

Responses to Christopher Little's "What Makes Mission Christian?"

Robertson McQuilkin responds

Robertson McQuilkin served as a missionary in Japan for twelve years, as president of Columbia International University for twenty-two years, and as General Director of the Evangelical Missiological Society. A speaker and writer, today McQuilkin engages in an extensive conference ministry across America and overseas. He also serves as president emeritus of CIU.

With an astonishing volume of research and cogent argumentation, Chris Little has provided an astute critique of what some are doing with the "holistic" view of Christian mission. I commend him for this much needed effort and I commend Ralph Winter for publishing it. To avert the charge of negativism by advocates of "holism," next time around, Little might want to give more emphasis than he does to the responsibility of the church for compassion and seeking justice, without merging all purposes of the church into the "mission," which has historically referred to the evangelistic mission. By merging all purposes "holistically," the evangelistic has been shortchanged, as Little powerfully describes.

When Chris expands this into book form I recommend certain additional chapters:

1. The impact of post-modern thinking on holistic advocacy. His critique of the "Kingdom of God" and "holistic" views emerging from the modern-Enlightenment matrix is formidable, but post-modern thinking also has fueled contemporary missions thinking. And not just in Emergent and "missional" circles, influential as they are, but in a broad spectrum of evangelical missiology. For example, it is clearly post-modern assumptions that have led to a neglect of hell if not

its denial. Postmodernism needs to be explored as part of the paradigm shift in "missions" thinking.

2. His doxological "alternative view" would merit great expansion, something beyond the scope of his article. Perhaps a chapter on "the great command," exploring how God's motivation must be ours in loving him and loving people. God so loved that he gave... to save from eternal perishing, not merely—or primarily—from temporal forms of perishing.

3. A chapter also on the great commission, pointing out how that, though two of the five can, by exegesis bordering on eisegesis, be stretched to holistic intention, three of the five cannot mean other than Christ's evangelistic purpose for his church. Should not the "stretchable" two be interpreted in the light of the unequivocal three?

4. Little's reference to the example of Christ's own ministry and the book of Acts demonstrating how those who received the last command understood it, could be expanded, either in the context of one of the others or with a separate chapter of the book.

Get on with the book, Chris!

David Hesselgrave responds

David J. Hesselgrave (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) is professor emeritus of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, where he taught from 1965 to 1991. Before coming to Trinity, he was a missionary with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) in Japan for twelve years and taught for three years at the University of Minnesota. He has also taught at Evangelical Theological College in Hong Kong and Asian Theological Seminary in Manila. He served as Executive Director

of the Evangelical Missiological Society from 1991–1994. He is the author of numerous articles and books. His latest book is entitled Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today.

I think that Christopher Little is correct in dealing with this question in the context of the long-standing debate between two views of the nature of Christian mission. Those views have been characterized in a variety of ways but one view is that mission is mainly concerned with the proclamation of the Gospel and the development of responsible churches (as in the A.D. 2000 Movement goal "A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person"). The other is mainly concerned with doing good works that, first of all, glorify God but are also often thought of as demonstrating and extending Divine rulership in the world by pursuing peace, securing justice, protecting the environment, ministering to the hungry, fighting disease and, in general, working for the betterment of humankind. Of course these aims are not entirely mutually exclusive and many attempts have been, and are being made currently, to overcome this dichotomy. Of course, Christian Mission can be thought of as "both/and." However, as Little has amply demonstrated, in the final analysis history, logic and Scripture make it clear that the priority issue is absolutely inescapable.

Little makes mention of Donald McGavran in his article. McGavran faced this question head-on. In an article entitled "Missions Face a Lion" (*Missiology: An International Review*, 1 July 1989) he emphasized the fact that, as a very practical matter, "both/and mission" simply doesn't work. Social and humanitarian ministries almost inevitably "gobble up" time, money, and personnel resources so that little is left for evangelism and church development. We have known this to be the case from the time of Rufus Anderson's survey of American missions after the

passage of but one generation of missionaries. But a century and one-half later, McGavran still viewed it as a primary challenge of the future.

But McGavran did not stop there. In personal correspondence to me as well as elsewhere, he made it crystal clear that, from a theological perspective, Christian mission and Christian missiology have to do with evangelism and church growth. Any and all of these other ministries may indeed be good things for the Church to do, but they are not Christian mission as such. It was on the basis of a commitment to sound doctrine and that more focused view of the nature of mission that he urged the formation of a "Society of Christian Missiology" (eventually to be called the Evangelical Missiological Society).

