangelism and church-planting mission agencies in the USA grew 2.7% from 2001 to 2006, relief and development agencies grew 75%. The impetus of the three thinkers mentioned was not all that happened, but those three can reasonably be considered the pioneers of a long-growing and now momentous Kingdom Era of American Evangelicals and their mission agencies in the 20th and 21st centuries. Thus we now have “Seven Men and Four Eras.”

When did the Fourth Era begin? Why not say that by the time the transition was a foregone conclusion—when Moberg weighed in, in 1967. Even now the awareness is not yet widely shared. As before, it overlaps the preceding era in a transition of considerable heated debate and confusion, a transition from 1967 until 2000. By the latter date the once new “awareness of Unreached Peoples” was no longer new, even though the last Unreached People was not yet reached.

Can We Do It?

Despite the dauntingly larger implications of a Kingdom Era, the task is not as difficult as it may seem for several surprising reasons.

In the first place, the great Evangelical missions like SIM and AIM have for a hundred years been making monumental contributions to society (e.g. building roads and bridges, vocational schools, providing better seeds and animal husbandry, etc.) even though those endeavors may not have been what some donors have wanted to hear.

Also, the task is not merely an American one, nor even a Western one. It will clearly involve Christians in every continent of the world. Believers living in the Global South are already becoming involved in countless praiseworthy initiatives involving deed-empowered evangelism.

One thing is very clear. In most cases the will of God cannot come on earth if all we do is to encourage *individuals* to do good works. Most of the major problems cannot be

solved by individuals. We must expect to start many new businesses and even new mission structures that will specifically tackle such problems—whether that means cooperating with China as it is forthrightly facing the terror of widespread corruption (and is considering Christianity as part of the solution) or working with secular organizations in fighting to extinction the many plagues of deadly viruses, bacteria and parasites (like Malaria).

Basic to the concept of a Fourth Era, is the fact that the enormously increased wealth and influence of both Western Evangelicals and the second and third generations etc. of the new believers in the rest of the world means that we can be expected to move beyond *micro* good deeds to take on some of the largest problems facing humanity in the world today. We can hope that as believers are able they will add organized muscle and insight to existing (and not-yet-launched) efforts to deal with *macro*- problems such as world poverty, global slavery, or the eradication of deadly diseases. As this happens the reputations of both Evangelicals and the God Whom they serve will be significantly improved, God will be glorified, and our evangelism greatly empowered.

Very important is the fact that once a beachhead is established cross-culturally within an untouched culture, the specialized mission task of creating a “Missiological Breakthrough” is at that point complete and the full implications of the Kingdom Era can then become the responsibility of all new believers, not just the missionaries.

Furthermore, “closed countries” are less and less of a problem, because the modern world is becoming more and more open and interdependent. There are literally no countries today that admit no foreigners. Many of the countries long considered “completely closed”—like -- Arabia—are in actual fact avidly recruiting thousands of skilled people from other nations. And the truth is, they prefer devout Christians to boozing, womanizing, secular Westerners. Christians with a sense of mission must become more and more prominent in these enterprises whether working directly for foreign countries or for external efforts to alleviate poverty and disease.

But our work in the Third and Fourth Eras has many other advantages. Not only do we have, potentially, a worldwide network of churches that can be aroused to their central mission. We know roughly how many groups need to be reached—how many doors we need to knock on. Now, we need to be much clearer about what to do to go through those doors. Best of all, nothing can obscure the fact that the Unreached Peoples Era and the Kingdom Era could well be the *final* eras. No serious believer today dare overlook the fact that God has not asked us to assist in the expansion of the Kingdom of God into every nation, tribe and tongue *without intending it to be done*. No generation has less excuse than ours if we do not go all out to do what is clearly His will.

When the Church Staggers, Stalls, and Sits Down (In the Middle of a War!)

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<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/when-the-church-staggers-stalls-and-sits-down-in-the-middle-of-a-war>

I. The Diagnosis

The church, all around the world, is badly wounded today by the seeping departure of its members. We Evangelicals track the number of new members the way some people track the rise in the stock market. But we don't know how to count things when members just fade away.

Our Inherited Doctrine and Church Culture

One high executive told me his denomination reports a total each year that includes disappeared members. Those people may have stopped attending, moved away, or died. They are still counted. "We are focused on getting people saved. We don't pay equal attention to much else."

That's not necessarily bad, but even casual contact with non-Evangelicals will tell you that a hallmark of Evangelicals (in the eyes of the outsiders) is their zeal to know decisively whether or not people are saved. To believe that God approves some people more than others is terribly important and crucial. But, to think that we Evangelicals can be certain who those people are and who they aren't is something else.

To an Evangelical it often boils down to whether a person is saved or not, and we often use our relatively simplistic and mechanical measuring stick such as repeat after me or "Do you believe that Jesus died for you and rose again?" If so, you're okay.

Jacob Loewen was one of the foremost missionary thinkers in his day. He deplored the Evangelical doctrine he called "Instant Conversion." It is not as though things of great importance, turning points, cannot happen in an instant. It is rather the fact that the Bible stresses far more a salvation that is constantly being worked out, as in Phil 2:12. We Evangelicals are thus often impatient and insistent on knowing only what God knows about the state of any one individual's life.

Homeschoolers' College

An example of this "hallmark trait" of Evangelicals can be seen in a relatively friendly book about the outstanding students at Patrick Henry College. The book is entitled *God's Harvard: A Christian College on a Mission to Save America*.

The author, Hanna Rosen, a Jewish woman journalist working for the *Washington Post*, was assigned for a year and a half to do an in-depth study of this college whose graduates are more and more in evidence in the corridors of congress and even the White House.

Again and again in passing she mentions the potential significance to this country of increased Evangelical influence in local, state, and national government.

This assignment took her into the confidence of the leadership of the college, into faculty meetings, classrooms, student center activities, and even student homes as far away as Montana, Seattle, and California.

She is quite willing to admit how impressed she is by the dead seriousness and high morality of the students. They are all products of homeschooling! One of the many really fine girls she followed in great detail for that year and a half was invited to stay with a family that did not measure up to her Evangelical understanding of conversion. After some time in their home she was asked, “Do you believe that if we were to die today we would go to hell? This student, one of the campus leaders, paused a long time, and then said softly, “Yes, but I’m not jumping up and down about it.”

Why couldn’t she have simply said, “I am not your judge. All I want for you (as well as for me) is to know God better, the Bible better, and Jesus better. God is the only judge of a person’s status before Him.”

But she didn’t say that. Of course the Jewish journalist knew better than to ask such a question. She knew where she stood in this admirable girl’s eyes. This is one thing that drives people out of church and keeps outsiders away from Evangelicals. This is so sad, because, as this book clearly describes, there is immense good, significant, morality, and impressive integrity in the Evangelical movement.

Truly amazing are the aspirations of these incredible students, many having scored all 1600 points on the SAT. They are super confident about Evangelicals taking back the government. At least three are hoping to become President of the United States, others senators, etc. Already 200 grads have infiltrated Washington and are optimistic that in time Evangelicals can dominate the government.

Thus, until now the unblinking eye of the world has never stared so seriously at the Evangelical movement. Ever. Patrick Henry’s collection of super-achieving and super-believing Evangelical youth may represent one of the pinnacles of the movement, and only the tip of the iceberg.

New Confrontations

Suddenly both inside and outside the Evangelical movement it has become terribly important to test out every belief and trait of Evangelicalism, which is now the major religion of the USA—a religion which some hope (and some fear) will be the major political force.

Sure, thousands are being attracted to this Evangelical movement, which is becoming the culturally established church of America. But could these be paper gains and concrete losses? Does Evangelicalism also contain within itself seeds of its own destruction?

Actually, the situation in some respects is no less than a catastrophe. Much of our carefully, patiently, and proudly built-up global church is coming apart at the seams, even in the USA. Is this true? Many good things are happening, but there are deep problems as well.

Nowhere, in fact, is this catastrophe more obvious than in the United States. Here, estimates are that 75% of the teenagers in Evangelical homes will lose their faith after high school. One denominational study says 85%.

No doubt Evangelicals can fairly claim to be experts on getting people TO faith. But in the case of our children coming to faith, that may happen only after they have floundered in the world for twenty years, finally sensing an emotional emptiness, and a few of them limping back.

But “Is that trip into the world necessary?” Do 75 percent of our young people have to first lose their faith and then only a fraction of them later stumble back into the church confused?

Why do they leave in the first place? And why do so few return? And do those few who return see Christianity as merely a preferable environment for their kids—but in fact a more healthy pattern of habits than a matter of personal faith?

Missionaries to Japan and Japanese churches are embarrassed by the tiny percentage of Christians. However, studies show that Japan’s tiny church wins proportionally as many people into the church as do churches in other mission fields—but few stay.

Similarly, around the world millions of poor and uneducated (desperate) people flock to churches because they vaguely see hope there—hope for better things in this life (and only maybe for the life to come). How long will they stay?

In contrast to the many of the poverty-stricken populations of the world, fewer people in Japan are forced (out of desperation) to take chances on a foreign faith. When they do duck into church they may not see any significant problems in this world being addressed. Even if they stay awhile they may not discover that the Kingdom of God includes the conquering will of God in this world as much as it assures eternal life. Such drop-ins may eventually leave thinking that Buddhism is not that different.