I commend Christopher Little for his article. Obviously it could be greatly expanded. He could, for example, write more about Christian mission as a means of bringing glory to God. But he has addressed what I consider to be a central issue in evangelical missions today, and for that I for one am grateful.

One thing more. The editors of the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* are to be commended highly for publishing Christopher Little's monograph. I firmly believe that, to a significant degree, the future of evangelical missions and missiology will depend upon our willingness to engage the best minds evangelicalism has to offer in the affirmation of Christian beliefs and a consideration of nature Christian mission as well as in the determination of mission strategy.

Paul McKaughan responds

Paul McKaughan has more than 40 years of mission experience ranging from fourteen years on the field in Brazil to denominational and para-church leadership roles. He served as COO for the Lausanne Commit-

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tee for World Evangelization and on the Executive Committee of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance. Paul provided leadership for EFMA, now The Mission Exchange, for fifteen years, serving as President & CEO before accepting the special assignment as Ambassador at Large.

I am not a theologian or a missiologist; however, for 40+ years I have been participant in God's mission to the nations. I have also been an integral part of the evangelical missions movement Christopher Little writes about. It is really difficult to interact with a paper without knowing the person who wrote it. People are much more nuanced than are paper and ink.

The framing of an issue has a powerful influence on the conclusions that are drawn. In seeking to highlight a "growing divide among evangelicals," I feel the author has misjudged the missions community. In the past two plus years I have met with hundreds of mission leaders from both para-ecclesiastical and denominational mission boards. The thing that has impressed me is not the growing divide but rather the growing theological convergence among these leaders.

In framing this issue as man centered mission over against God centered mission (weighed heavily toward proclamation), the author may be reflecting his own valid concerns more than a real 'growing divide' in our community. As I have traveled throughout the nation visiting mission leaders, God's glory is the driving missional motivation for healing the sick and sharing the plan of salvation. How we do this with greater Biblical integrity, each within his or her organizational and personal calling, is a challenge we all recognize.

Little proposes a Doxological approach as something new. However, never in my 45 years in missions has there been a deeper commitment to this truth as the conscious driver of all we do in mission. This is true equally for agencies that are heavily involved in relief and development, as well as those who feel uniquely called to proclamation evangelism.

Within our evangelical missions community there is an ongoing and lively discussion about how we advance the mandate of making God's glory known to men and women who live in the communities we encounter. Integrity demands we live out the good news we proclaim. In a world that is in every way desperately poor and needy, it is not Liberation Theology that causes evangelical missionaries to concentrate on the needs or priority of the poor. They are the greatest percent of the unreached. Integrity demands that both word and deed point the poor to our almighty God. Our community is far from perfect. It seems like we are always "in process." Those committed to making God's glory known through incarnational witness often need to be challenged to share more clearly and verbally the good news of the Gospel. Missionaries who are called to personal or mass evangelism must be reminded that their words may sound hollow and have little meaning without the demonstration of God's glory as He becomes incarnate in the desperate reality of the poor. I believe our evangelical mission community is largely united in its purpose, as well as our struggle to live and proclaim that awesome "Doxological orientation" referred to by Christopher Little.

Steve Hawthorne responds

Steve Hawthorne is director of WayMakers, a prayer and mission mobilization organization in Austin, Texas. After co-editing the course and the book Perspectives on the World Christian Movement in 1981, he launched "Joshua Project," a series of research expeditions among unreached peoples in world class cities. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. from the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in biblical theology of mission.

Christopher Little's article disappointed me. I'm in agreement with him that evangelical ideas of mission have been mixing and morphing in recent years in ways that are bringing us back to the same debates and distinctions of "the ecumenical/evangelical divide" of the last century. I think Little is correct to suggest that we are cycling back to positions and dichotomies that were debated fifty or forty years ago. If this is true, then it is all the more evidence that the first Lausanne Congress provided an imperfect resolution to the problem of the primacy of evangelism and the priority social action. I think we'd all agree that more clarity is needed. But we need light on the issues so that we understand why positions held by previous generations are regaining popularity. Drawing the dividing lines again in the same places doesn't help us move forward.