Quite a few people in the USA who seem to be “coming to Christ” may not be coming to a belief system as much as to a preferable community. That community glue may not always hold. If it does hold, it may only add numbers but not add to the number of truly believing and committed members.

The Powerful Acids of Rust and Corrosion in the University World

We need to realize that almost all our Evangelical youth are exposed to more facts, opinions and pressure in college than in all their years in church. In fact the time they put into grade school far outranked the time spent in Sunday School.

Since 15 out of 17 Evangelical youth never go to a Christian college, what goes on in the university world is a defining experience.

Why do we need a film called *Expelled—No Intelligence Allowed*? Why is the university world so harshly anti-theistic? And masses of people in the media and politics so ballistic about the growing Evangelical influence?

This was discussed in an earlier issue. Evangelicals began the 20th century as predominantly a non-college movement. It took a hundred years for 157 Bible institutes to turn into colleges, universities and seminaries. At the end of the century thousands of Evangelicals had crept back into faculty positions in higher education. But they discovered that they were in a decided and rejected minority.

For decades, if they kept their heads down they were mainly oddities. Now with the new visibility of their tribe in secular society, there is a strident voice against them.

In my editorial in the last issue of *Mission Frontiers* I mentioned two Evangelicals who had attained professorships in religion in state universities. Yet, in the process they had apparently been drawn into an agnostic or atheistic position. That takes the pressure off!

Give Up on the Bible?

One of them, Hector Avalos, had been a Pentecostal minister, and is now a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa (in mentioning him last time I mistakenly said University of Illinois). His book is entitled *The End of Biblical Studies*. He has come to calling himself a Secular Humanist and sets out to prove in great scholarly detail that everything in the Bible is irrelevant. Consider the final paragraph of his Introduction:

Biblical studies as we know it should end. We should now treat the Bible as the alien document it is, with no more importance than the other works of literature we ignore every day. Biblical studies should be geared toward helping humanity wean itself off of the Bible and toward terminating its authority completely in the modern world. Focus then could shift to the still thousands of other ancient texts still untranslated and unread. One day, the Bible might even be viewed as one of the curiosities of a tragic bibliolatrous age, when dependence on a text brought untold misery and stood as an obstacle to human progress. We might then study the Bible as a lesson in why human beings should never again privilege any book to this extent.

Now, obviously, with this book if not before, he has proven to his faculty associates that he is no longer beholden to his earlier religious role. It must be a relief to him, in a way.

I would suppose his Evangelical heritage must have allowed him to embrace a false view of the Bible in the first place. He could well have thought we were supposed to believe that the Bible in every verse gives us only good, not bad examples. True, we do skirt around the most depraved things. The ancient Gothic Bible left out long portions of 1 and 2 Kings, apparently because their pre-Scandinavian forebears already knew too much about warfare. The Taiping movement in China simply dropped out chapter 19 in Genesis. Thus, when Avalos found bad things described in the Bible, things understandably not mentioned in normal church life, he rejected the Bible as if it were teaching, not accurately and honestly describing those things.

Rather than being impressed by how long God had to wait, how much patience was necessary, as a Divine School teacher, to lead a ruffian nation into New Testament times, he treats the Bible as though it approves everything it describes. He even quotes the Dallas Seminary journal, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, as admitting that not everything in the Bible is “valid” for today.

True, the Bible pulls no punches. It describes the weaknesses and limited understanding of its greatest leaders. It does not make unblemished heroes out of its human characters. It could not be inerrant if it did.

In contrast to his perspective, we can and do learn a great deal from biographies of individuals. But if they are accurate, we don't expect to find adult brilliance in every grade-school homework assignment. If we did it would be erroneous. The Bible in one sense is a startlingly honest and certainly accurate biography of a nation. It would not be inerrant if it described the failings of fallible humans as if all they said or understood was correct and edifying. God was patiently leading them in their understanding during two millennia.

Give Up on God, Too?

Another book barely mentioned last time is the one by a very famous Biblical scholar, Bart Ehrman, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College, also a former pastor, now a professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Last time I quoted him from an article in *Biblical Archeology*, explaining why all the evil in the world led him to give up his faith:

This made me think more deeply about my own understanding of why there is suffering in the world. Finally, because I became dissatisfied with all of the conventional answers I decided that I could not believe in [a] God who was in any way intervening in this world given the state of things. So that's how I ended up losing my faith.

Now I have space to quote him from his most recent book, *God's Problem, How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer*. He tells of going to a little Anglican church in England on Christmas Eve with his wife (who is still a believer) and how moved he was when a layman prayed,

You came into the darkness and you made a difference. Come into the darkness again.

He comments:

Yes, I wanted to affirm this prayer, believe this prayer, commit myself to this prayer. But I couldn't. The darkness is too deep, the suffering too intense, the divine absence too palpable. During the time that it took for this Christmas Eve service to conclude, more than 700 children in the world would have died of hunger; 250 others from drinking unsafe water; and nearly 300 other people from malaria. Not to mention the ones who had been raped, mutilated, tortured, dismembered, and murdered. Nor the innocent victims caught up in the human trade industry, nor those suffering throughout the world from grinding poverty, the destitute migrant farm workers in our own country, those who were homeless and inflicted with mental disease. Nor to mention the silent suffering that so many millions of the well-fed and well-tended have to experience daily: the pain of children with birth defects, children killed in car accidents, children senselessly taken by leukemia; the pain of divorce and broken families; the pain of lost jobs, lost income, failed prospects. And where is God? (p. 6)

His book searches the Bible for explanations of suffering and finds four—and they don't all agree. Therefore he can't believe in God? Like Avalos he is apparently employing a false view of the Bible. Did he get that from Evangelicals? At Moody? At Wheaton? Possibly. Doesn't God have reason to give us an accurate account of people as they were, being guided by God as fast as they obeyed, but not always thinking or doing the right things?

The Bible is not merely a flash picture of a people at a given time. It gives flash pictures of a very lengthy sequence, more like a motion picture portraying growth and change, deeper insights and qualities of behavior.

I am not happy to say, but two things in the book I cannot put together. Ehrman says plainly (pp. 122, 123),

Since human beings misbehave and hurt others out of their free will (which exists even if God does not) then we need to intervene ourselves and do what we can to stop the oppression, torture, and murder—whether here at home or in developing countries where the atrocities are more blatant and less restricted.

All things considered, here is an author—who has already endured the suffering of producing 20 books—a person not mainly building a case against believing in God but presenting and agonizing about the astounding catalog of suffering both in the Bible and within the human story in general. No book I am aware of is as comprehensive and feelingly a portrayal of evil.

But he lives in a university world where, almost in order to survive, you need to stop thinking about anything supernatural, especially intermediate beings like Satan and evil angelic forces.

I can't write to him and say, "Did you forget Satan?" You can be sure that a New Testament scholar would be very familiar with the numerous NT references to Satan, far exceeding OT insights. But such thoughts are even more off limits today in university circles than a benign belief in some kind of a supreme being.

Thus he could easily be aware subconsciously that thinking like that would likely endanger his entire career—now after many years of hard work in the limelight of the secular world. He might even think that his his legitimate anger about evil and what should be done about it would be damaged! If that were true, then this is in fact a book shocking us into an awareness of the true amount of evil that we may not want to think about.

We can thus be thankful that he has so keenly described evil, even if he does not mention evil angels. Yet, we must see this omission in the context of the enormous social pressures in the university world. Even in Christian colleges little is said of intermediate beings (angels) good or bad, especially in papers written for secular consumption.

Unfortunately, as he says, he is not providing a solution but describing the problem of evil. This leads him to an impossible tension between, as he says, enjoying life as fully as possible and also doing as much as is possible about defeating evil in this world. This is no doubt a view from the very real limitations of being a full-time university professor. Professors are to think and write, but for the most part in a world of young students, little action is possible.

We do not have to agree with their conclusions. They do help us see ourselves as others see us.

The Inadequacy of Our Cultural Theology of Suffering and Evil

A book, *Reasons to Believe*, to which I did not even make a passing reference last time, is written by John Marks, once an Evangelical who worked in Young Life for a number of years and attended a very fine, large Evangelical church in Dallas.

He wrote for ten years for U. S. News and World Report, became a producer for Morley Safer in the CBS 60 Minutes program, and authored three novels before this non-fiction *Reasons to Believe*. He should have added a question mark because he sought those "reasons" diligently and did not find them.

First, he felt that he had to withdraw from Evangelicalism. After marrying a Jewish girl with whom he is very happy, he got to thinking that if he continued to be an Evangelical, he would have to believe she was going to hell.

Some years later, covering Bosnia for CBS he ran into the fact that Serbian Christians had slaughtered tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims. He says he could understand how nominal Christians could do that. But he could not understand why God would allow them to do it. So he felt he should withdraw from even a belief in God.

As mentioned earlier, Hanna Rosen spent a year and a half studying Evangelicals from the standpoint mainly of a single college—Patrick Henry, exclusively populated by super-achieving homeschooled students. In contrast, John Marks, already possessing an Evangelical vocabulary, spent two years going everywhere and interviewing a whole range of different Evangelicals. His is thus a remarkable handbook on Evangelical culture—well-written, informative and consistently respectful of those he interviews.