In my opinion, the lack of a clear vision of what God desires to bring about within the days of the age has set evangelicals shopping for some kind of here-and-now hope to accompany and validate their mission. And that's a good thing. But the "both-and," "two-wings-of-the-bird" models of holism are not focused upon a confidence of what God will bring about with His people within the days of the age. Instead, these models of holism are framed in reaction to a supposition of body-spirit dualism. Mission is reduced to a response instead of

a pursuit of a purpose. We are left without a clear vision of what God's mission will bring about in this age. This is why I think we are experiencing a drift more than a divide. We are groping for hope. Buzz words (incarnational, missional, transformational) are filled in any number of ways. Kingdom vocabulary is commonplace, but defined by any number of divergent agendas. Since I am convinced that articulating how our hope and mission align with God's activity in this age is of utmost importance, my



comments here are not at all intended to dismiss or merely to disagree with Little. I think he's right that we remain mindful of issues that have sundered, and in the view of some, have diverted the Protestant mission movement. But I was disappointed in his attempt to point the way forward. Here's why:

First, Little's polemical approach serves to widen the divide rather than help focus a way forward. The very title suggests that many evangelicals should not consider themselves to be doing Christian mission unless they hold his position.

Second, his arguments, sometimes supported with a single quotation, are far too brief to warrant some of the overstated and absolute claims. For example, when Little claims that "one can therefore not justifiably deny that..." I thought of several ways that

good-hearted and well-spoken evangelicals could assert different notions with seemingly sturdy biblical support. It may be an issue of attempting to deal with an enormous set of issues in a small space. When I read through Little's book-length work, *Mission in the Way of Paul* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2005) I didn't find him to be as unconvincing.

Third, Little tends to validate dichotomies by yet other dichotomies. It's important to keep your dichotomies clear if your point is which side one should take. I found at least eight different dichotomies: While it's common to align dichotomies such as 1) *physical versus spiritual* or 2) *deed versus word* with the dominant issue of 3) *social action versus evangelism*, his case became less convincing by overlaying these dichotomies with 4) *vertical* (having to do with God or spiritual things?) *versus horizontal* (having to do with human affairs). For some reason he presented 5) *the temporal as opposed to the eternal* as a clarifying distinction. But what was particularly unhelpful was to find him dichotomize 6) *the ministry and mission of Jesus as opposed to the ministry and mission of Paul*. What I found completely untenable was to set 7) *mission pursuing the kingdom of God as something other and opposed to mission pursuing the glory of God*. We have not understood the doxological theme of Scripture if we too simplistically set 8) *the "welfare of man" over against the glory of God*.

Little purports to present the "kingdom of God clarified." But he too quickly dismisses the motif of the kingdom of God as being realized in any way in the here and now. He considers the present-hour reality of the kingdom to be essentially a "spiritual experience." Come on, Chris; we can do better than that. Surely there is some kind of manifestation of God's rule in Christ that is to be observable in our day. I am sympathetic to the dis-

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inction of an incarnationalist approach (after the pattern of Jesus) versus a representationalist approach (with the presiding presence of Jesus). Why not have both? In my opinion, trying to emulate the example of Jesus is futile without relying on the operative presence of the risen Christ. In my view, it is Christ who makes mission Christian. Better stated, it is Christ who, along with His people, finishes the mission of the church, who makes it possible for humans to begin to resume the lapsed creation mandate, and who ultimately fulfills the entire mission of God. But when Little implies that the mission of Jesus is very different than the mission of His followers, we are left with the impression that we should dismiss Christ's example and follow Paul's model. If this is a distinction Little hopes that evangelicals will buy, he needs to argue it much better.

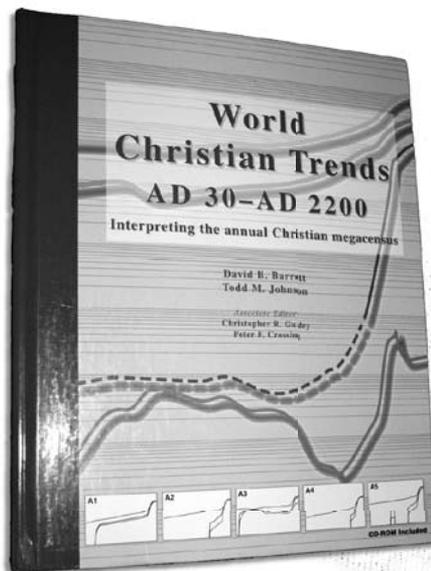
Perhaps what bothered me most was his suggestion that we should replace the kingdom of God with the glory of God as the defining biblical motif shaping the paradigm of mission. This will not do. We must offer some way of talking about God's rule, Satan's defeat, Jesus triumphing over evil in principle at the cross, Christ being obeyed by some from every people, and then Christ working with His empowered to overcome and subdue evil in demonstrable ways before He comes to judge the earth. All of these, and many more, are kingdom realities that are part of any Christian theology and should be part of any idea of Christian mission.

I'm known for my views about the glory of God. The "story of His glory" should be seen as one of the most dominant themes of Scripture. The glory of God is the ultimate purpose of our mandate and the most endur-

ing motivation for mission. I am not understated about God's glory. But we dare not set the kingdom of God against the glory of God. To "declare His glory among the nations" (Psalm 96:3) cannot be something different than declaring "among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!'" (96:10) in such a way that the nations will come to Him in worshipful obedience (96:8-9); this is the gospel of the kingdom. As the nations of earth resound with song (96:1-2) no part of the created order is left untouched by the hope of His consummating judgment of all evil (96:11-13). The glory of God is not something dispensationally distinguished from the kingdom of God.

I think it is very helpful to compare Jesus' mission with the mission of Paul. But one thing is clear in both: The kingdom of God and the glory of God are seen to be integral to their respective missions. Just after Jesus said "Father, glorify Your name," we find Him saying that "Now the ruler of this world will be cast out" (John 12:28, 31). A prayer for God's glory answered by the great act of overcoming evil,

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establishing His kingly rule. Paul opens Romans with the mission statement of bringing about “the obedience of faith among all peoples” for one overriding purpose, “for His name sake” (Romans 1:5). In one phrase, the kingdom of God and the glory of God.

Both the glory of God and the kingdom of God are *historical* realities. They both unfold on the timeline of history, with promise, and broad-scale purpose and eschatological necessity. Both are partly fulfilled and experienced in this age as God gives His people mandate to accomplish a portion of His purpose by His power. But both come to complete fulfillment in the ages to come.

Both the glory and kingdom themes are astoundingly *relational*. The glory of God is not a matter of getting higher approval ratings for God, or seeing that superlative statements are consistently made about Him. The glory that God desires is a grand scale of intimacy, where He is known and celebrated in obedient worship by a people from all peoples. The kingdom is a relational affair. Obedience is a relationship of a servant to master/king/messiah. Where Jesus is obeyed, there is the kingdom. We are now experiencing and furthering His kingly rule. His purpose to increase the extent and fruition of His royal rule will have greater fulfillments within this age as well as in the age to come.

We need to articulate a cogent narrative of history and mission that does not sharply divide using Hellenistic categories of temporal versus eternal or even vertical versus horizontal. This is the very kind of dichotomy that is easiest to dismiss and has already proven inadequate to provide a mooring for evangelical theology. And so we drift. We are groping for a narrative, a coherent story that is focused as something sourced, fulfilled by, and enjoyed by God, and yet at the same time, is a story of the war for, and redemption

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of, humankind and indeed, all the earth. We can do this without going soft on salvation or becoming vague about evangelism. Christopher Little is one of many who can help us. Let’s continue the work of clarifying our mandate for mission.

Ron Sider responds

Ronald J. Sider (Ph.D., Yale) is Professor of Theology, Holistic Ministry and Public Policy, and Director of the Sider Center on Ministry and Public Policy at Palmer Theological Seminary and President of Evangelicals for Social Action. In 1982, The Christian Century named him one of the twelve “most influential persons in the field of religion in the U.S.” His Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger was recognized by Christianity Today as one of the one hundred most influential religious books of the twentieth century and named the seventh most influential book in the evangelical world in the last fifty years. Sider is the publisher of PRISM magazine and a contributing editor of Christianity Today and Sojourners.

Christopher Little’s essay raises important concerns and warns against real dangers. At crucial points, however, I find it is confused and unbiblical.

He is certainly right to warn evangelicals against the genuine danger of repeating the heretical mistake of liberal Christians who allowed the Enlightenment to undermine any concern for evangelism. Some evangelical social activists do go in that direction. Faithful biblical Christians will never abandon a central, passionate concern to invite non-Christians to embrace God’s salvation offered only in Jesus Christ.