He tells of the time he did the behind-the-scenes production of 60 Minutes on the “Left Behind Series.” He was asked at the end, “Are you going to be left behind?” At this point he had been swimming in the secular world long enough to be disturbed by Evangelical exclusivism which allows them (us) to tell, on the basis of relatively superficial details, just who is going to be raptured and who isn’t.

The whole book, in a sense, is one long quest for clarification—would he or wouldn’t he be “left behind.”

But, as I say, he is very respectful, admiring, and even loyal in a sense. He is extravagant in his praise for the work of the churches in the aftermath of the Katrina devastation in New Orleans. By contrast the work of government agencies, he says, was pathetic.

He is not bothered merely by the quirks of Evangelical theology and our in-house jargon. Like Ehrman he is also deeply disturbed by the rampant evil in this world. The final paragraph in his book makes this clear:

The twentieth century, my century, asks its own terrible questions. Bosnia? Hiroshima? Rwanda? Armenia? So many people, and so many Christians, looking away when the Jews of Europe were led to their deaths? So many people, and so many Christians, embracing racist policies all over the world during the era of colonialism, policies that led to murder and catastrophe on a cosmic scale? One species allowed its full, unfettered measure of violence for so long? A god has overseen this nightmare? A god whose divine plan accounts for all the torment, horror, and loss visited upon ourselves by ourselves over the course of this century, and all centuries? And it’s not over yet, surely. Someone else, some other nation, is already preparing itself for the next slaughter, in which I do not want to voluntarily, unnecessarily implicate myself. A god who can’t stop it has no right to my loyalty, or my belief. I can’t speak for others. For now, I’m a free man in a free land. I am a man of the twentieth century, and I rest on the authority of the uneasy dead. Leave me behind [at the Rapture].

My basic response to this is not to question the rationale but to suspect a significant impact on Mark’s thinking of an environment of anti-supernaturalism. Unlike Avalos and Ehrman, he has not been working for years in a university faculty where supernatural factors are unmentionable, he has been in the secular world of Washington

D.C., New York City, and the media in general, where workers will also be sneered at if they are very religious or believe that Jews automatically go to hell.

Furthermore, in view of his both needing to defend his wife and also to face what he considers the unexamined fanaticism of many Evangelicals, he, like Hanna Rosen refers again and again, with fear, to what would happen if Evangelicals were to take over the country.

What Hope Our Young?

It would seem then, that both when our young people go off to college, and also when they get out into the secular world, the wind blows hard against them. Just to survive, to keep a job, to talk as equals with non-Evangelicals of whatever stripe, it may seem necessary to most of them to drop some of their inherited Evangelical views.

If people are being won into the front door and eventually move out the back door, what could be the answer? Is France the end product, where 80% are “Christian” but only 20% believe in God?

II. The Cure

In my opinion a basic problem is our blindness to the essentially wartime calling of those who follow Christ. The church has largely gone AWOL, distracted or preoccupied with programs that serve our own ends.

Everyone knows what happens to a peacetime army—it tends to fall apart, demoralization sets in. Soldiers want to get out of the army. Evangelicals have misread the Bible. They are bored. Many are getting out of what they think is a peacetime army. But the Bible does not call us to save ourselves, to solidify our security, and just to talk about world problems.

There was a time in the USA, and it is still true in many parts of the world, that people did not worry about world problems simply because modern communications did not bring that world into their small world.

Now, the world’s problems are ever present in our media. In addition, we are astoundingly more capable of doing something about those problems. We have greater opportunities and greater obligations than ever in history. Yet the chasm between our unemployed resources and an effective challenge to big world problems is very great.

A major reason people are leaving the church, losing their faith, and staying away in the first place, is thus because the church has not adequately stepped up to bat along with civil forces to beat down the corruption, disease, and poverty of at least a billion hopeless people.

It is apparent that organized believers are largely missing in the conduct of the Kingdom of God, in bringing His will into the dark and suffering places in our world.

The world is rightly impressed with the Gates Foundation, Buffet’s \$50 billion gift, and now Ted Turner’s recognition that his \$200 million is more likely to do good if mediated through overseas Christian communities than if he were to give it to the World Bank (which in the last 32 years has given away \$3,600 billion “causing mostly harm and very little good,” as the subtitle of a book indicates).

Is there any explicitly Christian organization with the specific purpose of fighting global malaria? Why not? Is there any explicitly Christian mission designed to fight the sources of disease in general—as does the Carter Center? Why not?

Should we wonder why John Marks and others can be amazed and full of admiration for the way churches in America dove in to help with Katrina, but unhappy when in general we are absent from the frontlines against many of the ugliest ongoing tragedies in our world? In fighting evil we can glorify God, not just help our own species. Remember, both Ehrman and Marks are thinking that Evangelicals believe that God must create or at least approve all of this evil. Why? Since the church does not believe forthrightly that it is Satan's not God's work? Are Evangelicals content to survive rather than to soldier against it?

What do Evangelicals have to offer at present? Some intellectual concern. Also, confusion about what we are able to do. And, a history of super individual Christianity that does not readily see the necessity of highly organized teams (mission agencies) to solve the most serious problems. We tend to assume that a whole lot of saved individuals (as beneficial as that is) will be all that is needed.

Evangelicals do have a conscience. They do have an intuition of God's will, even if they do not have a clear mission theology of the Kingdom of God. Is it any wonder that between 2001 and 2006 mission agencies thought to be doing mainly evangelism and church planting grew 2.7%, while mission agencies that focus on "relief and development" grew by 75%?

We are sending hundreds of long-term mission teams out around the world without either the knowledge, skill or theology to tackle effectively most of the profound practical problems real people have. We do a good job in talking to people about following Christ, but when their other needs cry out for serious practical solutions, we are often unprepared.

Historically, in hundreds of foreign fields, schools and hospitals have portrayed God's love, and have given meaning to the words of the evangelist, just as did the practical dimension of Jesus' ministry. Missionaries in the past have transformed whole countries in many practical ways. Today we know far more about the problems and far more about the solutions than ever before. Yet the world still sees us as merely religious fanatics propagating a salvation that is not here but only in the hereafter.

The cure for a church that is in many ways staggering, stalling, and sitting down, the cure for our malaise and evaporating faith, is clear-cut definitive obedience. We must face and define the need to get organized answers to this world's problems as well as getting individuals reconciled to God.

In fact, getting people reconciled to God AND to His Kingdom business must go together. Otherwise our absence at the frontlines of major global problems means we are misrepresenting God's will and misusing the wisdom and resources He has given us to act out and speak out His love and glorify His Name among all peoples.

Thy Kingdom Come: Proceedings of the 2008 ISFM Conference: Understanding the Polarization between Fundamentalist and Modernist Mission

(2009) (*IJFM* 26:1)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/26_1_PDFs/26_1_Winter.pdf

The difference between ordinary missiology and frontier missiology is that the latter talks about the edge of change. Often things change gradually and we don't recognize it. History doesn't turn corners very rapidly. Everybody is trying to catch up with reality, so it's not unusual for us to have founded the International Society of Frontier Missiology (ISFM) to study the changes we aren't clearly aware of, or that we need to become aware of, or the things that are coming down the pike over which we have no control. That's why we aren't talking about traditional missions.

The Great Reversal

We often hear about the "Great Reversal." The phrase refers to the early 20th century reduction of 19th century broad evangelism (including good deeds in this world) to narrow personal evangelism. In this regard we have talked about the tension between social action and evangelism. Professor David Moberg, author of *The Great Reversal*, was talking about the emergence of the polarization between fundamentalism and modernism. I want to address the source of that polarization.

Let's go back a few years before Moberg's book, *The Great Reversal*. In 1947, Carl F. H. Henry, who was a professor at Fuller and later Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, wrote a book entitled *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. For a small book, it has had an earthshaking impact, not necessarily positive, in the entire Evangelical world. As a result, the entire Fuller Theological Seminary was branded as New (or "Neo") Evangelicalism. This was, you might say, the postmodernism of its day—emergent theology. There was a great deal of unpredictability about Fuller. Henry's book essentially was the opening shot across the bow of where Evangelicals had been.

A decade later, in 1958, Timothy Smith, an obscure graduate student at John Hopkins, developed a dissertation on American history that hit the fan. He was soon asked to give lectures all over the country. He was the one who invented the phrase "The Great Reversal," which David Moberg later used as the title to his book. Smith unearthed the fact that in the 1900s we had a very different kind of Evangelical Christianity, which we had forgotten about by 1958. His book was one of the single most explosive theses in the history of the American Society of Church History. It was titled very simply *Revivalism and Social Reform*. Why was it so explosive? Because in 1958 it was still a foregone conclusion that if any Evangelical talked about the Kingdom, he was a liberal, a modernist who didn't believe the Bible, and had been taken in by German higher criticism.

But Timothy Smith's research was irrefutable. Evangelicals earlier had indeed talked about the Kingdom and worked toward its extension on earth in this life. Line upon line he simply quoted the facts from the past. Everybody was totally surprised by all that had happened in an earlier, forgotten era.