Little is also right that there is a continuing debate in evangelical circles about whether evangelism is the primary mission of the church (social ministry is thus secondary) or whether we should say that evangelism and social ministry are both central aspects of the mission of the church. But people like myself who take the second position [see my *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* (Baker), especially pp. 165–71] do not ignore Mark 8:34–38. Absolutely nothing is as important as having a living relationship with God through Christ. But Jesus never concluded, as Little seems to, that that means that we should spend a lot more time and money on evangelism than on social ministry. A quick look at the Gospels shows that Jesus devoted a great deal of time to healing sick bodies that he could have spent preaching. Jesus is our only perfect model, and he spent a lot of time on both. We should do both evangelism and social ministry and not claim that the one deserves most of our time and money.

I find the section on holistic ministry quite unconvincing. The fact that the Apostle Paul had the special calling of evangelist and thus rightly devoted most of his time to evangelism (although even he spent much time for a couple years focused on delivering an offering to the poor Christians in Jerusalem—Romans 8–9) says nothing about whether or not the church as a whole should focus largely on evangelism (if that were the case, why did the early church appoint the first deacons with the special calling of focusing on social need in the body of Christ?). To argue from John’s comments on the feeding of the 5000 (seek the food which endures for eternal life) that

"the other-worldly character of His ministry did not generate a more just society on earth" is simply wrong historically. Again and again throughout history, Christians have profoundly transformed societal injustice—whether poverty, slavery, or neglect of the dignity of women—precisely because they believed that accepting Jesus as Saviour also required them to accept Jesus as Lord of every part of their life.

Little is also right to object to those people who argue that evangelism and social action are identical. I think that is wrong. They are not the same thing. They are distinct, but they are very closely interrelated (*Good News and Good Works*, Chap. 10).

Even more serious is Little's discussion of the kingdom of God. He appears to want to turn away from defining the Gospel as the Good News of the Kingdom. That is a very strange thing for an evangelical to say. Virtually every New Testament scholar today agrees that Jesus defined the Gospel as the Good News of the Kingdom. Does Little know more than Jesus? Surely evangelicals at least ought to define the Gospel the way Jesus did—i.e., the Good News of the Kingdom.

There were two aspects of Jesus' Good News of the Kingdom. The only way into Jesus' kingdom is by sheer grace. God longs to forgive prodigal sons and daughters who repent. Forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus is at the center of Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom. But so is a horizontal aspect. Jesus claims to fulfill the long Jewish hope for the Messiah who would bring peace and justice on earth. The Jews expected that Messianic kingdom to come in its totality when the Messiah came. Jesus was different: he said the Messianic kingdom was actually breaking into history in his person and work and his circle of disciples, but that it would come in its fullness only at his second coming. But that Jesus thought that

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that Messianic kingdom was actually breaking into our space and time (it was not just some other-worldly hope for the future) is almost beyond dispute according to contemporary evangelical New Testament scholars. It is simply wrong exegetically to say that the "Kingdom of God" is a "transcendental, supra-historical order of life." It does have an important supra-historical element. But it begins now in our space and time.

Little is quite right to quote Bright to say that human efforts by themselves cannot bring in the kingdom. It comes now in part by God's grace as Jesus' disciples (through the power of the Holy Spirit) do what Jesus taught; but it comes in its fullness only at Christ's return. To reject that understanding of the partial coming of Christ's kingdom now because we rightly reject a purely human-centered understanding of the kingdom is simply confusion.

Nor is it descriptively accurate to say that people who define the Gospel as Jesus did (as the Good News of the Kingdom) lose the urgency of evangelism. I want more evangelism, not less. Evangelicals all around the world who are very committed to holistic mission grounded in the kingdom of God are passionate about evangelism. Pentecostals who are the global leaders in evangelism are increasingly embracing holistic mission without neglecting evangelism.

To casually dismiss the hundreds of biblical verses about God's special concern for the poor with the off-hand comment that evangelicals "are now influenced by the tenets of Liberation Theology" is breath-taking in its simplicity. It may or may not be the case that liberation

theologians saw how important in the Bible is God's concern for the poor more clearly than others. If they did, we should thank them. But that is largely irrelevant. What matters is what the Bible teaches. And the Bible teaches in hundreds of verses that God and his faithful people have a special concern for the poor. Jesus, in fact, said that those who do not feed the hungry and clothe the naked go to hell.