By Timothy Smith's day most American Evangelicals were settled in the conviction that there were just two kinds of Christianity, one valid and one invalid. The valid kind talked about Heaven (and later on the prosperity gospel for individuals)—an entirely personal-salvation gospel. We talked about taking that gospel around the world, getting everybody in the world saved. That was the philosophy and the gospel of a strong movement emerging in the 1920s. It was not the only kind of Christianity, but the mass of working-class Evangelicals considered it to be the most valid brand. The invalid kind of Christianity was modernist, mainly for university, well-fixed people whose pastors went to seminaries, not Bible Institutes.

However, by 1958 not only Timothy Smith and Carl Henry, but others, too, were beginning to rediscover the need for a broader understanding of our mandate.

Notice that both Smith and Henry were college graduates. In the 1920s college people were not in great favor in the eyes of the masses of Evangelicals. Evangelicals founded 157 Bible institutes instead of colleges. The 19th century Evangelicals founded colleges like Wheaton College, but much of what was founded later in the 20th century was polarized away from that college stream of Christianity—later “mainstream” denominations in general—which were considered suspect. In some ways it was assumed to be defective, and to some extent it was. But the muscular Evangelicalism that had developed by the year 2000 to be the dominant form of Christianity was neither that of the mainline denominations nor Catholicism. The older mainstream denominations in 2008 now comprise only 8% of the US population.

In 1968 David Moberg came through with the book titled *Inasmuch, Christian Social Responsibility in 20th Century America*. Then in 1972 Moberg wrote a second book called *The Great Reversal*. It could be more accurately termed “the great polarization.” Many people have described this phenomenon. There's nothing novel about saying that Christianity became polarized. The question is, why did it?

It is a rather delicate subject. The Evangelical masses by 1920 were working-class people. They didn't and couldn't easily think about changing the structure of society. A parallel example would be the theology of the slaves. Look at what are called Negro spirituals. Written by slaves, these hymns reflect an exuberant form of Christianity. But note that they don't speak of changing this world. It's not that some of the slaves were theologians who lost track of what the Bible is talking about and just focused on heaven. They were not prosperity gospel people. The ranking characteristic of the slaves was that they were slaves. They were not about to march on city hall and make changes in society. They weren't up for social action or social change. They didn't have the potential for doing that. And neither did the working-class masses of Evangelicals in the 1920s. As a result they sub-consciously or deliberately chose a theology originating mainly from J. N. Darby, which described the world as getting worse and worse until Christ would return. Darby's thinking was no recipe for challenging worldly problems in the name of mission. But it fit in with their limited capabilities as working-class people.

Thus, you can see the cause and effect between social status and choice of theology. Very often philosophers and theologians boast that their thinking changed history, when actually, much more often, turns of history changed their thinking.

What Exactly Was Reversed?

Let's go back for a little bit of history. Our nation was founded in 1776, symbolically, and in 1789, formally. We then suffered a lot of commotion and confusion. There was a time when people were marching on Washington with little wooden guillotines, hoping to execute George Washington—something novel and exciting like the French were doing. We have little about this in our textbooks because we don't want to talk about those days. But the real change did not happen in 1776, though 1776 was, you might say, the conception. The real change happened at the end of the War of 1812, in 1815. By then, for the first time, most Americans suddenly realized that the British were not going to come back again, and that this country was theirs. Add the huge Louisiana Purchase, and, of course, we seized Texas and half of Mexico—all very legally, you understand, with a pistol on the table. We forced our northern border out to the Pacific without asking the Canadians, cutting them out of Washington and Oregon. We went out to the Pacific and took over Guam, Samoa and the Philippines. Probably no conquest has ever been bloodier or more tragic than the American army's takeover of the Philippines. Talk about news blackouts. Nobody really knew that we were killing literally hundreds of thousands of Filipinos to establish control of that country. That's another thing that isn't in our textbooks.

Thus, this fever for taking over the world blossomed greatly in the latter half of the 19th century. But already in the first half of that century there was a period that is referred to sometimes as the "Second Great Awakening." Probably no nation in history has had such complete and total freedom in regard to its own future. There was a great deal of that optimism in the United States after 1815. Christian biblical religion in that period was more often than not the initiative for new ideas. Novel ideas from Europe sprouted and grew in this country. You could try out a form of Christianity where nobody married anybody (the Shakers), or where everybody married everybody (the Oneida Community). And we had everything in between. We had Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists (which are in a kind of different category) and Christian Science. All of these had an additional "New Testament."

Adding to the New Testament wasn't a new phenomenon. Calvin's *Institutes* was a sort of new New Testament. Even John Wesley's preachers were commanded to preach nothing but what was in his twenty standard sermons. We were inventing all kinds of New Testaments. It was an amazing and tumultuous period. Much good came out of all this, and a great deal of confusion as well. This should remind us that in mission fields around the world we can expect a great deal of good, but also confusion.

For example, the year that Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission was the year the quasi-Christian Tai Ping movement in China was defeated. When all was said and done, 30 million people were dead, and the movement was also dead. That movement took over the largest city of China at that time, the city of Nanking, and held it for 11 years. Talk about what the Kingdom of God would look like. Nobody had any fixed wages, they just shared with each other. They printed the Bible and followed it carefully. Did a missionary make a mistake in teaching the Bible to the Tai Ping founder?

To see more of what happened uniquely in this country you need to know about a very thrilling book, entitled *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848*, by Daniel Howe, published by Oxford University Press. It is a 900-page book on this unique period, this fertile, tumultuous, postmodern sort of period. The talk

today about postmodern-ism is meek and flabby compared to the uproar and change of this earlier period. All kinds of changes took place. Slavery was abolished. The women's voters' rights movement was launched. Women were going around with axes bashing in the windows of saloons. By 1850 there were probably only one or two of the states that were not dry. Prohibition, albeit temporarily, had conquered this country. By 1850 even the Presbyterians were dry, but, alas, they had more of their people coming over from Scotland who made their living from whiskey production. Very few people in this country would drink wine, hard liquor or even tea or coffee.

This was the Evangelical "consensus." It was though that it was the kingdom of God! There was a pastor named Sylvester Graham who left his church to be an evangelist of whole grain. Graham flour and graham crackers got their names from him. Coeducation and vocational education came into being; societies were established for the reform of morals; all kinds of amazing changes took place as a result of the Second Evangelical Awakening, mainly between 1815 and 1859.

Then Came the Reversal

In this period, note, the dominant leadership of the Evangelical movement also ran the country. They were upper-class people, not the masses of ordinary people. However, these upper-class Evangelicals soon were absolutely swamped by the massive avalanche of immigration between 1870 and 1930. Our population tripled and quadrupled due to this massive immigration of Southern Europeans who were mainly nominal Catholics. As a result, the spirit of revival ideal-isms was very much dampened.

Furthermore, a man came into the picture named Moody. His influence, in my opinion, was far greater than Billy Graham's. He won millions and millions of working-class, non-college people. When the Moody Bible Institute was founded, it was founded on the assumption that colleges were for the elite, often "modernists," and that Bible institutes were for the "ordinary" conservative Bible-believing people. One count, as previously mentioned, was that 157 Bible institutes were formed. Precisely because there was no hope for working-class people to change this world—because they had no real hope of changing the laws, the temper, or the trends of society—they did what they could. They founded inner-city missions, good works of all kinds. There's no question that they had as much of a social concern as anybody. But they had limited influence on bigger problems of society itself.

So what happened? Moody Bible Institute became known for its faculty's insights into prophecy. Prophecy conferences abounded. In my teenage years, eschatology was often the main subject in church. The Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society wouldn't even let you be a missionary unless you were pre-millennial (meaning the world is not getting better before Christ returns). We were confident that we had the future events all figured out. We were oriented toward heaven and to the future, toward personal soul-salvation, not social transformation, because this world was going to the dogs. Obviously, then, there was no reason to try to fix it.

This theology didn't actually characterize all missionaries, because the Student Volunteers were "elite" college graduates. To a great extent they carried forward the earlier century's idea of changing society. But they went out to establish universities. They also went to Africa and pushed African pastors out of the pulpit who were not college graduates! In some ways this rush of new, young missionaries set the cause of

missions back 40 years. They were in another world from Moody Bible Institute missionaries. And yet, they still did some very good things. Their SVM lists of missionaries “sailing” did not include the thousands from Bible Institutes.

Examples of the Polarization

Let’s take an example of the interplay between evangelism and the changing of this world. In Guatemala for ten years I lived out in the mountains, while most of the “civilized” people lived in the cities. But an educated non-Indian believer, Adalberto Castillo, told me he needed another Ph.D. on his board of directors. I said, “Board of directors of what?” “Well, we’re starting an Evangelical university.” Here I am working with barefoot Indians. I couldn’t imagine the value of a university; besides, I was leaving the country in two weeks to teach at Fuller for the next ten years. I told him, “I won’t even be around.” He said, “At least you can stand up for the picture.” So I got my picture taken with the board of directors and never heard another word for 38 years.

A few years ago I read an article that said there were 41 new universities in the non-Western world which were founded, note, not by missionaries, but by national believers. One was in Guatemala, one of the oldest, Mariano Gálvez University, with 10,000 students. I said to myself, “What in the world, that’s the one for which I stood up for a picture!” And theoretically I was still a member of the board. So here I was, a proud founder of a university in Guatemala which I had not even believed in. Two weeks later I talked to a man visiting from Guatemala whose father I had known. I asked him if it was true that Mariano Gálvez University had 10,000 students. He said, “No, no, 30,000! Every judge in Guatemala has come through that school. Indians never got a fair hearing in any court until now, because the judges now are Evangelicals.”

I was in Guatemala about a year and a half later. I tracked down the founder, who was 91 years old and still the president of the university. While we were in his penthouse office, I asked him, “Adalberto, is it true you have 30,000 students?” “No,” he replied, “37,000!”

I see things very differently now. It is true that during my time in Guatemala I started seventeen businesses for part-time pastors. But it never occurred to me that I should be trying to raise the economic level of all Evangelicals or even the whole Church.

When I first went to Guatemala, I soon noticed that there were two specific families that were benefactors of the whole denomination. They could be counted on to give thousands of dollars to the church. One was in the dairy business and one was in the printing business. They were sort of the spiritual and financial backbones of the 200 churches. They were not pastors, they were laymen, elders in the church. But they employed lots of people. I said to myself, how in the world did that happen? Everybody says missions goes to the poor people, and I think that’s only right, but you don’t have dairy industries and printing industries popping up among poor people. I found out later that two much-earlier missionaries had gone to Guatemala who weren’t preachers. They set up a vocational school to train people in dairy and printing. But, their school was later abolished by the mission. It was thought not to be “missionary work” to train people how to make a living. But some of their influence survived in these two families.

Later I tracked down in the States an old man who was one of those early missionaries, and he was very bitter about his experience. He’d gone down to Guatemala as a layman to help the people, but the theological missionaries looked down their noses

at him and eventually phased out both him and his associate. He was bitter to the day he died. Now this is fairly recent historically. Nevertheless, we still have, to some extent, these two points of view, representing the polarization.

When I left Guatemala, what happened to those 17 businesses I left behind? One of them was a fairly large operation, run by eight seminary students. Well, the missionary who took my place was into radio and television. He was concerned about converting the people not assisting bi-vocational pastors which are 90% of those in Latin America! He wasn't primarily thinking of raising their standard of living—and neither was I. I was merely thinking in practical terms about enabling more people to be pastors.

When I was back in Guatemala about three years ago, I visited the mountain territory where I had worked. It was a very rewarding and wonderful experience. When I left they had about ten churches in the area, now they have more like fifty. Even the secular businesses often have a Bible verse in their name. Practically everybody in that valley is a believer of one denomination or another. However, I found a disturbing reality: there were virtually no fathers living there.

The fathers are gone. Many of the older brothers are also gone. One out of every five people in that valley now lives in the United States as an illegal. When you cross the border, you're spending thousands of dollars and risking your life. You can't go back. Thus, thousands of families in *this valley alone* are being torn to shreds. The kids grow up in families like that. They say that elephants that grow up in the absence of, and, without the guidance of older elephants, become rogue elephants. These kids are becoming rogue kids. Their whole generation is getting into drugs and gangs, none of which was true when I was there. There's one section of the capital city called 'Via Hermosa,' from which one youth gang alone, I was told, is extorting 100,000 US dollars per week. Every day in the larger city there are dead bodies on the street. Yet, Guatemala has the highest per-centage of Evangelicals of any country in Latin America. It was 5% when I worked there. Now it is 40%—higher than Korea. However, with most families divided asunder *that is the way to tear Christianity to shreds*.

Globalization and Micro-Enterprise

I don't see very many in mission leadership who are thinking about the physical dimension. I think it's coming. The overseas churches certainly know that their people are poor. Thousands and thousands of Christian families in Southeast Asia are selling their children, not because they don't want them, but because the children would otherwise starve.

But, getting food handouts isn't the solution. Malnourished people need to be able to buy food. They need to be able to earn food. Why don't they have a job? Globalization has taken their work away. How does that work? Take the case of our own Navajos in Arizona. They used to have jobs. They were famous for their beautiful handmade rugs and turquoise jewelry. It takes a woman three months to weave a Navajo rug, and she can sell it for 400 dollars. That's not a whole lot of money for three months of work, but they scrape by. Nowadays, however, half of all those products they sell are made in China. They're identical. You can't tell the difference. So what do these Navajos do? This woman can buy the same rug for 50 dollars, and still sell it for 400. So why in the world would she make a rug by hand if the Chinese can make it more efficiently? But tomorrow

other businesses will be there to sell directly to tourists and the Navajos will be out in the cold.

There is absolutely no future for micro-enterprise or any human activity that's less efficient than some other process that is more efficient—even at a distance. That's globalization. It can happen and has already been happening historically on a country level. We should know how it works because it began to happen in England around 1775. It was called the Industrial Revolution. When axe heads began to be mass-produced, village blacksmiths had nothing to do. Where did they go? They went to London. So many people were driven to London out of work that Frederick Engels wrote the book *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. This is a very detailed, very accurate, very competent survey of the unbelievably evil conditions. Wealthy Evangelicals did not know what to do about it. That same process of globalization is happening today. What difference does it make if the factory that drives you out of work is 10 miles away or 10,000 miles away? *Any human activity that is less efficient than something else is going to go out of business.*

This is why micro-enterprise is rarely a good idea. I have no doubt that Muhammad Yunus who wrote the book *Banker to the Poor* is a good-hearted person. But you know what he's mainly done? He's mainly proven that banks can make money off of the desperately poor. As I was reading in *Time* magazine, after Yunus got the Nobel prize, a whole new banking industry exploded into existence all over the world. His investment in Bangladesh of \$1 billion practically overnight became \$350 billion lent by hundreds of banks all over the world. They said, "Great, here's another way to make money!" Were they really thinking about helping poor people do things that globalization would not soon replace? Rarely. They are mainly getting people into debt.

What Does the Church Offer?

We talk about 10,000 people coming to Christ every day in Africa. That's all to the good, because you cannot build a strong society unless you have people you can trust. But people keep saying that you can't trust Christians. I've heard pastors in this country more than once say that the businessmen in their congregation would never hire a Christian. On the other hand, when I was in Guatemala, even though the Evangelicals were less than 5% of the population, in every mountain town the treasurer was an Evangelical. I talked to the owner of a big textile mill down in the city, a Jewish man who was advertising in the main newspaper for Evangelical workers. I asked him why. Without blinking he shot back, "They don't booze, they don't chase women and they come to work." In the country of Chad, an absolutely Muslim country, in the president's household all of the servants are Christians. The president trusts the Christians. Yet, even if you have honest people in the picture, the talk about micro-enterprise has no future.

The World Bank in 32 years has given away \$3,500 billion (three and a half trillion), but, as evidenced by the subtitle of William Easterly's book *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, we are quite apparently doing a lot of harm and very little good. The chief problem is corruption. There's so much corruption even in the World Bank itself, we read, that they would have to shut it down if it were investigated.

The Theological Polarization Is Still There

There is still a very good reason to convert people around the world (the honesty of transformed people is still essential), but by and large we Christians have the *hope* and the world has the *work*. It is not the church but the world who is fighting the major problems. Our missions are not doing what they did in the 19th century. My chapter “Three Eras of Mission: The Rise, Reduction, and Recovery of Kingdom Mission” (*Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 2009) essentially gives more of the historical picture of just how it happened that there was a great loss of Kingdom Mission among Evangelicals. Carl F. H. Henry, Timothy Smith and David Moberg were all university professors, but 50 years earlier they would have been Bible Institute professors. They were the early prophets of a recovery of what I call Kingdom Mission. They began to see what a wealthy, professional Evangelical can do that a working-class Evangelical can’t do. This is my theory as to one of the major factors in the longstanding polarization between “fundamentalists” and “modernists.”

The tragedy is that it has taken Evangelicals so long to come back into the picture of fighting the real problems of this world that many of the options are no longer ours. We are in the minority in the universities. George Marsden, one of the most famous Evangelical historians of Christianity in the USA, says that in 1870 Evangelicals were very highly respected in the halls of Washington and among educated people in general, but that by 1920 Evangelicals were the laughingstock of America. (Marsden 2006:x) I’m not saying education is the solution. It’s just that in Moody’s day, only 2% of the people went to university, and they were from wealthy and influential families. That level was not an option for most of the Moody converts, and the polarization reflected to a great extent the kind of theology that corresponded to the capacities of the two different class levels.

A Very Key Question from the Audience

Question: So are you now looking differently at the church growth movement and its teachings than you used to?

Winter: I see church planting more firmly than ever as the absolutely essential foundation upon which any significant progress will ever be made. I really don’t have great confidence in these secular projects that are talked up so much. I don’t think that apart from honest people, people of integrity, anything significant is ever going to work very long.

I realize there are other forms of godliness than straight Evangelicalism. We are not the judges of peoples’ hearts. I speak of some Evangelicals who say if a person is not an Evangelical he’s a phony, or, if he has not undergone certain ritualized experiences, he couldn’t be a real Christian.

I have not changed my mind at all about the primacy of evangelism and church planting. But I see that we are, to too great an extent, producing a self-collapsing Christianity, insofar as our converts are told that the only important thing to do is to win more converts. It’s like getting the people into the armed forces, and they ask what they are supposed to do. “Oh, well, you are supposed to recruit.” Then they recruit more and more people, and set them also to recruiting still other people. Some day someone says, “Aren’t we supposed to be fighting a war?” “Oh yeah, there’s a war.”