Paul rightly connects the kingdom both to the return of Christ and also to the present reality in the church (Rom. 14:15–17; I Cor. 4:20; Col. 1:13). The kingdom has already begun, but it is not yet complete.

Little is certainly correct to lift up the doxological theme of Christian mission. The ultimate purpose of mission is to bring glory to God. But unless we beg the question, that tells us absolutely nothing about whether evangelism is the primary mission of the church. Both leading non-Christians to personal faith in Christ and meeting the socio-economic needs of people in the name of Christ bring glory to God. Christian social action is not "highlighting what human beings can do for one another." It is loving the neighbor in the name of Christ to bring glory to God (and also to open people's hearts to the Gospel). There is no logical connection between a doxological missiology and the particular theses Little wants to support.

I wish Little would sit down for more careful dialogue with evangelicals who embrace holistic mission and the Gospel as the kingdom of God. He would find people with a passion to share the Gospel with all those who have never heard. He would find that we are firmly resolved not to repeat the errors of theological liberalism. He would

find people who believe that the next few decades offer an unusual historic opportunity to dramatically increase the number of Christian disciples precisely because more of the church wants to love the whole person (body and soul) the way Jesus did and wants to define the Gospel as Jesus did.

I do not care much if Little wants to focus his time and resources primarily on evangelism. But it does not help the cause of Christ to distort the position of other evangelicals who believe Jesus calls us to do both evangelism and social action and to do them together as much as possible. Let's have all biblical Christians join together in a mighty movement of loving the whole person so that hundreds of millions, no billions, may come to know our Lord and Savior and experience life abundant both now during their short time here and also for all eternity.

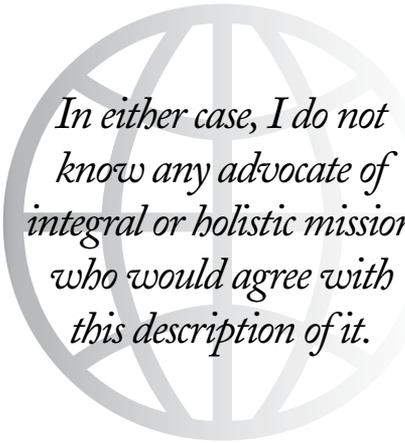
René Padilla responds

René Padilla, (Ph.D., Manchester) grew up in Ecuador and Colombia, studied in England and has been living in Buenos Aires, Argentina, since 1967. Passionate about social justice and the part the church plays in bringing this about, Dr. Padilla started the Kairos Foundation in Argentina, which encourages Christians to meet the physical, social and spiritual needs of poor communities. He is President of the Micah Network, a worldwide group of over three hundred campaigning organizations aimed at mobilizing Christians against poverty.

After reading this article, I feel that the author has either misunderstood what today is meant by Kingdom-of-God or holistic mission or he has intentionally built a straw man in order to show that his position, in contrast with the one he criticizes, is biblical. In either case, I do not know any advocate of integral

or holistic mission who would agree with this description of it.

To begin with, no advocate of holistic mission would ever say that the communication of the Gospel is not an essential aspect of the Christian mission. They know very well (1) that nothing can be regarded as "Christian" unless it is related to the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) that the great narrative of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, exaltation, giving of the Spirit at Pentecost, and second coming is the good news that



In either case, I do not know any advocate of integral or holistic mission who would agree with this description of it.

we Christians are called to communicate in word as well as in deed, and (3) that these saving events express God's unfathomable love and provide the motivation and the basis for our participation in God's mission. Holistic mission is both theocentric and anthropocentric at the same time because it is centered in Jesus Christ, the God-Man. And that makes it "Christian".

Unfortunately, the same error that is at the root of Docetism is also at the root of mission understood as evangelism separated from Christian responsibility in the socioeconomic and political realm. Docetism intended to emphasize the deity of Jesus Christ but it did it to such an extent that it denied his humanity. Mission as evangelism with no concern for human needs other than the need of God intends to emphasize

forgiveness and reconciliation with God but it does it to such an extent that it denies people's humanity.

I happened to be one of the plenary speakers at the First International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE), held at Lausanne, Switzerland, in July of 1974. I rejoiced when I heard John Stott say that he had "changed his mind from earlier positions"—basically, from a one-sided emphasis on evangelism as the oral communication of the Gospel to mission as including evangelism and social responsibility. I also rejoiced when the statement was included in the Lausanne Covenant, that because God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people,

We... should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression"; that "Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ"; that "The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist" and that "When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead (paragraph 5).