We sing songs all the time as if by repeating the same words a hundred times we can make them come true. Christ is so great for us, His cross is so important. All these things are true, but if that's all we sing, if we don't turn in the other direction to do God's will in this world, singing is not enough. One of the pastors at my church said Christians argue all the time how to do church. They don't talk about how to be church in the world. And that to me is a result of the impoverishment for many years of a lower-class standing and no opportunity to make major changes. Evangelicals are genuine believers, generous and eager to help, just as high quality as anybody, but with a background of limited social potential. But now all of a sudden, we've got people like Chuck Colson, who has started projects in prisons all over the world. The average Christian can't do that. Colson is in the halls of power. Many other Evangelicals today are wealthy. Evangelicals fritter away more money per year than Bill Gates gives away. Evangelicals often don't think clearly about what they could do with the resources they have. They have been buying boats and second houses and adding on to their homes.

Yet, in the real world it's the sixth-grade kids that are thinking about slavery in Africa. It seems like everyone is thinking about demolishing world problems—except the church. It is as if one could go to church for another 100 years the way things are going and never hear about poverty in Africa, never hear that 45 million people every day in Africa are withdrawn from the workplace because of malaria alone, either because they are sick or are caring for someone who is sick. If we did hear, we might not hear how Evangelicals can deal with it. When we are losing 45 million people in Africa out of the workforce every day, even if Africa had no other problems, it would be a poor continent. We don't ever hear about that. We may not even pray for malaria scientists. You are supposed to go out of your church door, stay legal, be generous and thoughtful. Don't mess with society.

A second step would be for the pastor to say, "Ask God if you are serving the Kingdom as effectively as you could. You have no right to do anything, make a living or whatever, if you are not sure what you are doing is the most urgent thing you are able to do for the Kingdom of God—and still make a living. Get rid of the job, get a lower-paying job, do the thing that will advance the kingdom more than any-thing else." This would be about *individuals* changing or confirming jobs.

A third step would be for pastors to tell their people, "Don't go out the door, stick around and I want all the attorneys to get together and talk about how they can help the International Justice Mission." Or, he gathers them to start a new organization to fight some other insidious evil in this world. This is not what you hear in church. Rather, at best, we are thinking of ways to extend the church to the last unreached people group.

Church Mission, which is absolutely basic and absolutely valid, is to extend the faith, and transform people into reliable people of integrity. Kingdom Mission is when the church stops thinking about itself and its members and pursues God's will in this world, not just pursues more members. In his book *Church Shift*, Sunday Adelaja, the pastor of the largest church in Europe, says that when members do things like help in the nursery and direct traffic on Sunday, that's not mission. It's church housekeeping. The church exists to extend the glory of God and His will *in society* whether or not it makes advances in church membership. Many people are leaving the church today because what secular people are doing is more exciting, more relevant, more concrete, and may seem to be more Biblically valid. But, I still believe that those people need to keep in mind that

everything they do out in the world will flounder if they don't have the church's redeemed souls right at the heart of it.

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Why Fight Evil

(date unknown).

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Prayer Log Entry:

“The reason I am so concerned to identify evil and become known as a believer in Jesus Christ who is fighting it, is because a great deal of evil in this world is blamed on God. How attractive is our invitation to people to return to and yield to their Father in Heaven if they continue to believe he is the one who contrives for most everyone to die in suffering? Unless Satan is in the picture and we are known to be fighting his deadly works we are allowing God’s glory to be marred and torn down. Doesn’t that make sense?”

Editorial Reflections on The Kingdom of God

(Ralph Winter's last editorial)

(2009) (*IJFM* 26:1)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/26_1_PDFs/26_1_Editorial_Reflections.pdf

The Kingdom of God

This time I (Ralph D. Winter) will comment on a particular theme and mention a few books on the subject. I'm concerned how better to understand the divergent concepts of the Kingdom of God that have been central to the polarization between Fundamentalism and Liberalism in the early part of the 20th century and still today.

For example, there are those who feel that the Kingdom of God is something that is going to come someday if we can just be patient. Along with that, often, is the idea that in the meantime the world is clearly getting worse and worse and there is really no reason to try to fix it because it is just going to get worse anyway. In fact, the faster it gets worse the closer we are to the coming of the Kingdom.

Then there is another view, an opposite extreme you might say, of those who feel that the Kingdom is already here. It is the church. When we win people into the church we are winning them into the Kingdom, which is true, but is that all there is to the Kingdom? In this view, when God talks about His Kingdom extending across the world, He's talking about the church expanding across the world. There is a good deal of truth in that, of course, but that also means that there is no Kingdom to be supported, pursued, upheld, developed beyond the church. It implies that we don't need to get mixed up in the world of politics, science, modernization and all that. We just need to mind our own business and win people into the church. Jesus' statement "I will build My church" ends with a period; there is nothing the church should do but build itself.

It certainly is true that expanding the Church is terribly important and absolutely essential. But there is something in between these two extremes of 1) waiting for the Kingdom and keeping out of trouble and 2) concentrating on the growth of the church, but then not feeling that we have any obligation to step outside the church and to work with this world's problems, with the World Health Organization, work for banishing malaria or poverty in Africa. We should be willing to work with anybody and everybody who can enable God's will to be done on earth. Are the good works that glorify our Father no longer important? Are those things for the world to do, and not for the church? Should we simply focus on evangelism and church recruitment, and let all those other things be someone else's responsibility?

What would a third intermediate view be to these two extremes? For one thing, there are two sets of books in front of me here in my office—about fifteen in each group. One group is on the "missional church," and there is not space to take it up in this issue. It has to do with churches that are restless, that feel there is something more to be done. They want to get their members involved in the real world, not just to add to their church membership, but to actually change the world. These missional churches are lashing out in good projects and helpful things, many of them rather superficial, only a few harmful. At least they represent a middle way between the two extremes just mentioned.

The other set of books talks much more specifically, if indirectly, about the whole matter of what we are supposed to do on earth in addition to *waiting for the Kingdom or*

expanding the church. These books are not necessarily all new, but they all pertain to the whole matter of the Kingdom of God and God's will being done on earth today. They build on the idea that we should be salt and light and that our light is going to shine, not just by our talk but by our walk, and that our deeds will glorify God thus making our words more credible. This is Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in heaven." The good deeds are, first of all, to display the character of God in this world here and now, whether we solve all problems or not. We can at least manifest a strong witness that glorifies God. If we do, we're in the middle area. All of the following books are in that middle area.

The first book is an older book now in its second edition with a new Introduction, called

***Fundamentalism and American Culture*, by George Marsden (Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 2006, 351 pp.).**

George Marsden is one of the principal historians of American church life. This book goes into great detail about how Evangelicals have struggled with this whole issue.

***Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*, by George Marsden (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987, 319 pp.)**

This is an earlier book by the same author telling how Fuller Seminary was established in 1947—the same year when a faculty member, Carl F. H. Henry, wrote a book called *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Henry's book broke a hole in our Evangelical universe letting in a flood in all kinds of concerns about cultural traditions and worldly problems which we had not thought we had to deal with—a very ground-breaking book. That this book's publication coincided with the founding of Fuller Seminary was symbolic. Very soon Fuller Seminary was labeled neo-evangelical. It emphasized things that hadn't been emphasized before. It worked in the middle ground between Fundamentalism and Modernism, or, let's say, Fundamentalism and Liberalism, or, more accurately, between working class/Bible Institute people and university/seminary people.

***Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, by Andy Crouch (InterVarsity Press 2008, 284 pp.)**

This very recent book by Andy Crouch again addresses the question of what our role is in this whole world (not necessarily inside the church, but outside the church), how we can affect our culture and how important culture actually is. It's a very interesting book. I'll quote a couple of things from it so you'll get a feel of what he's talking about. On page 204, he compares the hopeless situation, really, under the rule of the gods of Rome, by comparison, to the Christian perspective. He says,

We have to admit that a [Roman] pantheon filled with a wild variety of gods of various sorts and conditions, playing favorites and capriciously intervening in history in an endless cosmic competition, seems much better suited to the haphazard process of cultural consolidation in the ferment of the Mediterranean Basin than the idea of a single Creator God who has chosen a particular people and sticks with them with the ferocity of covenant love.

On page 261 he more or less summarizes his book,

If we are to be kingdom-announcers, modeling the new way of being human, we are also to be cross bearers. This is a strange and dark theme that is also our birthright as followers of Jesus. Shaping our world is never for a Christian a matter of going out arrogantly thinking we can just get on with the job, reorganizing the world according to some model we have in mind. It is a matter of sharing and bearing the pain and puzzlement of the world so that the crucified love of God in Christ may be brought to bear healingly upon the world at exactly that point... Because, as he himself said, following him involves taking up the cross. We should expect, as the New Testament tells us repeatedly, that to build on his foundation will be to find the cross etched into the pattern of our life and work over and over again.