All these statements on "Christian Social Responsibility", along with

others throughout the Covenant, led me to believe that evangelicalism was on the way to overcoming the dichotomy between evangelism and socio-political responsibility.

This conviction led me to edit *The New Face of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), with contributions on each paragraph of the Covenant.

I must admit, however, that I left Lausanne with the feeling that the old dichotomy between evangelism and social responsibility has not been quite overcome but had found expression in paragraph 6 of the Covenant, in the statement that, "in the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary." The discomfort I felt about that affirmation did not prevent me from signing the Covenant, but I was very glad when the opportunity to discuss the tension between paragraph 5 and paragraph 6 of the Covenant opened in 1982, at the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility (CRESR), in Grand Rapids, to which once again I was invited as a speaker. Jointly sponsored by the Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Fellowship, the Consultation had the explicit purpose

to complete Lausanne's unfinished business and to define more clearly what is included in 'social responsibility', whose responsibility it is, and how it relates to evangelism.

Space does not allow me to make a full analysis of the proceedings of that Consultation—a consultation summoned specifically to deal with the issue at hand. Suffice it to say that it is not quite right to say that the outcome of CRESR was simply the ratification of the narrow definition of mission as evangelism understood as the oral communication of the Gospel. On the contrary, the Report explicitly affirms that

The preaching that deeply affected Wilberforce was precisely the kind of prophetic preaching that is part and parcel of holistic mission . . .

we cannot stop with the verbal proclamation of the gospel. In addition to worldwide evangelization, the people of God should become involved in relief, aid, development, and the quest for justice and peace (paragraph 3A).

Quite clearly, this is a call to holistic mission. Or is it a call to "patronizing charity" for the sake of the so-called underdeveloped world?

How did CRESR resolve the question of "the primacy of evangelism" over social responsibility? It granted (1) that there is a *logical* primacy, since Christian social responsibility can only be displayed by people who have been converted to Christ, and (2) that there is an *axiological* primacy, since evangelism deals with the final destiny of people while social responsibility has to do with their bodily lives on earth. It also stated, however, that

evangelism and social responsibility, while distinct from one another, are *integrally related* in our proclamation of and obedience to the gospel" (paragraph 4C, emphasis mine) and that "the choice [between the two], we believe, is largely conceptual. In practice, as in the public ministry of Jesus, *the two are inseparable*, at least in open societies. Rather than competing with each other, they mutually support and strengthen each other in a spiral of concern for both (paragraph 4D, emphases mine).

Quite brief, but still significant, is the reference that the CRESR Report makes to the holistic approach to mission in the history of evangelicalism in the past. It mentions the Great Awakening in North America, the Pietistic movement in Germany, and

the Evangelical Revivals under the Wesleys in Britain as good examples of the way in which evangelism and social responsibility were closely related. Little is probably right in stating that there would have been no Wilberforce if there had not been first a Wesley. He does not seem to take into account, however, that the preaching that deeply affected Wilberforce was precisely the kind of prophetic preaching that is part and parcel of holistic mission—a preaching that makes no cleavage between evangelism and social responsibility, including in Wesley's case the abolition of slavery.

The CRESR Report rightly claims that the one-sided emphasis on evangelism, so widely spread among evangelicals today, has its origin in an over-reaction to the so-called "social gospel" at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Another factor that could have been mentioned is the spread, roughly during the same period, of a futuristic view of the Kingdom of God and the massive neglect of its presence in history beginning with Jesus Christ—a view and a neglect due especially to the influence of Dispensationalism. In light of the historical facts, it makes no sense to describe the "metamorphosis of monumental proportions" that the evangelical missions movement is presently undergoing as "a historical repetition" of what happened with the World Council of Churches in the twentieth century. Rather, it is nothing less than a recovery of the biblical approach to mission that provided the basis for socio-political transformation in various countries,

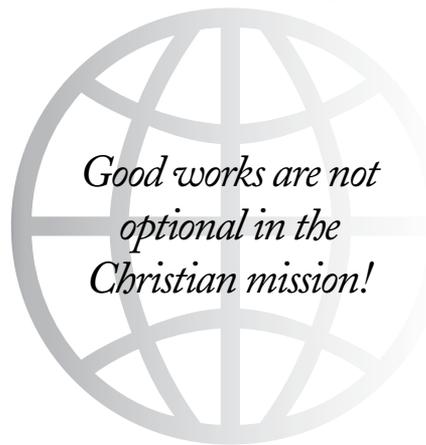
especially in Great Britain, several centuries ago.