My only comment on this excellent book is that he is focused, understandably, on what people can actually do right now *as individuals* in their own local situation. I think that's remarkable and a good place to start, but I do think that he grossly underestimates the task that we have before us—the full scope of the war in which we are involved. There are many, many problems which local fellowships and small groups together will never be able to solve unless they promote organized teams which can operate on a larger scale and really beat down those problems. I think this book is good in terms of meddling in that middle area and the Kingdom being here already, but it does not go far enough. Andy Crouch is a musician, an artist and a sparkling personality, but is not, in this book, a world-level strategist.

***The Formation of Christendom*, by Christopher Dawson (Ignatius Press, a republished collection, 2008, 319 pp.)**

This book is probably the most important book in the whole group—a new book but not new content. Christopher Dawson, a Catholic historian was a giant of an intellect. A professor both at Oxford and at Harvard in his lifetime, he possibly had a more sweeping, comprehensive understanding of the last two thousand years and the impact of the Christian church on Western civilization than any man who has ever lived. One of his earlier books, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, is an absolute spellbinder and groundbreaker which, in my lifetime, was one of the major turning points in my understanding of the fact that our religion, our faith, our people, our church, our activities, really are forming and developing our whole world and society. This is not what most people believe. This is not what is taught in our schools. This is not what is thought to be true in hardly any sphere of secular life, but it is true. It is absolutely crucial.

***These Sought a Country*, by Kenneth Scott Latourette (Harper & Bros 1950, 156 pp.)**

Here's another old but very vital book. These are lectures by Kenneth Scott Latourette who, within the Protestant sphere this time, probably represented the absolute pinnacle of insight and knowledge about the growth and impact of the Christian church across the last 2,000 years. This particular book (of over 40 he authored) talks about five missionaries. Two of them went to China. Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard were both out-and-out evangelicals and church-planting people, but whose overall ministries were radically different. Hudson Taylor pursued relentlessly the development and expansion of the church, which, of course, is absolutely basic. Timothy Richard did the

same thing. He planted churches and was very successful. But at the same time, he had a very different educational background in England. He found himself drawn to some of the upper-class people of China who ran things, and tried to influence them on another level: nature and science, history and astronomy, etc. He spent a good deal of his time founding universities and changing the whole structure of education in China.

You can easily see the difference between these two very sincere men who were good friends in many ways, but just didn't agree at all on how to go about mission. One of them had to do with the extreme of the church being the Kingdom of God, and for that reason its expansion was enough on which to focus. The other felt that the church of God was supposed to be salt and light and to interfere in this world and to extend God's will in terms of the Kingdom. The fact is that both men had enormous impact on China. There is nothing you can really critique about either one of them. But it is also true that while they were cordial to each other as persons they diverged sharply in their methods.

***Promise Unfulfilled: The Failed Strategy of Modern Evangelicalism*, by Rolland McCune (Ambassador Publications 2004, 398 pp.)**

Here's a book that presents an amazing and fair-minded, meticulous tracking of the changes of perspective on the part of key evangelicals in the middle of the twentieth century. I don't know of any book that is as careful and as thorough as this one by a professor from the Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. He shows very clearly how Carl F.H. Henry began to think outside the box—Billy Graham, too. McCune tracks what Billy Graham said in speech after speech across the years. You can easily see how both Carl F. H. Henry and Billy Graham were beginning to see things differently. Interestingly, reading the book, you could easily be persuaded that Henry and Graham were gaining good insight and were right. However, McCune is clearly opposed to their change of thinking. Thus, you have a remarkable combination of opposition to the new thinking and yet a very fair-minded and objective treatment thereof. It is a valuable book.

***Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement*, by Sally G. McMullan (Oxford University Press 2008, 310 pp.)**

This is a very well researched book that talks about the origins of the women's rights movement and shows how closely it was related to the development of thinking within the Evangelical sphere. There is nothing like the actual facts of history to disabuse us of perspectives that aren't quite right. Today we have no idea of the battles, problems and prejudices that these women went through in those days to change their world. This is a remarkable replay of those events.

***The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions*, by John R. Mott (Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions 1910, 251 pp.)**

Here is a book which is an exposition, you might say, of the thinking of the thousands of college level missionary candidates and missionaries that were catapulted overseas out of the volcano of the Student Volunteer Movement back in the very early days of the 20th century. John R. Mott is the outstanding leader, unquestionably, of the entire movement. He was an imposing man who actually got a Nobel Prize and could have been elected US president, had he been willing to be nominated. This book is his summation of what happened at the famous meeting of 1910 in Edinburgh, a remarkable

account of just what they thought. Their thinking reflected a carry-over of the 19th century upper-class, influential, wealthy people's views about missionaries changing this world, not just extending the church. At the same time he was writing (when the Student Volunteer Movement was exploding) there was also another movement, very separate, of Bible Institute people, Moody Bible Institute leading the way—157 Bible Institutes in which there was a fertile soil of thousands of missionaries going out. But they were totally unmentioned in the Student Volunteer movement's records of missionaries "sailing."

This was unfortunate, in a way, because the missionary movement in this country obviously was not just college or non-college people. It was both. The identification of these two streams enables us to understand how there came to be a class and social polarization, including a theological polarization. That polarization has been partly valid and partly invalid. We have to better understand what happened and go beyond it today.

Colonialism and Christian Missions, Stephen Neill, (McGraw Hill, 1966, 446 pp.)

This is an old book, a gem, and hard to find. It is written by an absolute giant of mission history and knowledge. It shatters all kinds of current stereotypes of what missionaries did or didn't do and shows how colonialism was by no means as evil as the secular world thinks it was. I am reminded of Dinesh D'Souza's famous chapter, "Two Cheers for Colonialism," in which he tells how there were certainly serious problems with colonialism, but remarkable benefits at the same time. This is the sort of thing that you do not hear today although D'Souza wrote that just recently. Neill's is a very significant book that has to do with the actual record of what you could call the interference of the church in the world beyond its boundaries, in that middle area between waiting for the Kingdom and supposing the Kingdom is already here in the form of an expanding church.

Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to the Passion of the Christ, by Stephen J. Nichols (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2008, 237 pp.)

The Puritans, it turns out, were by no means just a bunch of super-religious people. They were super-involved in this world. In fact, one of the famous sermons preached in 1636 by John Cotton, "The Christian's Calling," declares that the Christian calling is precisely to interfere with this world and to change it, and that it is equally important to do that as well as to be forgiven of your sins!(Cotton, John, "Christian Calling," in Miller, Perry, ed. *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry*, Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 171-81) Now, obviously the Puritans were up against many practical obstacles so that they couldn't just think about systematic theology and how to extend the church.

Prophetess of Health: A Story of Ellen G. White, by Ronald Numbers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, 417 pp.)

and

The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design, Ronald Numbers (Harvard University Press, expanded edition, 2006, 616 pp.)

Ronald Numbers grew up in a Seventh Day Adventist pastor's home. He is kindly toward people like Ellen White, who was essentially the founder of the Adventist Church, and his own father who also believed in the Adventists' 6,000-year-old universe. Today, Numbers himself is a highly respected "Historian of Science and Medicine," a professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. His books are meticulously developed, giving graphic insight into the 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's when Ellen White and many others were concerned about health, cures, and the conquering of disease. It's a fact that around the world there isn't a finer network of hospitals than the Seventh Day Adventist network of hospitals. We are greatly indebted to the Adventist tradition. They are a remarkable example of the meddling of Evangelicals in this world.

On the other hand, Numbers has no use for Flood Geology or Young Earth thinking, despite his courteous treatment of those who promote such ideas. The second book is actually an amazing blow-by-blow account of how Evangelicals gradually took over an Adventist teaching—literally letter by letter, article by article and meeting by meeting. It is a fascinating story.

The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880–1920, by Valentin H. Rabe (Harvard University Press 1978, 299 pp.)

This is a very valuable book. It has not as much to do with China as it has to do with the American home base of missions to China and elsewhere in the 1880 to 1920 period. That period encompasses the origin and development of the Student Volunteer Movement. The book gives fascinating insight into what intelligent, influential and wealthy people in mainline denominations were doing and thinking in terms of what missions is and what missions ought to be. It is an excellent, factual insight into that whole sphere of mission.

Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History 1706–1914, Dana L. Robert (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2008, 314 pp.)

Dana Robert is one of the best and brightest scholars at work today in the history of missions, and this book gives outstanding examples of how colonialism itself was greatly changed and modified, not only by the colonial powers themselves, but also by the people with whom they went to deal. It is rich with insights.

God and Globalization: Vol. 4 Globalization and Grace, Max L. Stackhouse (Continuum, 2007, 281 pp.)

This book seeks to understand on the global level what God's will might be for believers here and now. This is the exact opposite of Andy Crouch's book about what individuals can do within their own immediate social sphere. Obviously, just as the mass production of axe heads in London knocked out the existence of hundreds of blacksmiths across the country (simply put them out of work), we can see the same process happening on a global level. It doesn't matter if a more efficient process for doing something is done ten miles away or ten thousand miles away, the less efficient will die. Modern transportation and communication have made the entire world smaller and have brought pressingly into existence factors on the global level that used to exist only on the local or national level. For example, it has been true for many years that a Walmart could kill off dozens of smaller grocery and department stores in its area. Now that they have

expanded beyond the U.S., they are doing it on a global level—which, in the long term, is often a good thing. (During World War II, 600,000 small businesses were closed down as being inefficient. After the war the ground was laid for a whole new burst of larger, more efficient enterprises which vaulted us out of the depression era.) There is absolutely nothing new about this happening on the global level. However, this is something that Christians should understand, be concerned about and do something about. This is, again, meddling in the intermediate period, between the Kingdom to come and the Kingdom that is here.