The biblical arguments that Little advances to prove his point are as weak as his arguments from a historical perspective. Space does not allow me to elaborate this topic, but allow me to mention one example. According to Little, Jesus' words addressed to people after the miracle of the multiplication of five barley loaves and two fish, "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (John 6:27) prove that "He [Jesus Christ] did require behavioral change in order to receive the benefits of the kingdom." May I ask: What came first in this case, Jesus' response to the physical hunger of the people—a wonderful benefit made possible by Kingdom power working through him—or the preaching of the Gospel? Did not in this case the deed precede the word? What deed does the word explain if there is no deed?

Because Jesus' ministry was holistic, he gave people bread to satisfy physical hunger and the bread of life to satisfy spiritual hunger. As the Word made flesh, he illustrated in his own life and ministry what it means to keep the commandment to love God with one's whole being together with the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. Christian work in response to human needs—whether physical or spiritual, material or psychological—is modeled on Jesus' life and ministry and therefore brings together the two commandments, knowing that love for God is inseparable from love for one's neighbor. Its aim is not to bring in the Kingdom by human labor, but to manifest in concrete ways the Kingdom that has already been brought into history through Jesus Christ—to participate in the accomplishment of God's purpose that his Kingdom

come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Little's interest in "recovering the doxological theme of mission" is commendable. The question is, how is that to be done? No Christian would claim that it will be done by a "purely humanitarian act" that fails to point to God as the source of every good gift. God was glorified on earth through Jesus' holistic mission—a mission that included the proclamation of good news for the poor, freedom for the oppressed,



recovery of sight for the blind, and release for the oppressed—and he will be glorified through the holistic mission of Jesus' disciples, which includes a wide variety of good works. Good works are not optional in the Christian mission! The recovery of the doxological theme of mission requires that we take seriously into account Jesus' exhortations to his followers to let their light shine so that people may see their good works—not only hear that God loves them—and glorify the Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16).

My conclusion is that the main value of Little's article is that it synthesizes the main criticisms that have been leveled against holistic mission and the main arguments that support the one-sided (Western?) missiology that, quite unfortunately, has oftentimes prevented the church all

over the world from demonstrating in practical ways that the Kingdom of God includes every aspect of human life and the totality of God's creation. The time is ripe for the integral mission that especially in the Two-thirds World an increasing number of churches are beginning not only to talk about, but to practice!

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

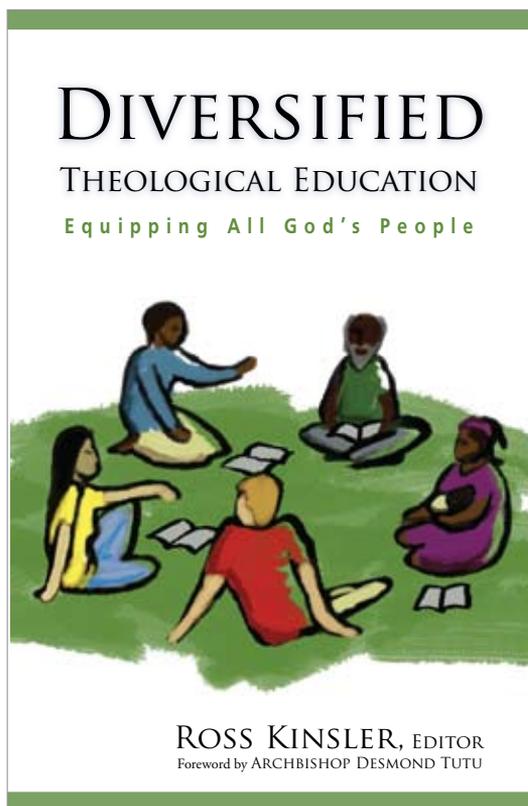
so. But does that mean we should not fight crime, injustice and disease? Little says that "Before there can be a Wilberforce there must first be a Wesley." That is very true, because Wesley spent more time fighting crime, injustice and disease than Wilberforce ever did. What amazed and stirred Wilberforce 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



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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 exposit a major arena of God's creativity. It means missionaries taking with them to the field both a microscope 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. **IJM**

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