***God's Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith*, by Bruce A. Ware (Crossway Books 2004, 254 pp.)**

This book, from its title, does not seem to be related to the whole issue of the expanding understanding of some evangelicals of the larger view of God's will in this world, but he does, very clearly, discuss those issues from a theological point of view. This is a fairly up-to-date book that should not be ignored.

***American Religious Traditions: The Shaping of Religion in the United States*, by Richard E. Wentz (Augsburg Publishing House, 2003, 455 pp.)**

This book is a superb collection of actual, blow-by-blow events in this country that have to do, not just with the shaping of religion, which the title implies, but with the shaping of the United States itself.

***Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, by Timothy Yeats (Cambridge University Press 1994, 275 pp.)**

This is an important book. It talks very knowledgeably about the entire Christian mission movement in the last century. It is a little bit thin on American activities, but the author very clearly understands the stressful transitions that have taken place over time, for example, in the global level conferences from Berlin in 1966 sponsored by Billy Graham and Christianity Today, and later the indirect sponsorship by Billy Graham of the Lausanne conference in 1974, the development of the Lausanne Covenant, and then the many conferences following the one in Lausanne. The book is insightful in pulling together disparate facts about the same situation. Except for its price it certainly is a valuable book.

***The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*, by Garth M. Rosell, (Baker Academic 2008, 268 pp.)**

This book is probably the best book in this entire list in displaying the transitions going on within Evangelicalism in the middle of the last century. Garth Rosell is the son of the famous evangelist, Merv Rosell, who was very much a part of the Youth for Christ movement and one of the main revival speakers of his time. So Garth grew up in the world of Harold John Ockenga and Billy Graham. You'll notice that he doesn't talk a lot about polarization or reducing tension. He simply talks about "The Surprising Work of God" and the "Rebirth of Evangelicalism." This is an interesting point of view because the word rebirth could actually refer back to the Evangelicalism in the earlier century. The 19th century had a very spectacular and different pattern of work.

In this book Rosell presents many personal anecdotes and quotes. It is an extremely meticulous book written by a professional historian who has endless original documents at his disposal. He has a huge bibliography on the whole subject. The book shows how Youth for Christ efforts of a popular sort employing the standard definitions of evangelism, not reform of this world, burgeoned into a major movement and how that movement then merged with the thinking of Carl F. H. Henry and Billy Graham and those who backed, for example, Fuller Seminary and later Gordon-Conwell Seminary—and, in general, concern for this world. Both seminaries were the initiative of Harold Ockenga. Rosell explains this without rancor or reference to tensions. He tries to be very fair about the new fervor within this new evangelical movement and gives loads of vital information on that subject. To give a little insight into the flavor of the book and of the era it describes, on page 162 there's a section called "The Reform of Society." Here the author quotes Henry's book, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, saying, "For their own part the Fundamentalists sponsored no program that attacked societal evils and ignored serious reflection on how an evangelical ecumenism might impinge in a culture crisis." The author summarizes, "Rather they constituted almost exclusively on 'evangelism' as 'the solution' to every problem." *Henry may not have stopped to think that working-class people generally lacked the necessary influence to make those changes.*

Rosell says, on page 164,

How are we to make sense of Fundamentalism's seeming disinterest in such matters? When Modernists talked about building the Kingdom of God on earth many fundamentalists focused increased attention on the rapture of the church and the prospect of a better life in heaven.

Then he quotes Henry addressing a group of evangelical pastors. "How many of you over the course of the past six months have preached a sermon devoted in large part to the condemnation of such social evils as aggressive warfare, social hatred and intolerance, the liquor traffic, exploitation of labor management and the like?" Not a single hand, he reported, was raised in response. "For the first projected period in its history," Henry lamented, "evangelical Christianity stands divorced from the great social reform movements" (in the 19th century).

On page 171 he writes,

Throughout his early ministry Ockenga also invested in issues relating to the manufacturing, distribution and abuse of hard liquor. Drawing once again on his Wesleyan roots, Ockenga warned his Park Street congregation of the "awful menace, the soul destroying menace, that life kill-ing menace—alcohol." The substance that "has taken more lives than all our wars and more money than our worship or God or the education of our children and the entertain-ment that we enjoy." Ockenga goes on to say, "I challenge you as Christians tonight to fight this thing in the church. Fight it in your home, fight it in society. Fight it by the ballot. Fight it by local options. Fight it with your influence. Fight it with your testimony all down the line and God knows how many souls you can save from hell and turn to Him."

To Sum Up

Most of the books mentioned here are just recent acquisitions. Many are fairly new, but there are loads of other books that talk about *this whole issue, which, in my opinion, is the major issue in terms of mission strategy today*. We often think in terms of what it takes for people to become Christians and we are naturally and properly concerned about expanding the growth of the church. In missions we do understand a little differently what that church will look like. It may look very Muslim or it may look very Hindu, but it will still be very biblically based and absolutely sound and valid.

In any event, the discussion above has more to do with issues than with what the church will look like. It has to do with the relationship of that movement, priceless and essential as it is, and the will of God for His glory and His Kingdom in the larger sense. Obviously there are hundreds of other books that are older and equally relevant. In fact, if I went back more than three months in terms of my own acquisitions, I could review dozens of other books in this area. However, the number of books is not as important as the depth and concern of the issue. Are we or aren't we to "meddle" in this world? Is there a better way to glorify God and make our evangelism credible?

In conclusion let me say that it is very important for me to realize that it is not just a case of whether or not we should be trying to make this world better for *human beings* to get along. For example, the whole of the animal kingdom is also beaten down with suffering night and day—from biting flies and internal parasites to predators and everything else. It isn't just *human beings* who need to be delivered from evil.

For me the key issue is whether doing good deeds in this life is essential to glorifying God and communicating His character. The other side of the coin is, if we don't demonstrate His character, are we misrepresenting God? Are we giving people the impression that God doesn't care to stamp out malaria in Africa, for example? This is not simply an issue of doing good, improving the human condition, or making human beings happy in this life. It is a matter of stamping out the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8) and it's a matter of glorifying God, which is a more significant thing by far than just simply helping people get along. When Jesus healed people what was He really doing? Was He trying to show us how to heal, or was He revealing God's heart that we should heal? Was He trying to be kindly to people? Of course He was. Was He trying to emulate the character of God? Yes, in an even more important sense. Otherwise we do, in fact, misrepresent God. We may preach, in effect, that all God wants is for us to join in Sunday gesticulations and ignore the vast evil outside the church that is flooding this world, bringing nine out of ten Americans down into suffering and pre-mature death due to disease alone. "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Samuel 15:22 KJV)

Who Is a True Christian?

(2009)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ec42ea30173380732231767/1589915300294/Who+Is+a+True+Christian%3F.pdf>

This was Ralph Winter's last "writing," dictated to his assistant a few weeks before his death on May 20, 2009.

Evangelicals have a hard time figuring out who is and who is not a true Christian, in the sense of a born-again member of God's Kingdom. We are especially troubled about those who don't call themselves Christians. We tend to reject the faith of Gentiles in the Bible who had a relationship with God, such as Abimelech. On the other hand, we turn a blind eye to a billion Christians who may have no spiritual credentials at all. And even church fathers like Justin Martyr and Tertullian, who disagreed with each other on practically everything, and whose views would not pass muster with our present day doctrine of substitutionary atonement, are viewed as true Christians by most Evangelicals today.

Down through history our criterion for what a Christian is has tended to be intellectual. As late as 1524, long after the Constantinian period, a scholarly Lutheran professor began to doubt whether the body and blood of Christ appeared in the eucharist. She was executed. A few years later a man turned up in Geneva with a slightly different interpretation of the trinity and Calvin executed him. As Christianity invaded the Dutch, two versions of Calvinism were popular. One version was totally unacceptable to the other side and street riots led to people on the other side having their arms and legs torn off.

Eventually the Evangelical Awakening appeared with its emphasis that experience, not knowledge, is what is necessary to be converted: being born again, the filling of the Spirit, and other experiences. However, Evangelicalism has experienced a relapse, and we are back to emphasizing creeds, which seem less demanding. Across the United States we have innumerable creeds.

Thus to sum up, it seems to make little difference to most Evangelicals what a Christian needs to be and to do if they call themselves a Christian. But if they don't call themselves Christians, such as Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists, all of our powerful criteria are brought to bear and we tend to throw them out, no matter how seriously they seek God. It seems to me, however, that no form of Evangelicalism nor any other definition can be adequate as a criterion of acceptability to God. We need to realize God does not intend for us to decide who is a spiritual Christian [OR: who is in his Kingdom] and who is not. That means the spiritual status of a lot of people is in doubt, and that's the way it should be. Embarrassingly, a huge amount of God's will is being performed every day by people who do not call themselves "Christian." Jesus' expectations that the will of God would be enacted in this life is actually happening before our eyes. This also means that Kingdom mission is in many cases a joint operation with "Christians" and non-"Christians" whose status with God is ambiguous or unfinished.